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Daily Nebraskan

Dutbound for drinks and the krawl home

By Kevin Cowan Staff Reporter

There you are sitting with a couple cronies in your usual bar: O'Rourkes, The Zoo, Chesterfields. You know, the krawl of the brown-bottle circuit. It's not the weekend, fortunately, so there's no weekend warriors to compete with for a good table. Al, the smilin' bartender, is standing behind the bar polishin' glasses quietly to himself.

"This is boring," you belch. "We see the same people on the same day, drinking the same old shoe polish. Christ, the same guy is playing "I Robot.' "

That boredom is the opportunity -the mistress of tavern innovation.

Beyond the domain of the haggard bar-vultures that nest in the downtown bars of Lincoln, lies a different breed of bar - the small town bar. And if approached in a pseudo-mature fashion, a small town bar krawl might be considered one of the benefits of hedonistic pursuit in the midwest.

Drunk Drivers might deem me worthy

an "intoxicating" bar krawl.

First, find a car. Sometimes that's the majority of the problem - all ambition and no means.

choose a direction. Make it simple on tender, Harry, of course, when talked to the first krawl: north, south, west or east. Decent bars lie on all points of the the college public relations babble, is map.

Let's say tonight the compass needle or map or the wind pulls you north. It's about 15 or 20 minutes to the Ding-aling bar in Raymond. A highly ruralized "hotspot," though the decorum is that of a mid-seventies Holiday Inn lounge.

Rivalous all-you-can-eat, fish fry competition with another town pump down the street on Thursday, might be Maybe you should go see for yourself. deserving of bar krawlers attendance.

another town.

ways to leave the city, safely, and have develop a fondness for a particular bar or bartender or not, the idea is to break away from inertia and move.

Right. On to Valparaiso.

Harry's Tavern. A corker of a rural pub. An elongated, always well-lit, With cushy '74 Bonneville en route, semi-conservative, tavern. The barin a rational conversational tone, minus full of all sorts of bar chatter.

> The most unique feature of Harry's tavern is the handy-crafts kept on display. Duane Pecka, a retired resident in Valparaiso builds exquisitely detailed tractors, trains and trucks from used beer and pop cans. Now, I don't immediately go topsy-turvy over every Ronco knit-o-matic or any other such craft, but this guy really does a good job.

Skuttle on up northeast to the happ-A drink, a pitcher or a shot. On to lest town near Lincoln (aside from Denton); WA-HOO.

That's one of the tricks of small town Down the empty Tuesday streets to bar krawl. Only stay for one, or at the the Last Chance Saloon. A type of pub I know, I know, Mothers Against most, two drinks. The nice thing about that combines the old death-riddled alcohol is the taste is damn near univer- west with a sense of humor. Iron-rod jail

phone coffin rests in peace at the end. humor will please your overly-urban The young bar executives who run the ears. tavern macabre tend to initiate conversation immediately: "Where ya from?" and that sort of thing. Best to order a large, completely frosty mug o' beer and banter about tavern jargon.

But let's say, instead of North, all omens and rhetorical debate lends the krawl to a southernly direction.

The Roca bar is seedy on the outside, clean on the inside, down to the soil and grain, pub. Nothin' much normally goes on, says the early-elderly bartendress. It's a nice quiet place to begin a small town bar binge.

Up around the road about 11 miles is the Princeton Tavern. No "foo-foo" drinks here. Vodka or whiskey. Of course, Ray the bartender/owner also stocks a reasonable line of mainstream domestic beers as well. The really intriguing factor in the Princeton Tavern is the archaic, semi-circular bar. Not many of those to be found. And with a working-class ethic. You have to stay in O'Rourkes and purge a few

of hanging for saying this, but there are sal from town to town. Whether you bars gate the front of the bar, a pay about horse races). His small town

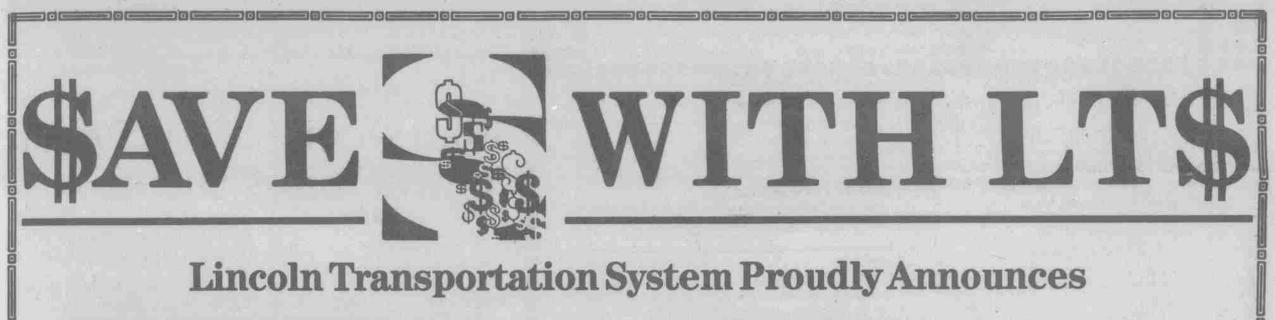
Well, there's two of the four points of the compass. My binge cohorts and I have traversed all four. I could go through and spoon-feed the experience to you, but I think this best be left up to krawling initiative.

P.S. A couple of hints for small town krawls:

1) The driver should not, as a mere guidelines, drink more than four or five beers and a couple of shots in the four and a half hours that bar krawls endure.

2) Only take three or four cronies on the binge. A large mob of young college transients will put any small town bartender on the immediate defensive. They'll probably serve you, but it doesn't please them an immense amount and it kind of destroys the purpose of wanting to get away from the same old faces.

So drink in the bottomless dregs, Ray? Ray's one of those Depression kids move forth on to different horizons or. . . be mildy plying before he'll talk (ask more beers for the walk home.





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