

# Kiss my grits

## Restaurant servers deserve decent tips



**JOSH WIMMER is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

A little bit of money can go a long way.

And I want to get back to that subject in a moment. First, though, speaking for my hometown of Fargo, N.D., I want to thank you all for your support as we struggled through this Mark McGwire thing.

It wasn't easy, watching him break our boy Roger Maris' record. It hurt. But seeing as how we're a people who go ice fishing naked and use our kids for bait - it makes 'em tough - I think we'll pull through, by Allah.

Besides, McGwire seems to be a pretty decent guy. In fact, I extend to him a permanent invitation to come see us in North Dakota, where no one will hear his screams.

But that's neither here nor there. As I was saying ....

We're three weeks into the semester and, as usual, money's starting to get tight for the J-Dogg. I'm sure this comes as a surprise to you, because you probably assumed this newspaper was paying me an exorbitant wage to enlighten you each week.

Well, it's not.

Thankfully, I'm otherwise gainfully employed at this fine Mexican café and cantina up on N. 27th Street.

(OK, it's Carlos O'Kelly's. This isn't a plug - believe me, as much as

we want it, we don't need your business. I've done a comprehensive survey of all Lincoln's Mexican restaurants - comparing margaritas based on price, flavor and alcohol content - and on any given night, we're dropping the competition like they were sucker MCs. So come for the food, stay for the fun.)

Anyway, on a good night, in an hour and a half of waiting tables, I make as much as one column nets me. And there are a lot more women, and I don't have to worry about grammar.

But I could be making more money.

And if you'll help me out, I will. And so will my co-workers, and most of them are better-looking than I am; and they'll all be very grateful.

How can you help?

Just remember this simple figure: 15 percent.

OK, there's more to it than that. You have to remember to *give me* 15 percent.

They're called "tips," and I like them; and every one of my colleagues at every sit-down restaurant in town likes them too. They're simple to figure out, and the math is good practice for most of you.

Imagine you're dining out, and your check comes.

(And for the record, it's a "check," you provincial peasants - not a "ticket.")

The total on the check is about \$20.

*How much do you leave your server?*

I know what all y'all are shouting, because you've left it for me so many times before - \$2.

No.

That would be 10 percent. Etiquette demands that, for good service - and the J-Dogg *always* treats you right, baby - you leave 15 percent.

To figure out 15 percent of the

total - and I'm going through this because I assume your parents never taught you, because mostly, they tip worse than you do - you determine how much 10 percent is. So you're already one step ahead of the spider.

Then you cut that 10 percent in half, for 5 percent.

So if 10 percent is \$2, 5 percent is \$1.

And then you add the two numbers together. Get it? Ten percent plus 5 percent equals 15 percent.

And \$2 plus \$1 equals \$3, which is a dollar more than you were planning on leaving.

It's just a dollar. But it means the world to me and my colleagues.

Why does it mean so much?

Oh - did I mention we make \$2.13 an hour?

Yes, folks, that's why it's important to tip well. See, as some of you might not know, we're not bringing home minimum wage plus the tips. No, after two weeks of work, we're lucky if our paychecks total more than \$40, after taxes. And that's true of just about every restaurant in Nebraska.

Now if that sob story doesn't get you for some reason - like, you've seen me driving my spoiled ass to Homer's in my parents' Ford

Explorer - there's another good reason to tip appropriately, if not daz-zlingly.

Should you ever leave this wasteland, if you try to drop the 10 percent in, say, Chicago or San Francisco, everyone at your table will know you're a cheapskate.

And they'll know you're from Nebraska.

They'll be like, "Damn! Even Iowans tip better than that!"

And I know, from speaking to many of you, that once you leave Nebraska, you don't want anyone to know you were ever here. And you sure don't want to lose to Iowa.

Now if that doesn't have you convinced - maybe you're going to stay here and spend the next 40 Labor Days at Holmes Lake, too, or something - I'll give you one more good reason to tip your servers 15 percent. And this one applies across the board.

We're vicious.

And we're unforgiving. We deal with the public all day and we grow bitter.

And if you don't tip us appropriately, we do remember you sometimes.

And we always clean up your tables. And if we don't, the busboys do; and they like us better than they like you.

