

Sports

Niobrara: Wildlife unmarred by humans

By Mark Davis

As remnants from our youth, we are sometimes privileged with reappearances of ancient voices that cut a figure in our childhood. These voices occupied us as children for moments, decades at a time, giving us continued adventure in the confinement of our own space, creating prodigy for our conquest and procreating comrades for top secret conversations.

Travels with Mark

As we grow older, these voices disappear for lack of faith. Some of us retain vision longer than most, but we are visited by our intimate friends from the past, each interval growing longer, until finally we are discouraged by the ravages of time.

For me the visitations are becoming more rare, but I have discovered a way to refuel the voices, encouraging them to make reappearances at times when I desperately need friends to confide in.

As children, our world is less touched by adults, uncensored by social norms and only restricted by the solid stroke of a mother's mixing spoon. Now, very seldom do we have opportunity to exist in the natural state, yet ironically we have had a breeding ground for vision preserved for us in our own backyard.

Exclusive to this continent and largest in the world, Nebraska's sandhills are such breeding grounds. As if maneuvered by my ancient friends themselves, the UNL Recreation Department offered a trip down the upper Niobrara and I seized the opportunity.

The river's trailway through the sandhills is passive, but an adventure. Even though it lacks some of the challenges that the river offers at its lower

points, it does take you into a part of Nebraska that is relatively unmarred by man.

After putting in on an old settlement abandoned by its builders, we slowly cut our way around sand dunes and passed many more of the settlements built of logs and abandoned for refuge of the abundant wildlife in these hills. The eroded valley that the river has left is green and full of surprises. As we traveled, pelicans flew over our heads and waterfalls of fresh springs entered the river, reminding us of scenes from Atlantis.

On the evening of our first day on the river, I took a canoe back upstream to a place where the Snake River enters the Niobrara. As we passed it earlier, I had thought that it would be a good place to fish. Walking back upstream pulling the canoe against the current wasn't easy, but the time spent alone made it all worthwhile.

While being embarrassed by the humbling brook trout, I was visited by a doe and what I thought must have been the offspring of a rat and a beaver. The trout in The Snake are large and virgin to much fishing, but their will was stronger than my line and the only thing I really caught was a burning desire to go back and conquer the unobtainable.

"No Trespassing" signs litter the land surrounding the rivers and make it difficult to find a place to fish. I saw evidence of the greedy white man displayed after stealing land that wasn't meant to be stolen but rather shared among men.

As the sun set that night and I turned my canoe around to head back toward camp, I took a mental picture of a place I promised to come back to.

That night we sat around a fire and told crude jokes and disposed of a large bottle of tequila. The women on the trip disappeared first, and then one by one we all went to our tents to pray for a painless morning.

The next day everyone had a more serious, sullen attitude. As we put in, I looked back at the unscarred camp site we left behind. Old trees and a fallen bridge assured me that this place would still be here long after we left. The foothills I had canvassed



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

An unidentified shuttle runner, taxi man of the sandhills, leans on a fare.

didn't seem so large as we got further down the river. But they were even more beautiful now. The hills hide wildlife which were wary of human presence, but watched with the same curiosity.

Without much warning, we had reached our destination and we were packed and back in the van headed for home.

When we arrived, the goodbyes were very short and we were all eager to help unload the equipment. We had all been contacted by our ancient friends.

I could almost see evidence of frequent visitations on the faces of our veteran guides. Their eyes weren't tired and their lips were pursed with promises of coming back to this stretch of the upper Niobrara.

U.S. athletes will make up for boycott void

Opinion by Scott Ahlstrand

The 1984 Summer Olympics at Los Angeles will be better known for those competitors that didn't show up than for those that did.

Absent from this year's Games are athletes from the Soviet Union, Cuba and several Eastern Bloc countries. Their absence will certainly deprive the competition of some great athletes, but shouldn't dull what projects to be an exciting athletic event.

With the Soviet and the East German contingents out of the Olympics, the main competition for many American athletes will come from their own teammates.

While hundreds of events and thousands of athletes will be on display in Los Angeles, a few performers seem destined to grab the spotlights. Among the best of the world's best are:

CARL LEWIS — Lewis is chasing the legend of Jessie Owens. Owens won four track and field gold medals in the 1936 Games, a feat that Lewis would like to equal. Lewis has a near lock on the long jump competition, an event which he has dominated for the past three years. He is also the favorite in the 100- and 200-meter dashes, and is a member of the heavily favored U.S. 4 X 100 relay team.

