

Arts & Entertainment

Duffy's owners revive old ideas

By Michael Hooper
Senior Reporter

After 30 years of the 9-to-5 grind, some folks want to settle down by owning a laid-back bar where "everybody knows their name."

Then there are those who can't wait that long.

Al Hummel and Reynold McMeen, former UNL students, are two entrepreneurs who didn't wait all their lives to own a bar. When Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St., came up for sale last fall, they pooled their resources and bought it.

"We were tired of wasting our talents working for someone else," said Hummel, referring to the partners' work as bartenders in another Lincoln bar.

Hummel and McMeen, both in their early 20s, haven't satisfied their entrepreneurial spirits simply by buying the clean, well-lit Duffy's Tavern. To make room for more seating, a pool table and possibly a stage, they took over LaShel's Restaurant Feb. 1. Since then Hummel, McMeen and friend Bruce Johnson have gutted the old restaurant next door and now are restoring its original brick walls and 17-foot ceiling.

The new addition, to be completed by Mar. 1, will be used for cooking sandwiches, stew, chili and other lunch dishes.

Laid-back atmosphere

Even with the expansion, one aspect of the 49-year-old tavern will remain the same — the simple, laid-back atmosphere that many longtime customers have enjoyed. The owners say the atmosphere brings in a diverse crowd — working class, retirees, UNL students, businessmen and politicians.

Whether in wedding clothes or work clothes, customers come in dressed as they are, Hummel said.

A big, plate-glass window faces O Street. Inside are a shuffleboard — which the owners claim is one of the best in town — and several booths

and tables. Behind the well-worn bar are the usual liquors as well as Hank, a bartender and staple at Duffy's since 1963.

"She is like an institution," Hummel said. "If Hank had not been here over the last several years, many customers may have left." Hank, whose real name is Henrietta, wouldn't give her last name.

Hank is modest. She said people come to Duffy's because it's a place where friends meet.

An old friend

A regular customer, Abby Moravec, likes to come to Duffy's because it's a friendly, homey place where she can keep up on what's happening with her friends. Abby, 79, said she has been stopping in Duffy's for a beer every day for nearly 30 years.

"Since 1958. No kidding," Abby said.

None of her 26 great grandchildren, 18 grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren live in Lincoln, so Abby said she likes to look after other friends' children.

"Like a happy family, I call them . . . No kidding," she said.

Twenty years ago, Hank said, Duffy's was popular among the college crowd. Now many alumni come back for a drink and a game of shuffleboard, she said.

One alum who still comes in is former Gov. Bob Kerrey, Hank said. Duffy's was one of the bars Kerrey and actress Debra Winger patronized, Hank said.

Traditional event

Hummel and McMeen have revived Duffy's Bar Association, a Friday afternoon club that was started by several UNL law students in the mid 1960s.

When the law school was on City Campus, the students would go to Duffy's on Fridays, drink, play shuffleboard and, when a week was tough, some would share their concerns with Hank.

"She got some of us through law school," said one patron. "She was



Paul Vonderlage/Daily Nebraskan

Young entrepreneurs Al Hummel and Reynold McMeen at home in Duffy's Tavern.

kind of like mom to everyone. She listened to their problems."

Hummel and McMeen have started other specials. Among them is Fish Bowl Night every Tuesday. For \$3.50 to \$5.50, depending on the drink, a

bartender will fill a half-gallon fishbowl with a drink and serve it with straws. Also, on Thursday nights, Duffy's serves Coronas for 85 cents.

Besides the new specials, Duffy's

is keeping its traditional Duffy's Burger, (a sloppy-joe), Irish stew and chili. These have been handed down from owner to owner, Hummel said.

"The tradition has been kept around here," he said.

'Dead Time Stories' — entertainment for a truly warped mind

By Kevin Cowan
Staff Reviewer

"Dead Time Stories." What's does that call to mind? Twisted veins, burning hands, Little Red Riding Hood — or maybe a psychotic Goldie Locks and the Three Bears?

I hope that Jeffery Delman wasn't aiming at a horror film. If he was, "Dead Time Stories" fails miserably. It wasn't scary. Twisted? Yes. The only "scary" thing about the film is the person who told Jeffery Delman his bedtime stories.

The film uses narrative — a child with the pre-bed jitters and an articulately lurid storyteller, — as a transition between three independent "bedtime stories." Of the three, the film gives a contemporary (I use that word loosely) gouge to Little Red Riding Hood and Goldie Locks and the Three Bears. The other is spun by Uncle Mike (the storyteller).

