

The inside bits of Lincoln edition . . .

Inside Capitol building

By Jim Hanna Staff Reporter

coln with the towering state Capitol hanging on the skyline every day, it wasn't until I was about 15 that I first heard anybody refer to it as "The Penis of the Plains."

I'm not sure how I made it to age it during earlier visits. 15 without the phallic implications of our Capitol building slapping me in the face. I'm surprised that when I was 13 or 14 and in the throes of puberty, it still didn't occurto me that our Capitol looked like a petie.

I didn't realize the added touch of a sower spreading his seed from the tip of the Capitol until almost a year later.

pretty good command of the sexual nuances of nearly every building in the city.

With my sexual identity now secure, I ventured into the Ne-braska State Capitol last Sunday afternoon.

Here's what it was like.

under the main stairs. (The stairs were closed. I'm not sure why.)

Perhaps my favorite feature in the entire building is located inside the ground-level doors of all four entrances. About 20 feet in from the doors, there is a place where sounds like footsteps echo between the floor and the ceiling. I can't five minutes just groovin' on the avoided it. super-cool echo.

But there were other sights to

Straight down the hall from the north entrance is the Hall of Governors. (I don't know if that's the official name but it's what I call it.) wall. (Hint: It's our current gover- ciate it for its artistic merits.

boring because I look at it every time I go in. I'm not sure why.

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the west entrance. I call it the Hall these rather gaudy murals. Even though I grew up in Lin- of Senators. On the walls were yearbook-style pictures of every Nebraska senator since 1937.

It was interesting, but only because I'd never seen it before. I'm not sure how I'd managed to miss

I noted with a chuckle that Sen. Ernie Chambers had the same picture up from 1972 to 1986. I had visions of him vainly rebelling and refusing to have a new photo taken. I thought that was pretty cool. I P.J. Morgan looked like a real dork nice when he was a senator in the early

ar later. The four hallways that come in Now, I'm 22 and I think I have a from each ground-level entrance converge in the center of the building, where you will find the infor-



mation desk. I've always been in-I went in the north entrance timidated by the information desk. I suppose it's a holdover from my younger days when the people who staffed the desk were just there to pick on little kids.

"Where do you think you're going?! You can't go in there! Where are your parents?!"

Now that I'm an adult I suppose they'd gladly dispense information, rode in really describe it, but I spent about but I still was a little scared so I

> secondfloor where all of the action creaking around me. was, the main rotunda. I love the main rotunda.

This truly is an amazing place. Intricate tile art covers the floor and walls. I remembered when I was about 7 years old, I thought it was governor in Nebraska's history. Five so neat that a public building had thing from this level." points if anybody can tell me the tile pictures of naked women on name of the last governor on the the floor. Now, of course, I appre-

Some of the art that was way up on the walls around the rotunda and along the halls of the main about 25 feet up was a series of Actually, this hall was kinda on the walls around the rotunda

Fortunately, I made a new discovery in the hall that extends from back to this awesome structure, it's back to this awesome structure, it's

> But I can live with it. Since I'd seen the main rotunda about three zillion times, I didn't

stay there long.

I wandered around for a while and finally came to rest on a small bench in some interesting nook or cranny not far from the information desk. I made sure to be quiet so the information people wouldn't see me and give me a hard time.

I lay down on the bench and looked at the ceiling for about 30 also noted that current Omaha Mayor minutes. No big deal, but it was

> Finally, I decided I would leave and come back tomorrow for a visit to the 14th floor -- the highest point in the building that tourists can

On Monday, I returned. For variety, I entered through the west, ground-level doors. I passed by the Hall of Governors and climbed a flight of stairs to the second floor where I found an elevator.

I noticed that the elevators looked like crypts with automatic sliding doors, a none-too-comforting thought as you're about to enter and ride it a few hundred feet into

I got into one by myself and the doors closed. It looked really old on the inside. These are the kind of elevators Lizzie Borden probably

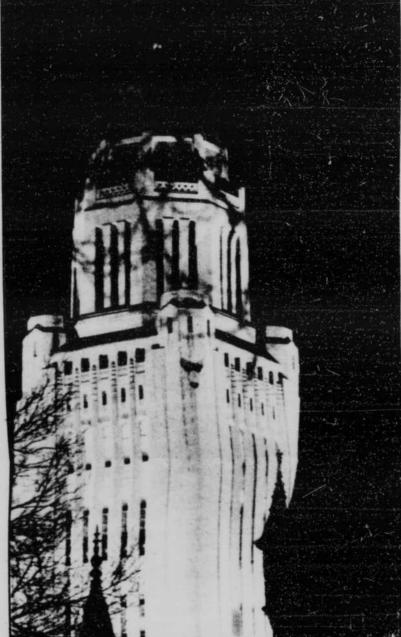
I rode the elevator up 14 floors with my Walkman turned all the I made my way upstairs to the way up so I couldn't hear the cables

I made it safely to the top and made the mandatory walk around to each viewing deck. The west side was closed for repairs.

I chose to heed the warning I read that said, "Don't drop any-

I quickly got bored looking at Lincoln from above and went into the rotunda area. This also is an interesting place.

hallway leading up to it almost engraved words. They ran a com-



David Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

The state Capitol at night

really know where it began.

Finally I deciphered it as follows: "With malice toward none/ With charity for all/With firmness in the right/Let us strive on to finish the work we are in/To bind up the nation's wounds/To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan/ To do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

It was from Abraham Lincoln's

plete circle around, with the last second inaugural address. I forword of the phrase running right back into the first word so I didn't notions I saw in his passage and chose to appreciate the wisdom o the rest.

Our city has a pretty cool namesake.

And with that comforting revelation, I decided I was ready to go. traveled back down to ground level and headed out the west exit.

The sun was setting, the weather was pleasant, and I was totally

centered. really love the Capitol building.