

ALAN PHELPS

# Cigs key to laid-back lifestyle

If you start down the road of real life, you can easily end up bitter and burnt out. People expect you to do things like vacuum or have kids or some strange combination of the two that courts have ruled is illegal in most states.



**"When I get a lot of money, I'm going to go back to Winston," Gabe often says. But then, he also says things such as, "I'm going to look for a job tomorrow."**

Fortunately, there are a few free spirits floating around who don't accept the artificial dichotomy of "employed" and "unemployed" that evil society forces upon us.

Yes, a gray area lies between the destitute and the successful — a warped lifestyle in which existence means something more than the 9-to-5 drudgery of owning major appliances.

Usually it means hanging around communes while in various stages of getting a job at Amigos. It means heading down to the plasma center every couple of days and putting in a couple hours of hard donating. It means waiting on hold for hours to talk to Harris Labs.

It means living life the way it was meant to be lived, damn it.

The commune in which I reside is a halfway house for exactly this type of modern-day Renaissance man. In my time, I've learned a thing or two about the good life, where body fluids mean money for smokes.

A good way to tell what kind of day freebirds are having is to look at what brand of cigarettes they ask for from each other.

At the top o' the chart is Black Death, the most expensive brand of smokes in common circulation among members of the subculture.

If someone is smoking Black Death, you know he is living the high life. Harry Slab's ship just docked and the money cargo is being unloaded. No more hardtack — just hardpacks, baby. Light 'em up. Hell, smoke two at once. It's on Harry.

A commune-mate of mine once bought a whole carton of the skull-

usually, they taste a lot like smoke.

Below Full Flavor lies the depths of Rainbow Brand cancer sticks, the kind one finds at Super Saver. But at least they match our Rainbow Brand toilet paper and tortilla chips.

Unfortunately, there are times when the lungmasters can't scrape up even enough to make it to the pot o' gold that is Rainbow. But if a person looks around the commune long enough, there's usually a stupid girl or two with a menthol or "light" cig, or some extra-long-lookin' sucker — anything to feed that Frankenstein.

For a time, I thought that was the complete hierarchy of smokes: Black Death, Marlboro, Full Flavor, Rainbow and — if you're desperate — Girly Cigs. But then we met the greatest cigarette scavenger of them all. To protect his identity, I will call him by a random name — say, "Gabe."

Oddly enough, the random name that popped into my head happens to be Gabe's real name. He stops by the commune most every night from about seven to close — although he missed two shifts last week and we fired him.

But that didn't phase Gabe. He grew up surviving the hood I live in now. He's streetwise, he's cunning and he smokes some creation called Private Stock, which he buys at M&S Salvage Grocery on 27th Street.

"When I get a lot of money, I'm going to go back to Winston," Gabe often says. But then, he also says things such as, "I'm going to look for a job tomorrow."

Then Gabe will chuckle, light up a Private Stock, crack open a Black Label beer and watch one of the two television channels we receive at my house since the sneaky cable bandits took our box away.

Ah, life. Drink it in, thralls.

Phelps is a junior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan managing editor and a columnist.

festooned gimmicky death sticks. Apparently Black Deaths have more tar than other smokes. They aren't as harsh as Marlboros. Actually, they taste rather wimpy, but in a smooth sort of way.

I like it best when my commune-mates are smoking Marlboros. Marlboros mean life is fine. The Marlboro is the cigarette of stability, of peace, harmony and, of course, adventure. Sit back. Breathe it in. Accidentally knock over the ashtray. It's OK — you've got a pack of Reds in your pocket and extra butane on the shelf. Ahhhhhh.

But when the Marlboro man is strapped for cash, he can get by on Full Flavor, the smoker's cheap, satisfying savior. I don't quite understand that name, myself. Cigarettes don't have that great of a flavor. Ac-

RAINBOW ROWELL

# Flying J is bed-tosser's dream

I love to sleep. I treasure sleep. Sleep is my passion, my best friend, my reason for waking.

But I never sleep anymore. College has wreaked havoc with my inner clock. I get one good night's sleep — total — every semester if I'm lucky.