"Little Red Rinning'hood" revolves around a virgin who has designs to lose the virginal white. Interrupted during an erotic mirror scene, the heroine is sent to the drug store for Grandma's

Mallox. The package is mixed up with the drugs of a werewolf who is a heroin addict; thus the conflict. The whole thing ends up with a graphic claw scene at Grandma's house. The out-

Movie Review

come? Didn't your parents ever tell you?

The final story, "Goldie Lox and the Three Baers," is stranger yet. I wish they would have cut back into Uncle

Mike's dialogue. I can hear him tell the story: "And then, after baby Baer had sex with Goldie Lox, they walked romantically through the forest and baby Baer plucked the fingers from a severed and decaying arm murmuring, 'She loves me. She loves me not.'" Get the picture?

This film is Delman's baby. He wrote the screenplay and lyrics, directed, and had a minor role . . . must have had problems finding help.

"Dead Time Stories," as a horror film is bad. The suspense is so completely

predictable that you know when, where and how the object of suspense will enter. However, the film may appeal to one specific group, the warped of mind. At times the film is so bent and deranged you can't help but chortle loudly.

This amoral work violates all the values that were instilled into children through bedtime stories. It takes these fables and gnaws at their innards only to leave a steaming hunk of flesh shown against a silver screen. And it does so in such a way that it is pure insanity . . . in a funny way.

'Tourist Season' bizarre thriller minus icons and cliches

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

"Tourist Season," by Carl Hiaasen (Avon) \$3.95

"On the morning of December 1, a man named Theodore Bellamy went swimming in the Atlantic Ocean off South Florida. Bellamy was a poor swimmer, but he was a good real-estate man and a loyal shriner."

And so we're off and running into Carl Hiaasen's caustic private-eye thriller "Tourist Season," a novel that threatens to do for Miami what Raymond Chandler did for Los Angeles and Dashiell Hammett did for San Francisco. Whereas Chandler turned the heat blur of the City of Angels into the stuff of hard-boiled romanticism and Hammett transformed the Bay Area into a maze of dark rooms, dark hallways, dark

alleys and infinite dark corners perpetually obscured by fog, Hiaasen creates a Miami where mutilation, torture and ritual execution are as commonplace as retirement condos.

Hiaasen peoples this landscape with the most cynical potpourri of characters this side of Flannery O'Connor, people whose notions of right and wrong have been permanently numbed by heat, cretinous tourists, real-estate development, occasional hurricanes and casual vice.

The author himself hails from that most cynical of professions, journalism. A columnist for the Miami Herald, Hiaasen writes with the off-the-cuff know-how of a man who has been on the video-display-terminal side of the major headlines. It's obvious that often he's had to turn the cruel assault of an old Jewish lady retiree from Ohio, bales of marijuana floating in the Atlantic

and the mob-style slayings of impeccably dressed Cuban gentlemen into poetry. To the treasure trove of information at Hiaasen's fingertips about the underside of Miami, the author adds the grisliness of his own imagination.

The plot is loaded with macabre details, beginning with the pitiful

Book Review

kidnapping of Theodore Bellamy, a drunken shriner from Evanson, Ill., on an all-expenses-paid trip to Miami for a shriner convention. While his wife, Neil, looks on, Theodore is attacked by poisonous jelly fish the minute he steps into the ocean. He then is borne away by two men who claim to be lifeguards and is never heard from again. Bellamy's fez

eventually floats in on the tide.

Within two pages Hiaasen comes up with another whopper — Sparky Harper, president of the Miami Chamber of Commerce and creator of such tourist-bait PR slogans as "Miami Melts in Your Mouth" and "Miami — Too Hot to Handle!" Harper has been missing for a day, and his body is finally found stuffed into a piece of Samsonite luggage. His legs have been chopped off by some kind of wild animal; his body has been doused in Coppertone and dressed in a floral shirt and Bermuda shorts. The autopsy reveals the cause of death as asphyxiation from a rubber alligator lodged in his throat.

Events like this are commonplace in Hiaasen's Miami and they gradually become interconnected, not to mention twice as bizarre, as the novel unfolds. Because the law, from the coroner to the chief of police,

has become so anesthetized to violent crime, Hiaasen provides us with one virtuous character, Brian Keyes. Keyes is a squeamish ex-reporter who exchanged the stress of the newsroom for the leisure life of "staking out nooner motels with his 300-millimeter Nikon" in pursuit of adultery, that legal staple of divorce courts across the country. Keyes' squeamishness in the face of the sanguinary mayhem around him is his greatest virtue. Everyone else in the novel, besides the victims, of course, are so shell-shocked by living in a city that has "more mutilation-homicides per capita than any other American city" that they have reduced law enforcement to the gathering of statistics and gambling on the odds.

Each member of Hiaasen's en-

See TOURIST on 10