

DRAGONS, DRUGS & THE STORYTELLER

The Weekend in Preview

Author aims works toward troubled youth

BY DIANE BRODERICK
Staff writer

For most people, a drug-induced trip off of a bridge is the end of what could have been a promising life.

But for author Tom Frye, knowing someone who survived such a harrowing experience is what jump-started his writing career.

In the mid-'80s, Frye began working with four adolescents on probation.

One of the boys, after taking several kinds of drugs, jumped from a bridge in Lincoln's Havelock area in the early '80s. The youth survived, and when Frye was sent to talk with him he heard for the first time the teen-ager's visions of a seven-headed dragon.

The boy said he was going to hell when he died, but he was OK with that—all his friends would be there. He said it would be like a great party.

The experience had a tremendous impact on Frye, and it inspired him to write a book about at-risk children called "Scratchin' on the Eight Ball."

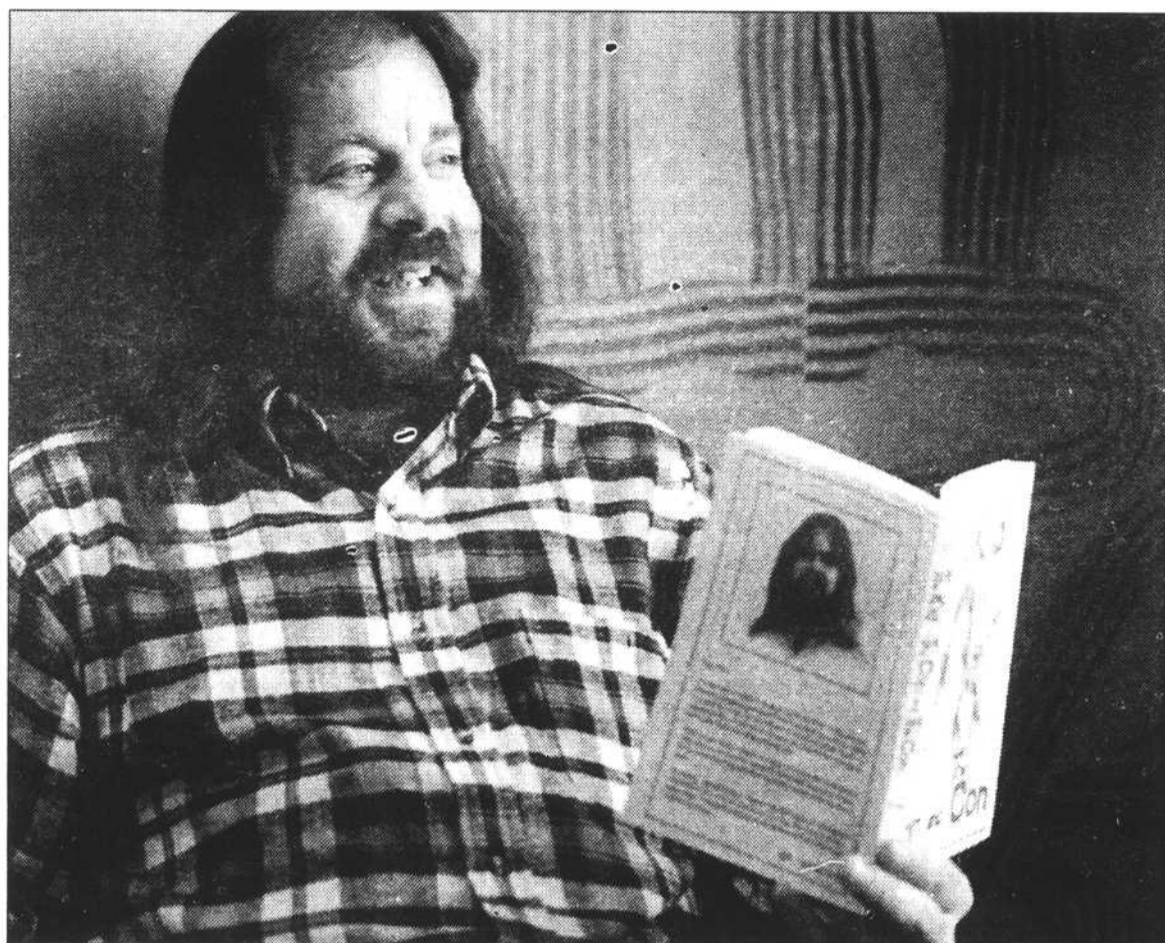
"That's when I started writing—when I got home that morning," Frye said. "I thought, 'Somebody's got to tell this kid you don't have to do what your friends do.'"

