



**ALEXIA SCOTT is a senior biological sciences major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child well, and this weekend I returned to *my* village for the last time. For within the month my parents are moving from the town that I have called home since I was 6. So I took the weekend to say my farewells and to bask in the warmth of my childhood.

Well, actually my roommate and I set out on an excursion to get away from Lincoln for a few days – as well as to celebrate my father's birthday. In four years of friendship, she had never visited the sacred streets of Ida Grove, Iowa, and this was going to be her last chance.

The drive home is very calming, and the knowledge that good food and some needed R&R awaited us only multiplied this feeling. During the descent into the sheltered valley,

I instantly flashed back to my first trips from Lincoln when I would be rushing down that hill at 80 mph just to get home. Everything looked just as it has for about 16 years, as though nothing has ever changed there. (Of course, an argument could be made in support of that theory!)

I looked at Ida Grove differently this trip, maybe because Jess was along, but more likely because I knew that this would be my last look at home. As my parents gave her the super-deluxe version of the tour, I had time to think back to all of the good times that I experienced while growing up. I also found myself thinking about the people that made the most impact on my life there.

One of the first stops was my high school – the building hasn't changed at all in the five years since graduation – but the most important person who was there is now gone. No, I'm not talking about myself, but rather my basketball coach. He left this past year to take a job elsewhere, leaving behind an enormous legacy. Coach was tough, on and off

the court, in and out of season, but only because he expected nothing less than absolute dedication from his players. I was far from the most talented member of our team, but he and I always connected. This connection made him the person I turned to when I wanted advice from someone other than my parents. This connection extended past our coach-player relationship – he was a mentor for me.

As I waxed nostalgic throughout the rest of the tour, I was reminded of more people and events, some good and some not so great. Passing by my mom's office reminded me of the summer spent working in the factory.

Those three months were probably the only time in my life when I questioned whether or not my parents loved me, because I was sure that if they did, they would not have made me work from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day doing hard, physical labor. The first lesson on the first day of that job taught me why I was going to college and not staying at

home for the rest of my days. It was that summer I learned I could live through anything for three months!

Since we were only home for about a day and a half, most of the time was spent with my parents and older sister, Shilo. The creature comforts of home were all still there, except that I had to sleep on the floor so Shilo and Jess could be comfortable. We talked, ate, listened to the Nebraska football game, and ate some more. We sat around the dinner table and laughed about all the things that Shilo and I had done when we were younger, most of which Shilo got caught for and I did not. For a few moments, our family managed to freeze the rushing clock that always surrounds us and just enjoy each other for just being there. No one mentioned that this would be our last dinner around the table in Ida Grove, but Shilo and I knew it and felt it. Thanksgiving and Christmas will come as usual this year, but the trip "home" will not be the same, and I will reminisce while I drive to wherever it is that Mom

and Dad will be living.

At one point the realization came to me that I played a bigger part in this village than just being raised there. I was talking to the younger brother of one of my best friends, who could, for all practical purposes, be my little brother. He is a senior in high school and sees me as part of his family too.

I also ran into the parent of a young lady I used to baby-sit for, who is now a freshman in college. Her mom told me that she would love to hear from me, since I would understand what she is going through. I've played a role in the lives of these two people, and made an impact on the village that they've come to know.

Overall, the weekend reminded me that having grown up in a small town, even one in Iowa, was a great way to go. I was taught some of life's most important lessons by members of that village, and now it is my turn to take those lessons on to wherever I end up calling home.

# One last trip

## Final visit home revives fond memories

# Go your own way

## Be true to self, not superficial world



**CLIFF HICKS is a junior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

I almost started drinking Sprite because of its slogan. Almost.

It had to be one of the most encouraging pieces of advertising I'd seen in years. Perhaps you saw it? Three guys in front of a basketball court start offering up why they drink this fake soda, and then the director of the commercial points out that the can is upside down. The three basketball players suddenly change into the whining stereotype of actors, complaining about their lines and motivation.

The ad ends with "Image is nothing. Thirst is everything. Quench your thirst."

Oh, if only the world would listen to the first part of that ... the things that would change. Read it again and let it engrain itself into the surface of your brain.

Image. Is. Nothing.

It's not true, of course, but if it only were. This is a superficial world we live in. Everything is only as much as it appears to be. In the world we live in, appearance is everything. It isn't based on reality, but the perception of reality.

In high school (and here in college too, I suppose) I was the weird kid. I moved funny, sat in strange places during the lunch hour, had a tendency to stare without focusing, was notorious for having strange political and social views – in essence, I wasn't that popular. Notorious, perhaps, but not popular. I still have mixed feelings about those years of my life. I'll tell you why.

Over this past summer, I ran into one of the more popular kids in my high school. He and I actually sat down and had lunch. We swapped stories and caught up. During our conversations, he said something to

me that has stuck with me awhile now.

"It must have been wonderful not to care about appearances back then. How could you stand giving the finger to popularity for so long? How could you stand the price of solitude for your martyrdom?"

I had to think a good while about it before I answered. While I can't remember my exact wording, my point to him was this: No matter where you go, no matter what you do, everyone will have a different idea of what you should be like. Either you can spend all of your time and energy trying to find a way to satisfy everyone, or you can tell them all to buzz off.

It's been months since I wore anything other than a T-shirt and jeans. I cut my hair just the other day, not because I wanted to look more respectable but because I was tired of it curling up on me. I've changed between being clean shaven to a mustache/goatee/beard so many times even I've lost count because I can't make up my mind which I like. My appearance means very little to me.