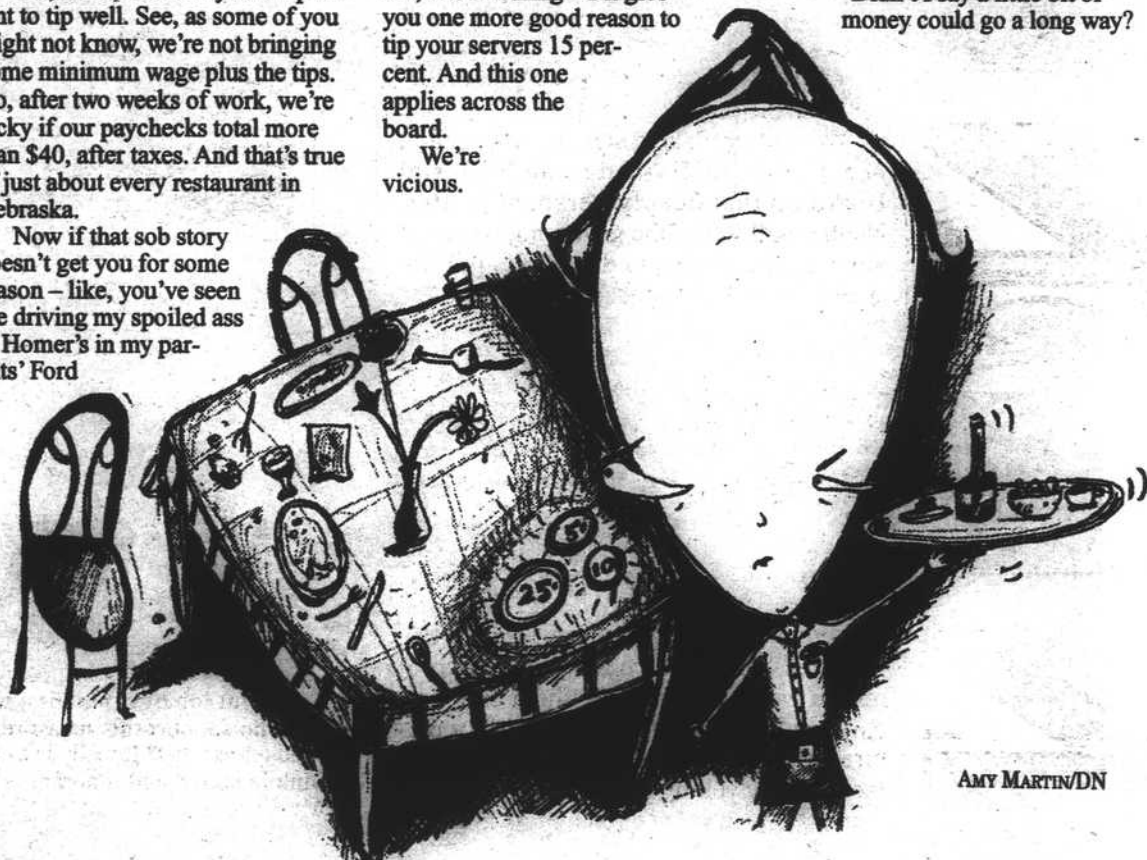
So comes that day you leave your keys - or your gloves, or your glasses, or your husband - in the booth and walk out of the restaurant.

You better hope to Tone Loc's ghost you left 15 percent too.

Or I see a round of dumpster diving in your stars.

Dry cleaning can be pricey. And dumpsters stink. And it will bite, having a bunch of restaurant peons laughing at your predicament.

Didn't I say a little bit of money could go a long way?



AMY MARTIN/DN

# In living color

## Skin shade doesn't determine content of character



**LESLEY OWUSU is a sophomore broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

Who am I? What am I? I am black. What does this mean? It is merely the color of my skin. I am a black, young, independent female. What does this mean? It simply means that I am a strong, motivated, hardworking individual.

I look at myself and I do not let the color of my skin determine my potential, as a person of color and as a woman. These barriers and obstacles I take in stride, and they need to be eliminated from my mind. If I am to be successful, such worries are really not worth my time. But we live in such a diverse and multicultural world that the color of a person's skin can play a significant role in the achievement of certain goals and ambitions - if a person allows this factor to rule his or her life.

