Book defines what makes a Husker

■ **Nebraska native** works with NU Alumni Association to define what it is to be a Nebraskan.

BY STAN BEEDER
Staff writer

A native Cornhusker living in Ohio wants Nebraskans to tell him what it means to them to be a Nebraskan and a Husker fan.

Ohio University professor and Scottsbluff native Roger C. Aden, is working on a book – scheduled for release in late 2000 – that looks to tie the Nebraska history, landscape and football team together and define what it is to be a Nebraskan. To help diversify his book, Aden is working with the NU Alumni Association to seek contributions from Nebraskans and out-of-state citizens.

Aden is asking people questions such as: What makes someone a Nebraskan? How does the Husker football team contribute to the feeling of being a Nebraskan? How is the character of the state manifested in the football team?

"I don't want this book to be all about me," Aden said. "I want it to reflect the people as a whole."

Aden said the combined voices of many Nebraskans will give readers of his book other stories they can relate to.

"I am like the choir director. I have my own ideas, and other people's ideas just add to the strength of the sound," Aden said.

Aden is also inviting University of Nebraska-Lincoln students to contribute writings about how their hometown shows Husker spirit.

"I remember when I was in Scottsbluff, I couldn't go anywhere without hearing the radio broadcast of the game," Aden said.

Pride for the Huskers is not just confined to Nebraska, Aden said. Many states have formed spirit groups in order to extend the fan base.

"Many groups, such as Californians for Nebraska and Arizonans for Nebraska, formed as spirit groups and now have become more diversified to the point of recruitment of members from their state," said Glenn Cacek, building activities manager of the NU Alumni Association.

Former UNL student Judy Strickler said she has been a fan through the Huskers' good and bad years.

"I have been a Husker fan since the '40s," she said. "I have stuck with them through thick and thin. (My husband and I) had season tickets for 30 years."

The Husker football team serves as something that almost everyone in the state can identify with, Aden said.

The team brings people together and gives them something common to root for.

This shared element of culture and personal identity intrigued Aden and motivated him to discuss it in his latest book, tentatively titled, "There is No Place Like Nebraska: Homesteading and Homecoming Among the Husker Faithful."

Aden's main source of inspiration for the book came out of his past experience in the state and with a little help from his friends and family.

After graduating in 1989 from UNL with his doctoral degree, Aden took a job in Wisconsin as a teacher for two years. He eventually settled in Athens, Ohio, as an associate professor at the School of Interpersonal Communication.

Once he was out of Nebraska, he realized how much he missed his home state.

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> Ohio University professor

He couldn't pinpoint what he was missing until he and a co-worker, who was a Kansas native, started to chat one day about the Midwest.

Aden said he missed the wide-open prairie of Nebraska.

"I realized that I was feeling trapped and claustrophobic because of Ohio's rolling landscape," Aden said.

In 1994, Aden made his first visit to Nebraska since his departure in 1989.

He and his aunt, who was visiting the state for the first time in 20 years, attended the Nebraska-Colorado football game at Memorial Stadium.

He told his aunt what he was feeling, and she told him, "There's something about Nebraska that just sticks with you."

This quote stuck with Aden and inspired him to write about what he had identified in himself.

Aden has received some contributions already and is excited to read more, he said. Most of the contributions are accounts of personal experiences and stories. He said he was grateful for the response and support already shown.

Contributions may take the form of letters, stories, poems or any other written form.

Contributions may be used in their entirety or quoted from, with credit given to the source. Contributions should not be previously published, and submission expresses permission to publish.

People interested in helping can send contributions to Aden at Lasher Hall, Athens, OH 45701, or e-mail them to aden@ohio.edu.

Law & Order

Road rage incident suspected

Police said a Northeast High School student on his way to class Wednesday may have been the victim of road rage.

The 16-year-old student said he became aware of a white 4x4 vehicle following closely behind him while driving east on Cornhusker Highway. The white 4x4 followed the student onto 27th Street, police said, and then into the turning lane at Adams Street.

The student pulled into the turning lane in an attempt to let the 4x4 pass him, police said.

When the student turned, the 4x4 made contact with the rear bumper of the student's car and pushed his 1991 Hyundai Excel through the turn on to Adams Street, causing minor damage to the Hyundai.

The student then sped up on Adams Street and into a neighborhood parking lot at 39th and Adams streets, police said. While in the parking lot, the student's car became stuck on a parking block.

The driver of the 4x4, described as a white male, 6-foot-3 and weighing about 250 pounds, then stopped and got out of his vehicle and pounded on the student's car, police said.

After denting the car's hood and intimidating the student, the man returned to his 4x4 and fled the scene, police said.

The student escaped on foot and contacted police. Police said they did not know if the student had done anything to provoke the attack.

Man eludes police

A man eluded police Wednesday afternoon after a witnesses saw him masturbating near a local bike path.

Captain Al Soukup said police received a report of a white male with no pants on near the MOPAC bike path between 46th and 47th streets.

He was described as being between 20 and 30 years of age with light brown hair.

Compiled by senior staff writer Jake Bleed

Gore says Bush's plan on schooling is hurtful

SAN DIEGO (AP) – Vice President Al Gore took direct aim Thursday at George W. Bush's national education plan, saying the Republican presidential front-runner's proposal to strip failing schools of federal funds would "virtually destroy them."

"You cannot strengthen learning by weakening public education," Gore told more than 1,500 business leaders at the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's national convention.

"In many neighborhoods, public schools would be devastated" by Bush's school voucher plan, Gore said.

Gore, who is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, also took an unmistakable shot at Bush's views on gun control one day after a gunman's rampage in a Fort Worth, Texas, church left seven victims and the shooter dead.

Bush said Thursday that "a wave of evil" – not a lack of gun control laws – is the cause of rampant gun violence in America.

"We do know that the availability of assault weapons and deadly weapons in the hands of people who shouldn't have them contributes to a repeat in (such) incidents, to having these things happen over and over again."

Gore never mentioned Bush by name.

Gore has attacked Bush's school-voucher plan since Bush unveiled it Sept. 2, but the vice president's remarks Thursday were his most pointed criticism yet of how Bush would pay for his plan.

Bush proposed that chronically failing schools be denied so-called Title I federal funds that flow to classrooms in poor neighborhoods, and he would give the money to states, which would pass them to parents. They could use the money to pay for a variety of educational purposes, including private school tuition.

Bush campaign aides said his plans would require schools to perform.

"It's too bad that Vice President Gore has got such low expectations for public schools in America," said Bush campaign spokeswoman Mindy Tucker.

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