Frye has been writing ever since—for more than 15 years. He balances his time between working with children and writing books for them.

"Scratchin'" explores a 14-year-old's exploits with drugs and alcohol, and it examines the steps the character takes to cope with his problems.

Frye's impetus for writing it was more or less to reach children with a message—one carved out of experiences Frye himself has been through, he said.

Frye ran into trouble, including drug



TOM FRYE writes books to send anti-drug messages to at-risk youth. His first book, "Scratchin' on the Eight Ball" was inspired by the attempted suicide of a youth he worked with as a youth worker.

use, as an adolescent. In fact, it was his own probation officer who put him into contact with the youth who jumped from the bridge.

This first-hand knowledge makes Frye's message mean more to children, a colleague said.

"His own personal experience growing up—some of the things he went through as a youth—have taught him how to relate well, especially with youth," said probation officer Roy Nifoussi, who works with the Juvenile Probation Office.

"I've had many youths who have

been to his programs, and all have just raved about (Frye)," Nifoussi said.

The programs that Frye works with include daily classes with gifted students at Lincoln Public Schools, various storytelling activities he does around the community and work he does with at-risk youths through Family Solutions, a domestic support group in Lincoln.

But in addition to this work, Frye has made time to publish six books since "Scratchin' on the Eight Ball."

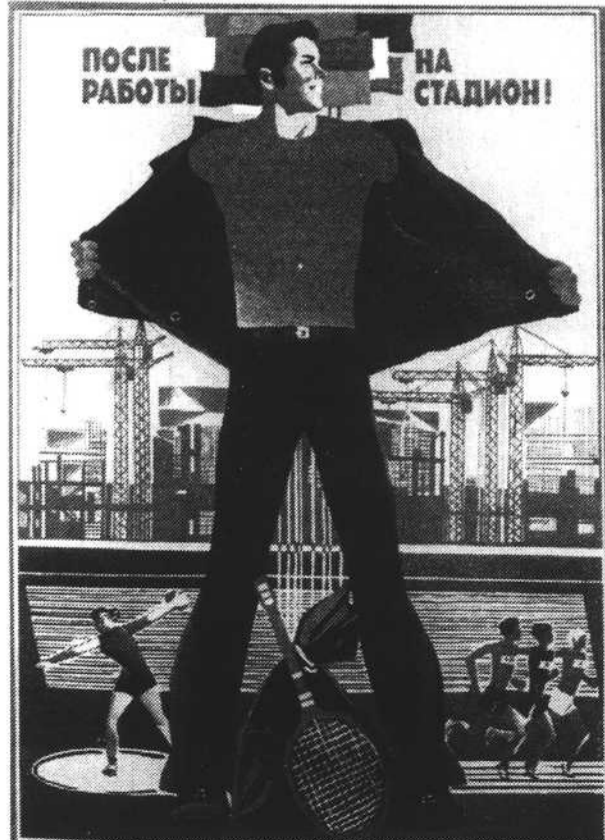
His follow-up book, "The Kid, the Cop and the Con," continued the adventures of the boy introduced in



Resident Writers
A semesterlong look at Nebraska literary culture and the people who create it.