It's not about being the preppie or the rebel anymore. It's about being you, no matter what it takes, not what someone else sees as you. There's no difference between the people who wear only Gap clothing so that they fit in at parties and the people who get their backs covered in tattoos just to freak out their relatives. It's doing something for someone else.

Maybe I'm still the weird kid I was back in high

school, but now I'm coming to terms with it. I don't have to care what's "in fashion" and what's "passé."

That said, even I can't say that I disregard image entirely. I'd be lying. Every single one of us has perceptions that we have developed over time. It's sad that it happens, but all we can really do is try and ignore them. Close your eyes and focus on the ideas being conveyed, not the form conveying them. I have trouble with it sometimes myself, but we still have to try.

You can't hear my voice or can't see me talk. All I am to you is words on paper and a little picture to help you know who to hate

on campus. I'm not a person, I'm an opinion. I love that. You don't know me, so this is all you get. Nothing more.

Stop and take a long, hard look at yourself. Are you a victim of superficiality and don't even know it? How long do you think about your clothes before you put them on? Have you ever avoided someone because you didn't want them to "see how you look"?

Are you just an image, or something more?

Spend a few weeks wearing T-

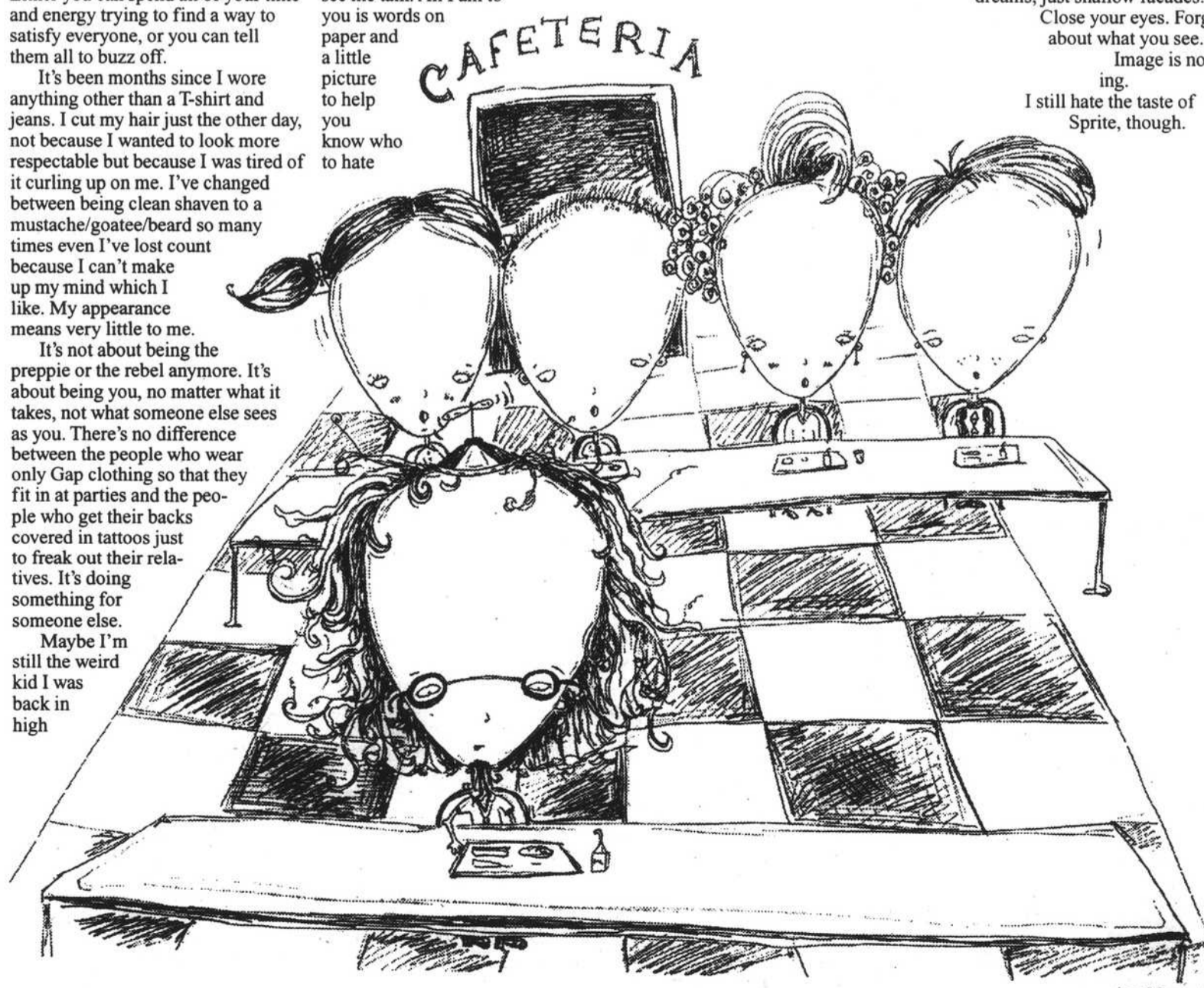
shirts and jeans. Leave your hair in a state of disarray. Don't shave. Forget about your appearance and watch how other people can't. You'll find people ask you what's wrong, trying to get you to change back into the status quo you fell into before.

That's the reason I like words. They're faceless – they can contain ideas capable of overthrowing rulers or they can just make someone laugh ... and they still look the same. Just a quick glance at words reveals very little about their content. But the real world doesn't believe in ideas or dreams, just shallow facades.

Close your eyes. Forget about what you see.

Image is nothing.

I still hate the taste of Sprite, though.



AMY MARTIN/DN