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**Capitol View**

***Commentary by J.L. Schmidt***

**Statehouse Correspondent**

**Nebraska Press Association**

**Dear Colorado, What Is Hatred Anyway?**

An open letter to Colorado.

It’s fitting that I am writing this on the 22nd Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on America, the day that hatred manifested itself openly on American soil.

I am writing about a now-past football game and the comments made by the showboat coach of the University of Colorado and his son the star quarterback who said to more than one media outlet “We don’t like Nebraska.” That comment is somewhat toned down from Saturday evening reports that he uttered that he “hated” Nebraska.

Given that neither father nor son has likely ever visited Nebraska, I feel compelled to pursue this matter. Since I was born and reared in the Nebraska Panhandle, I have been to Colorado numerous times.

Boasting of beating the University of Nebraska football team has, for the past few years, been laughable. I am sure that on a given day the Huskers might not fare well against the 2-1 Lincoln East High School Spartans, but that’s a matter for sports writers of which I am not.

The son said he took issue with comments made pre-game by Nebraska’s first-year coach Matt Rhule.

Brent Schrotenboer, writing for USA TODAY, said “It’s not clear if Rhule meant any disrespect or what exactly he said that offended Shedeur Sanders. But that’s how these Buffs roll – big chips on their shoulder pads and making things ‘personal’ even when there’s not much there to support it sometimes.”

Those comments Sanders referred to that Rhule made didn't single out Colorado by name, but the coach did take some issue with teams relying so heavily on the transfer portal and building their name with "hype," Schrotenboer wrote.

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Are we to understand then that the father and son don’t like the Husker football team and/or its coach? There are probably more than a handful of Husker fans that don’t like them either on any given Saturday. That post Osborne love-hate relationship has existed for years and was exacerbated recently when native son Scott Frost was coach.

If they don’t like Nebraska, that’s another story representing a slap in the face of everyone from the sugar beet farmers in the Panhandle to the cattle ranchers in the Sandhills and the corn and soybean growers in southeast Nebraska. That includes everyone from Chadron to Falls City and Benkelman to South Sioux City.

I went to a snowball fight at Folsom Field in Boulder in the 1960s and a football game broke out. I spent the second half in a warm bar called Tulagi that had been around since the 1940s. Since I didn’t own a stitch of red clothing in those days, I made it through the second half with some fellow bland dressing Nebraskans. I don’t remember who won that game.

Over the years I learned to love a trip to enjoy the so-so food but great atmosphere and entertainment of Casa Bonita in Denver. I enjoyed and still yearn for a slice of pie at Ginger and Baker in Fort Collins. Heck, I even liked the emergency room in Frisco where I went for treatment of food poisoning I had picked up in Grand Junction on a trip between Las Vegas and Lincoln. My wife and I honeymooned in Estes Park 48 years ago.

But never have I been subjected to the chants of “F--- Nebraska” encountered by Husker football fans who made the trip to Boulder. I have no doubt that was the atmosphere they encountered recently. That’s a shame neighbor.

The country has changed since 2001. Given the aftermath of the 9/11 events that killed more than 2,700 innocent Americans and the contentious presidential elections of late, George Floyd and other cases of alleged police brutality and a rash of mass shootings, things are out of whack.

University of Nebraska President Ted Carter, recently named as the next president of The Ohio State University, noted that things have changed in Nebraska. When he came to Lincoln in

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2020, he was known for his ability to persuade conservative and liberal constituencies about the value of investing state and private resources in higher education.

But that has changed. A more conservative Legislature increasingly puts university spending and actions in the political crosshairs, including public spats between former Gov. Pete Ricketts and former University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Ronnie Green.
 One thing hasn’t changed. Many Nebraskans remain proud of this mostly square fly-over state out west that some people couldn’t find on an unmarked map … and we like it that way.

So don’t be hating on us Colorado.

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*J.L. Schmidt has been covering Nebraska government and politics since 1979. He has been a registered Independent for more than 20 years.*