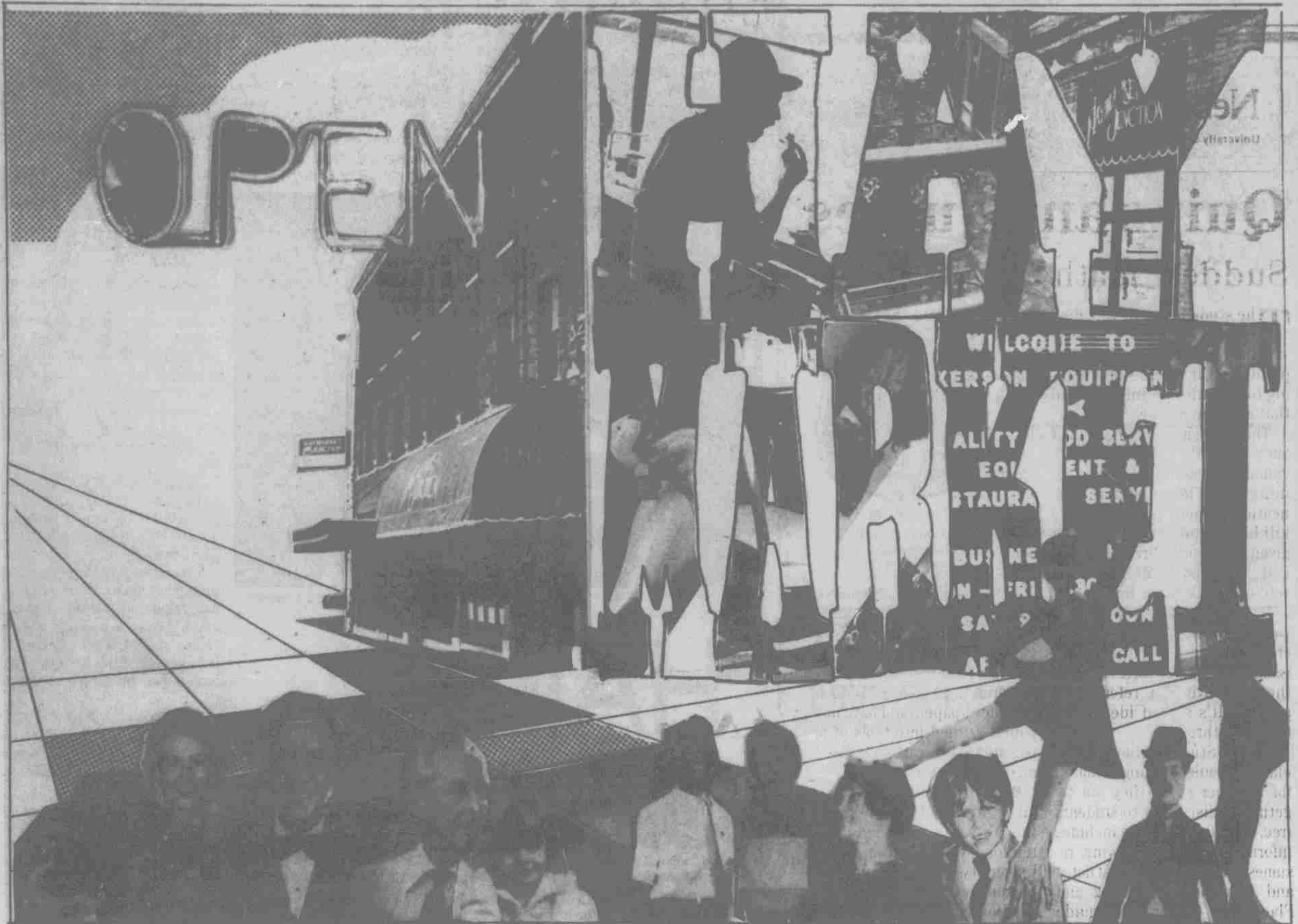


DIVERSIONS



John Bruce and Andras Hoy/Diversions

By Geoff McMurtry
Diversions

Sidewalk cafes in Paris. Rustic old buildings. Cobblestone streets. Restaurant windows overlooking the courtyard. Small shops, filled with old-world charm.

