



night work

By Nancy Winans

If working an 8-5 shift isn't for you, you may consider the advantages of working at night.

Clifford Miller, a driver for Yellow Cab, has had the "graveyard shift" for five and a half years.

"I like the freedom of it," Miller said. "It doesn't interfere with anything."

Sun-down to sun-up

Miller said he has worked nights most of his life, because he has no problem sleeping during the day and he can bowl or have some time during the day to himself.

Driving cabs suits him, because, he said, he can take a break and get a cup of coffee if he feels sleepy or whenever business gets slow. In short, he likes his job.

People have had epileptic seizures in his cab. He sees his share of drunks, but he takes it all in stride with an easygoing attitude of, "if it happens, it happens". But it also works the other way. He recently met Isaac Stern, the renowned violinist, during his stay in Lincoln.

Miller, 57, speaks proudly of his boss, Charles Essay. "He's stern—you can't pull nothin' on him."

Married for 35 years, he is proud of his wife, Zetta, and then three children: Candace, 23; Cathy, 28; and Clifford, Jr. 33.

Miller retires in four years, but for now he's more than content to drive a cab.

Another of those who work the graveyard shift is Debbie McNichols, who is a donut maker at Dippy Donuts.

"I just can't get up in the mornings," she said. "I took this job because I needed the money and had worked for a bakery before."

Debbie starts work at 10 p.m. after the shop has closed, and into the next morning, until 7, after it has opened.

"I'm a night person, but I also like to stay up during the day," Debbie explained. It takes her a long time to unwind after work, she said, and sometimes she doesn't sleep for 24 hours, but she doesn't get sleepy at work.

"Once I get here, I'm all right," she said with a grin. The shop is pretty quiet when it first opens at 6 a.m. and it has its early morning regulars. Campus police, Lincoln police and Lincoln Transportation System (LTS) employees are usually the first customers, she said.

But Debbie likes the quiet shop at night and has the radio on to keep her company.

"I need the money," she said. And that keeps her working.

Only one filling station dividend is open in Lincoln 24 hours a day, and Phillip Bury mans it from 11:30-8 a.m. Bury, 21, said the opening at the filling station was the first "appealing job" he had seen. He also likes the hours.

But dealing with the public as he does, can be aggravating he said.

Bury estimated that 50 per cent of the night business is drunks and that it is a "pretty rough crowd, but pretty intriguing."

Bury squashed out another cigarette in an already filled ash tray.

"I don't like the sun, I like darkness," he said. "Working at night does change my social life, like missing parties, but it just hardens me to be anti-social. I don't mind it, or I wouldn't still be working here."

Bury has worked at Dividend for four months. Working alone is nice, he said, but since he sees at least 100 customers on weeknights, it isn't always quiet.

"I guess I must like this job, because I knew what I was getting in for and I haven't missed a day since I've been here," he said. "I could go back to a day job, but I have to keep myself out of ruts."

Another night worker is J.L. Cook, a Meadow Gold deliveryman for 22 years. With his jaunty black knitted cap and baggy white suit, he looks younger than his 60 years.

Cook has the 2 a.m.-3:30 p.m. shift. His route is the downtown campus area and his truck with its flashing lights is a well known sight.

Although the hours are long and lugging containers of milk up to houses can be tiring, he says there is nothing about the job he dislikes.

So why does he stay?

"You get used to it and keep going," said cook.

Acquainted with the Night
I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain - and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat.
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-by;
And further still at an unearthly height
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

Robert Frost

Nightowls' plight

11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.:

Theresa Vos, 21, UNL campus security guard Vos, a UNL sophomore theatre major, makes the rounds in the dormitories checking for loiterers and unlocked doors. Dressed in khaki-colored uniform and armed with key ring, she is the protective night-stalker for sleeping students.

"I like it. I like the idea of being up when everyone else is sleeping.

"At night you set your own pace. A slower-paced person works at night; basically a person who can be by themselves and enjoy it.

"During the day it's (working) a whole different pace. Time is so obvious. Lunchtime, breaktime and everything with other people. The day is so cluttered.

"Afternoon is the nicest part of the day and people give that part of the day away to work. When you work at

(Continued on p. 3)