

Showdown with Allen spawns wisdom

# Columnist: Dull Nebraska equals dull person

There's just something about these mornings during the first week of fall classes. You can almost smell the leaves getting ready to turn colors, the apples waiting to be eaten and the books waiting to be read. The air is cool, crisp and refreshing after a long, hot Nebraska summer. When the wind messes up your hair as you ride your bike to campus you can't help but feel a tremendous sense of freedom and passion for living.

It's a time to be excited for all the possibilities offered by the semester ahead.

It's a time for confusion and new experiences.

It's also an easy time to become reflective and thankful for all the good things in life...

He was a man of contrasts. His red, curly hair hung off his collar, but his beard was always short and neatly trimmed. His sense of humor was dry and thoughtful, but he laughed a warm, hearty Fred Flintstone laugh. He was strong, always first pick at Daily Nebraskan football and basketball games, yet sensitive, charming his way into the hearts of everyone his life touched. His personality was somewhere between Winnie-the-Pooh and Tom

Sawyer. We read poetry together and took long walks into the night to climb fire-escapes and talk about literature, visions and girls.

## DYER mick

His name is Bill Allen. He was, and still is, an inspiration to me (to do what I'm not sure can be printed). He gave me the opportunity to write. He challenged me. He taught me.

One particularly memorable night, Bill and some friends and I were listening to Jimmy Buffet, drinking shots of whiskey and playing cards. Bill's hazel eyes had that familiar twinkle, which, more often than not, meant he was feeling mischievous.

"Mick," he said while leaning up from his chair to the sturdy old wood table, clearing a space from the loose papers, cards and empty bottles in front of him with the gentle sweep of one hand. He carefully placed his elbows on the table then folded his hands and rested his chin on them. Everything in the room had

stopped, only the strains of "Son of a Sailor," could be heard. All attention was on Bill and me. Everyone knew there was going to be a showdown.

"Is Nebraska dull?" he asked. Suddenly we were facing each other under the hot afternoon sun in the dry town square of an early Nebraskan settlement. His question shot at me like a deadly round from a Colt six-shooter.

I slowly moved the toothpick in my mouth from one side to the other. Everyone else looking on began to breath again, seeing that it was only a warning shot. I was still on my feet. I drew and shot.

"Well Bill," I said, pausing for emphasis, "the way I see it, a place isn't dull, places can't be dull, they're just there. People are dull."

The shot struck the ground between his feet, creating a dust cloud that partially obscured his vision. He shot again.

"But can't certain environments stimulate a person to experience more boredom than other environments," he said.

His shot missed its mark, hitting the bell in the town square behind me, the sound being carried across the prairie by the wind. I fired again.

"That's just part of the illusion that fools most people," I said. "You see what you

want to see and you hear what you want to hear, so, if you find Nebraska dull, you're dull."

I don't know if I hit Bill's gun or not, but it was on the ground behind him. Bill and I looked at each other long and hard. I threw my gun away. We both began to smile as we realized we had come to an agreement. Everyone was cheering from the boardwalks.

We slowly drifted back into reality feeling a little bit closer and a little bit wiser for it. Together, we drank a shot in the name of truth and had fun seeing who was better at cheating at cards.

Bill has since left school and Nebraska to see the world and seek his fortune. There was a rumor going around last spring, as rumors usually do about people who suddenly disappear, that Bill had been shot by a Paraguayan firing squad. But there are still letters and phone calls late at night. At any rate, no matter where he is, I'll bet he's not letting himself get bored there. The story of Bill Allen illustrates an important, yet often over-looked perspective for the optimum enjoyment of life — if you think Nebraska is dull, chances are you're just a dull person in general.



Buy your course packets from Astro's NOW...and we'll buy them back LATER!

Don't leave your money all tied up. When you're finished with your course packets, bring them back to Astro's and we'll buy them back. We know how important these packets are to you, but we also know how important money is to you. That's why Astro's is the only copy center to buy them back! Astro's Copy Center is the only place to go for your course packets and all your copying needs.

**Astro's Copy Center**

In the Reunion • 16th & W  
477-9011

Open 7:00am to 2:00am

We Accept Visa & Mastercard

August 29th-Sept. 10th  
College students ride free!  
Any LTS bus, anywhere in the city.

# FREE RIDE DAYS\*

# College Commuters

## GET AROUND BEST BY BUS!

SPECIAL PRICE  
20 RIDES ONLY \$10<sup>00</sup>

WITH THE **LTS COLLEGE COMMUTER BUS PASS!**

\*Student ID required upon boarding.

With a College Commuter Bus Pass you'll enjoy:

- ☑ Carefree commuting. Study or socialize — ignore the traffic.
- ☑ Carfree living. Leave your car and car expenses behind.
- ☑ Comfort and convenience. Ride in air-conditioned comfort to campus, downtown and all over Lincoln.
- ☑ Seeing the city. Explore by bus.
- ☑ Money-saving coupons. From participating merchants when you buy a pass.
- ☑ Downtown on a dime. Ride anywhere within the downtown loop, only 10¢. (Pass not required.)

Get your College Commuter Bus Pass today! Call 476-1234 or visit the sales outlet nearest you:

**LTS**

- UML City Campus — Student Union, information desk
- University Bookstore — Student Union, lower level
- Nebraska Bookstore — 13th & Q Streets, service desk
- UML East Campus — Student Union
- LTS — 710 J Street, upstairs main office