Please see **FRYE** on 10

Soviet propaganda on display



COURTESY OF WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM
CREATED BY SOVIET ARTIST E. Arzrunyan in 1986, this propaganda poster reads "After work - to the stadium."

BY DANELL MCCOY
Staff writer

The faces of Lenin and Stalin jump out from every corner while the color red hangs from the walls like the dripping blood of revolutionaries past and present.

For those people who lived through the Cold War, the artifacts bring history into focus.

For those who know little of the Soviet Union, the exhibition serves as an experiential history lesson.

Through April 25, the Western Heritage Museum, 801 S. 10th St. in Omaha, is showing artifacts of 20th-century Soviet society and government in the exhibition "Darker Shade of Red."

The exhibition is dedicated to the various forms of Soviet propaganda art that evolved behind the iron curtain as a result of the world's first national-scale communist experiment.

"I think the exhibition gives a bit of a window into Soviet life," said Terry Keane, curator for the museum. "It is the difference between reading a book and actually seeing the things that affected the society and culture of the country."

Gallery Preview The Facts

What: "Darker Shade of Red"
Where: Western Heritage Museum, 801 S. 10th St., Omaha
When: Through April 25, Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 1-5 p.m.
Cost: \$3
The Skinny: Soviet Propaganda paints Omaha red

The display includes paintings, posters, flags and uniforms starting directly after the revolution of 1917 and continuing through the dissolution of the Soviet state in 1991.

"Most of the artifacts were commissioned by the government," said Deborah O'Donnell, director of education at the museum. "They were used as a way to preserve the ideas of the govern-

ment." Many of the artifacts sport the looming faces of Lenin and Stalin: the two most infamous leaders in Soviet history.

The paintings are mostly socialist realistic works showing the everyday lives of Soviet citizens. Topics include factory workers going to work, portraits of Lenin and Stalin and children involved in youth organizations.

The posters show the breadth of influence the government had over the people of the USSR. Some promote good citizenry, while others teach the people how to work with the government in a positive way.

Anti-West posters that came out during the Cold War broadcast detest toward political enemies, including the United States.

Please see **SOVIETS** on 10

The following is a brief guide to weekend events. Please call venues for more information.

CONCERTS:

Duffy's, 1412 O. St.
Sunday: Wally Pleasant

Duggan's Pub, 440 S. 11th St.
Friday and Saturday:
Grateful Dudes

Knickerbockers, 901 O. St.
Friday: Black Light Sunshine.
Clever, Lower Case i
Saturday: The Case Wicked,
Husking April

Mo Java Cafe, Suite D, 2649 N 48th St.
Friday: The McNeelees

The Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Hwy.
Friday and Saturday:
The Confidentials

Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.
Friday: Who's the Boss
Saturday: Mark Sallings and the Famous Unknowns

THEATER:

Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, 12th and R streets
Friday and Saturday: "Slam"
Sunday: "Life is Beautiful"

Museum of Nebraska History, 15th and P streets
Sunday: "Band Wagon" starring Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse

Lied Center for Performing Arts, 12th and R streets
Friday: "African Sanctus"

Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St.
Friday and Saturday:
"Oleanna"

Kimball Recital Hall, 12th and R streets.
All weekend: "Cosi fan tutte"

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Studio Theatre, Temple Building, 12th and R streets
Friday and Saturday:
"Childe Byron"

GALLERIES:

Burkholder Project, 719 P St.
Friday and Saturday: "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues," "Places in Europe"

Gallery 9, 124 S. Ninth St.
All weekend:
"Fruits of Passion"

Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St., Suite A
Friday and Saturday: "The Art of Jazz Photography"

Noyes Art Gallery, 119 S. Ninth St.
Friday and Saturday: recent works by Amy Sadle, Carol Sexton, Steve Settles, John Gillett, Olive Bishop, Bonnie Goochey

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets
All weekend: "New York School Installation"