Being a minority student is a unique quality. Obviously, we were all created to be different, which is why we have such a variety of ethnic races and skin shades of different tones and colors. If the Creator had wanted us to be the same, then per-

haps we would all be identical. But we are not.

What makes us all similar is that we are all human beings, regardless of our skin color. We all came into this world with a pair of legs and arms, and one day we will all leave this world. Genetically, we are the same, and physically we are alike. The only distinctive difference is the color of our skin.

So I am black, yet I would not regard myself as an African American, because I am not. In fact, I am British. However, I am from Africa because my family is from Africa. To be more specific, I am from Ghana, which is in West Africa. I could classify myself as a black British or British-African or simply British, because I was born in Britain.

There is such a wide range of ethnic groups and classifications, at times it is really hard to know what or who I am. Who am I? I wonder.

I look around in this office and observe that I am the only black person working here for the Daily Nebraskan. Why is that? It does not disturb me or even bother me that I kind of stand out. The fact that so few black students attend the university could help explain why I am the only person of color in this workplace.

When I say there are few black students at the University of Nebraska, I mean it! There are so few black students and faculty, one would barely know we existed, if people like myself didn't represent ourselves.

If there were no black athletes or any existing groups like Afrikan People's Union, you wouldn't even think there were any black people at UNL.

As a black student I feel so happy when I see a fellow black brother or sister on campus. It makes me feel like there are more of us, even though I know the numbers are few.

For a school as large as UNL, one would be surprised by the shocking statistics on minority students. Out of nearly 25,000 students, fewer than 500 are black. Yes, it's quite hard to believe, but it is the truth.

Being black and young should mean an individual is willing to work that much harder than a white person, who is in the majority.

I'm not saying white people do not work hard, because they do. I'm saying that I am among the minority, and I have a desire and a drive to achieve my fullest potential. I want to give 110 percent effort and dedication towards my studies, work and my sport. I am willing to compete against all people if I am given an equal chance.

Black people have never been given the same opportunities as white people. We are among the only group who were slaves and involuntarily brought into the United States. Black people have only been free for the good part of this century.

We all know blacks have suffered, that we've been oppressed. It has existed all over the world.

Yet as we reach the 21st century, blacks still continue to fight for equal opportunities, equal rights and

equal benefits.

The struggle goes on. Changes are happening gradually. These days there are more black men and women running their own businesses. We are seeing more black doctors, lawyers and politicians worldwide. There is a growing number of successful black actors, entertainers, musicians, entrepreneurs and athletes.

But blacks are still outnumbered by whites who dominate our society. However, it is good to see blacks helping themselves and each other in many different ways. We have our own television networks, which cater to black people's needs, but do not seclude themselves from other racial groups. Black Entertainment Television, for example, is watched by people of all colors.

So I am black. Black by nature, proud by choice. I would not want it any other way. Whether one is a black person in America or Britain or Africa - black is black.

Whatever color you are is the color you were meant to be. I love people of all colors, and I have grown up mainly around white people. If I were meant to be white or Asian or Hispanic, then I would have been born that way. But I was not, so I will not complain. I am black and very proud to be black, just as you are proud of your color.

I'm just comfortable being who I am. And just who am I? I am Lesley Owusu; that is my name, and I am a black, independent, self-motivated, hardworking woman. I know that if I am determined enough and work

hard to achieve whatever goal I set for myself, I can - despite the color of my skin.

Just because I am black does not mean that I get a job, or that I don't get a job. I'd like to believe that is true in a world that should have equal opportunities and justice for all. I hope that I get a job because of my qualifications, communication skills, hard work and most importantly, because of who I am. My personality, not my color.

The sky is the limit. My ambition is to be a successful journalist and an Olympic athlete. I will achieve this if I remain focused, positive and determined.

I think people of color should avoid complaining or worrying about being a black person, and concentrate on being a person who has many talents to offer. As a person of color, be willing to work just as hard as any competitor, black or white. Study, learn your profession and set out to achieve your aim.

The great Dr. Martin Luther King once said:

"I have a dream that one day my children will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

These are the wise words I hope we can all live by. We are all special and unique. We all have a number of great qualities. Let's all make the most of what we have instead of what we don't have. Let's not worry about who we are not, but concentrate on who we are and where we're going!