

# iar tastes e summers

McCubbin



Doug Carroll/Diversions

years now, but only within the last school year I discovered both a King's and a Zesto miraculously surviving here in town. I've tried them both, and it's like my childhood has been reborn.

The last surviving King's, at 1650 Cornhusker Highway, has deliberately turned itself into a period piece. It sells itself as a nostalgic monument to a bygone age of restaurateering. This is a little depressing when considered in terms of my own mortality, but if I look at it objectively King's has become a rather wonderful place.

Posters of James Dean, Elvis and other '50s icons hang on the walls. The waitresses wear '50s-style uniforms. Classic rock'n'roll is all that plays on the sound system.

It's spotlessly clean, like King's restaurants always are. The floor is almost a work of art: big, square, black and white tiles polished until they shine.

The tables are sturdy and the booths are big and padded — none of those horrible plastic shells that the fast-food chains use to get you to give up your seat fast.

The food's the same as ever. Big, hand-patted burgers, generous fries, luxurious shakes, and you can even still get the mysterious Cheese Frenchie.

The only thing I really miss is those nifty telephones.

If King's has kept its menu and changed its style, the Zesto at 1100 South St. has done the opposite.

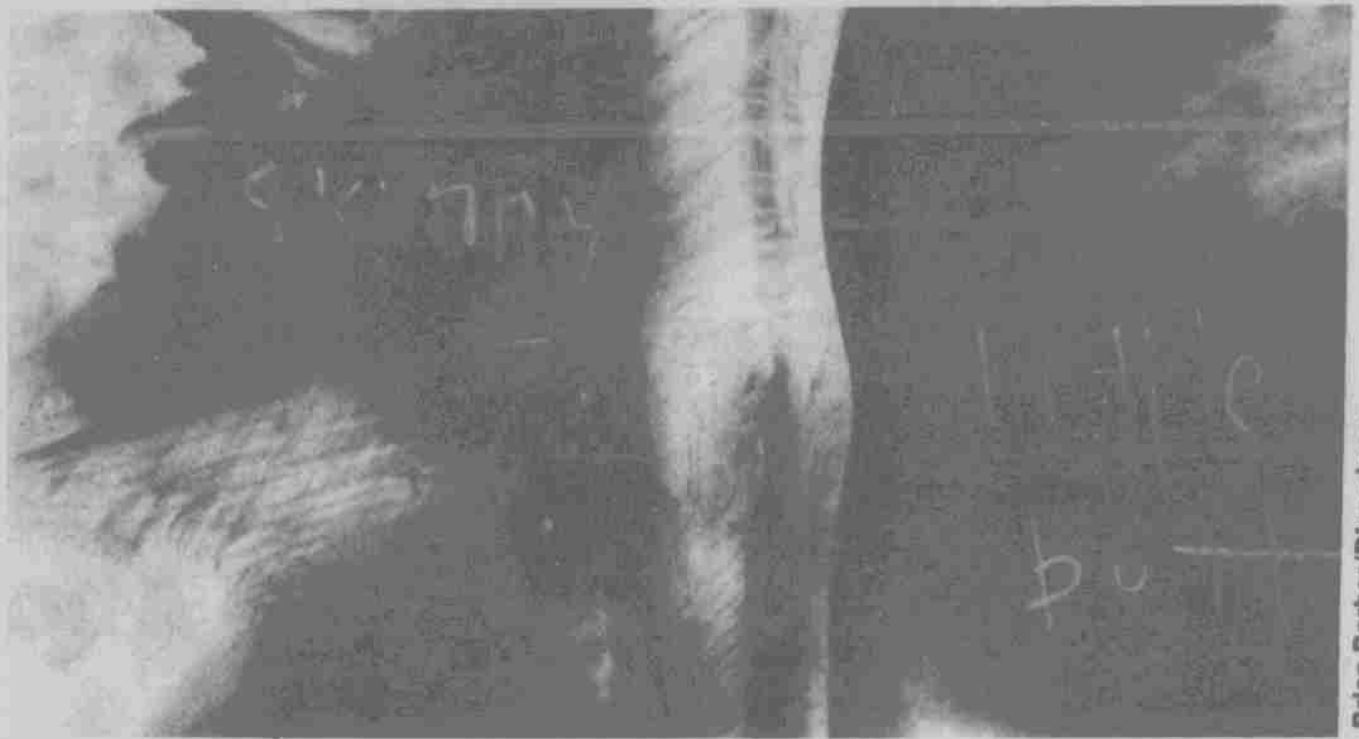
The Zesto is a drive-in in the classic sense. No interior tables, not even a picnic table. You buy your food and you eat it in your car or you take it home. The restaurant is only open during the warm part of the year.

You can't get a twist cone at the Zesto now. I don't know why. I wish I did. But the soft-serve ice cream is still flavorful and perfectly textured.

Picking up on a fast-food fad from a few years back, the Zesto offers several dozen different flavors of milkshake. My mint shake was grossly overflavored, but then I like my shakes grossly overflavored.

Entree selection is strictly limited. You got a big, juicy hot dog or a Zestoburger. Both cost less than a dollar. The Zestoburger isn't the tiny greaseburger of my childhood; instead it's a spicy little sloppy joe.

Stopping at the Zesto is sure to send you into nostalgialand, whether the drive-in you remember was called Zesto, Dairy Sweet or whatever. This is the perfect ending for a summer excursion to Pioneers Park.



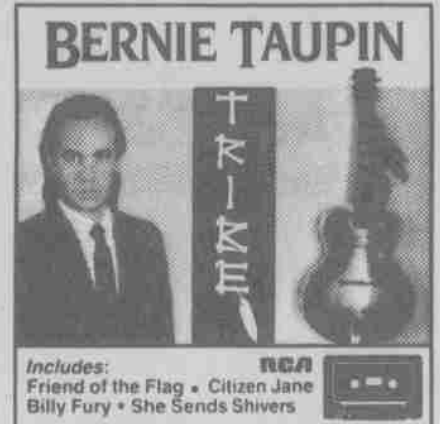
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