Each morning when my alarm, like so many Nazi storm troopers, wrenches me from slumber, only one thought keeps me from tears — in just 19 to 20 hours, I can sleep again.

So I get up and plow through my daily ritual. All day I think, 12 more, 10 more, three more hours to go.

But lately, I've been having a problem.

Three a.m. arrives like clockwork. I'm ready to shut down for the day. My pajamas are on. Teeth brushed. Prayers said. I close my eyes with an audible sigh. And then it happens.

Nothing. Just nothing. I can't sleep. So I lie there for a while in a completely dissatisfying state of semi-unconsciousness, teetering on the brink of sleep, close enough to peer in and hear the rest of the hemisphere snore peacefully.

I try counting sheep, thinking sleepy thoughts. Flannel sheets and easy-listening music. Four-hour chemistry labs and Nyquil.

No dice. If I lie there long enough, I start to believe that I'm the only one alive in the whole town, state — possibly the entire region.

I've become deeply depressed and very tired. Lonely.

A few weeks ago, I could stand it no longer. I went on a search for humanity. For life.

I tried most of the Lincoln's 24-hour establishments. I tried Super Saver. After an hour or so, I didn't care to know who needed Cool Ranch Doritos and cocktail wieners at 2 a.m.

Kinko's was OK, but I can only make so many copies before the smell of hot ink gives me a headache.

I searched on. Convenience stores. The health center's urgent care. Late-night TV. Finally, I gave up searching for nocturnal civilization.

And then, last Sunday, I found it.



**Somewhere between Lincoln and Omaha, east of Eden and west of Shangri-La, I found an insomniac's paradise.**

... in the darndest place.

My brother and his best friend were driving me back to Lincoln after a sleepless weekend in the Big O. We made it to the Ashland exit when the Subaru made a strange noise — kind of a bang.

My mechanically oriented companions informed me that one of the back tires blew. They also told me that — unlike jet airplanes that can still fly with two engines or even one — cars need all four tires to keep moving.

We each got out of the car, walked around a few times to confirm that the tire was indeed flat and that, yes, we'd have to walk.

And walk we did, along the edge of the interstate until we saw — in the distance — a sign. We kept walking toward that sign through the cold and the dark and the cold.

On the way, I decided that I'd rather have a root canal than be passed by a semi-truck. All the trucks were out last Sunday, and they were having a contest — who can drive the closest to Rainbow without actually running her over?

We walked for hours on the I-80 treadmill, but the sign didn't get closer.

We gave up trying to make progress and passed the time spotting shapes that could be mistaken for dead bodies in the roadside brush.

When the sign realized we didn't care about it and started looking for other unlucky pedestrians to tease, we stormed toward it, catching it off guard and forcing it closer.

The Flying J. A truck stop. A phone. An hour or so before my mom came to cart us back to civilization. We ran the rest of the way.

We arrived breathless and frostbit at The Flying J. Without a pause to scope the place out, we ran in.

I was Dorothy after the tornado, Alice in Wonderland.

Somewhere between Lincoln and Omaha, east of Eden and west of Shangri-La, I found an insomniac's paradise.

Open 24 hours every day, The Flying J has a grocery store, showers, a buffet restaurant, dozens of carpeted phone booths, an arcade, a huge, cable-equipped TV and — get this — a three-person shoeshine station. A shoeshine station! Those truck drivers must really scuff up their footwear.

As with all incredibly good things, there is a catch. Just anyone can't enjoy The Flying J. Many of the more posh and exciting features are reserved for professional drivers.

I have a car, but I still don't know how to drive. I now have incentive to learn. If I can just master those pedals, I'll have someplace to go at 4 a.m.

I won't have to be alone. I can enjoy a roast beef dinner — all I care to eat. I can play Street Fighter Two until my fingertips bleed. I can get my shoes shined!

Kinko's, Super Saver and dozens of breakfast restaurants should bow their heads in shame. I have found the king, the queen, the entire royal family of 24-hour establishments. And it's all mine if I just learn how to drive.

Rowell is a junior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

# Yell Squad Tryouts

Open to any males or females interest in trying out.

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**SUN., Feb. 28, 5 p.m.**

Open gym 6 - 9 p.m. following meeting.

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or at 436-7051