Walking through Lincoln's Haymarket district, it's easy for our minds to wander off into unknown, faraway lands of subterranean elegance. Within a small, five-block area we can find the kind of turn-of-the-century architectural atmosphere we wouldn't expect to see in downtown Lincoln.

The first step in our journey is getting across Ninth Street. While Chrissie Hynde purrs "Mystery Achievement" into our headphones, cars are dodged and the raging torrent is crossed.

The central part of the area is Haymarket Square, appropriately enough. We walk past Stooges, and there we are. We go inside the brick courtyard, where in warmer weather there are tables outside on the terrace. In the summer we would probably sit down at one and have a drink. Signs on either side inform us that the four buildings bordering this courtyard were built between 1884 and 1915. One was originally the Horse Collar Factory. These buildings are an integral part of the atmosphere and heritage of the area and help to make this section of town the unique landmark that it is and an interesting change

of pace from the redevelopment just down the street.

Bordering this courtyard are some of Lincoln's more interesting eating establishments. There's the Tubbery, where couples can have their dinner served to them in the intimacy of their own hot tub. Also in this area is the original Kuzu's Kebab, where you can get authentic Greek and Turkish delicacies like, well, kebabs. And baklava.

Around the corner the new age Silver Circle Bookstore offers spiritual guidance to those seeking a better way of life in the '80s. Also here is Buchanan's Pub, Paper Parade, a novelty and party goods shop and a few offices.

Walking out the back way, we come into an alley straight out of "Bullitt." Only a block long, the alley runs steeply downhill with tight turns at both ends, blocked off by ancient buildings on both ends and sides. Step back. Steve McQueen could be chased around the corner at any moment.

Following this alley down to the bottom turn, we come out at the loading docks along Eighth Street. Going around the warehouse takes us to Seventh Street. The post office is a couple blocks to our right, and the Amtrak station is across the street.

The inside of the train station is one of those places you could swear you saw in a movie once. High, ornate ceilings, marble benches — it's reminiscent of the main floor

of the Capital, without the mosaics but with a few train passengers.

Not finding much to do here, we go back outside. At the dead-end corner of Seventh and P streets is a large sign saying "Muldoon's Pub and Pizza." Next to this is the Hairem House.

Across the street from these, at the old Sidetrack location, is the Haymarket Junction. Here are five gift shops: the Pioneer Peddler, From the Heart, Burnham House, House in the House and Coffee Mill Antiques. These have items ranging from antiques to art, pottery, and other handmade items and collectibles.

Cute is a strange thing; some can't bear it and others can't live without it. These shops have plenty for both tastes, but From the Heart, which specializes in hearts and stuffed bears, is almost a heaven on earth for connoisseurs of cute. Also here in the Junction is the Sample Outlet Clothing Store and the Hair Market Junction salon. Back across the street again and up a block is the Haymarket Printer. We're nearly back to where we started.

On the corner of Seventh and P is one of the Salvation Army outlets, the best place to get party clothes nobody else has or suits to interview for jobs you don't want.

Directly across the street to the north is Sheppard's Business Interiors and the Candy

factory. This half block gets my vote for Lincoln's best sidewalk.

A block south are the bars: Oscar's, Peter McCue's and Sweep Left, along with the Fringe and Tassel costume shop and the busy parking lot in town under a real live expressway.

Here you can find Bluestem Books, Lincoln's most dignified bookstore, where you can browse for hours among the shelves of fine, old volumes, undisturbed by anyone except the proprietor's large son. But we're not going that way today.

On the street we go, back to Ninth Street. On the corner is the Lincoln Hilton, but we're not in need of a room at the moment. Next door, though, is the Haymarket Restaurant. Another block south is the Haymarket Art Gallery where local artists can display their works.

We've practically finished our tour. Perhaps now we could stop in at one of the many pubs or even one of the restaurants. We could go look at Steve McQueen's alley again. If it were warmer, we'd certainly want to sit at one of the tables in the courtyard. The tape is almost finished. "The City" is winding down, and it's starting to get dark.

We turn the tape over to "Clubland" and look back across Ninth Street's rush-hour traffic. We must do this again sometime, and soon.