MARY DECKER — Decker, perhaps more than any

other athlete, is a symbol of the frustrations that the Olympics can bring. Injured before the 1976 Games and sidelined by the United States boycott of the 1980 Games, Decker should be in top form for Los Angeles. The current world champion at 1500 and 3000 meters, Decker will miss the push that Soviet and East German competitors would give her. But she still should turn in some excellent times.

EDWIN MOSES — Moses dominates the 400-meter hurdles like no other athlete dominates an event. The winner of 102 consecutive races, Moses was the 1976 champion and should breeze to more gold this summer.

U.S.A. BASKETBALL TEAM — This could be the toughest ticket to buy in Los Angeles. While the Soviet team will be missed, the high-flying, slam-dunking behind-your-back, in-your-face U.S. team should provide the crowd with plenty of thrills. Coached by Bobby Knight and featuring Michael Jordan, Wayman Tisdale and Patrick Ewing, the Americans will be solid favorites to grab the gold.

MARK BRELAND — Fancied as the best amateur boxer in the United States since Sugar Ray Leonard, Breland has dynamite in both hands. A Golden Glove winner and reigning amateur world champion, Breland heads a strong American boxing team.

These are just a few of the athletes viewers should

watch for in Los Angeles. Of particular interest to Nebraskans should be the performance of UNL sophomore **Angela Thacker**, who qualified second in the long jump at the Olympic trials. Also making the team from UNL are gymnasts **Jim Hartung**, **Scott Johnson**, **Jim Mikus** and **Chris Reigel**. Lincolnite **Abdurrahim Kuzu** earned a spot on the U.S. Olympic Greco-Roman wrestling team and has a legitimate shot at winning a gold in the 136.5-pound weight class.

Rec Scoreboard

The following are scores from June 18 to 23. Scores from Monday's through Thursday's games will run in the Friday newspaper.

CO-REC VOLLEYBALL

Whiners d. Surf's Up, 7-15, 15-9, 15-3
Brew Crew d. Drunken-Pack-of-Turtles 15-8, 6-15, 15-9
Dorchester Longhorns won by forfeit over Wreck Crew
Misfits d. Wreck Crew 15-10, 16-14
Dorchester Longhorns d. Chemistry 15-0, 8-15, 15-8
Animal Science d. We Don't Care 15-0, 15-2

CO-REC SOFTBALL

Co-Rec League 1
Hoops Later 15, Ragamuffins 6
Guppies 12, Business Services 11
Screenigne and Co. 8, HSS Summer Resort Staff 7
Co-Rec League 2
Huskers won by forfeit over The Birds
Road Warriors 8, Animal Science 2
Speech Communication Department 7, Food Science 6

Diverse athletes to Plunge for Nebraska

Nebraska diving coach Jeff Huber recently announced the signings of four divers to national letters of intent to compete for the Huskers next year.

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Pepin: 20 sign letters of intent

Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin recently announced the signing of 10 men and 10 women to national letters of intent.

Joining the men's team will be Steve Akesson of Chappell, John Baumann and Scott Parker of Norfolk, Tony Coe of North Platte, Alan Emanuel of North Bend, Jeff Rowen of Nebraska City, Craig Duncan of Glasgow, Scotland, Phillips George of Lagos, Nigeria, Gerald Hughes of Bristol, Connecticut and Richard Hughes of Coeymans, New York.

Two native Nebraskans are among the 10 women joining the three-time national indoor champion Husker squad. They are Vicki Johnson from Geneva and Tammy Thurman from Fremont. The other recruits are Debbie Dunant from the Netherlands, Belvia Moody of Ft. Worth, Texas, Michelle Milling of Oklahoma City, Stephanie Reed of Topeka, Kansas, Susan Samuels of Pittsburg, Kansas, Debbie Smith of Lake Station, Indiana, Yolanda Waddles of Denver and Cindy Mentzer of Roswell, Georgia.

Pepin said he was generally pleased with the

Huskers' recruiting season this year.

"We still haven't filled our need for a really outstanding distance runner," Pepin said. "We were in on the right people, but we just couldn't get them."

"We really filled some areas that we needed help in for next year. We didn't have a triple jumper this year, so we went out and picked up four, one real good one and three others who should improve and come on. We also needed and got help in the long jump because Von Sheppard couldn't be with us out there the whole time."

Sheppard, a sophomore from St. Paul, Minnesota, is also a member of the football team and thus unable to compete for the track team during spring practice. Sheppard finished third in the Big Eight outdoor meet with a jump of 25-6 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Pepin also announced that steeplechaser Marc Adam, who missed the outdoor season because of a bout with mononucleosis, will compete in both the indoor and outdoor events for the Huskers next season.