



Paul Tisdale/DN

Linden in Lincoln: Linden grinds as comrades move

By Mark Nemeth
Staff Reporter

Linden was in Rue de la Grind. He felt that he was feeling what no one else felt. He was alone and in Lincoln, fiscally challenged and without a job. He was in school, or with school, before or beyond school. His next class was a night class. He was frustrated with his life's lack of creativity or lack of creative productivity. He was stifled by the seeming lack of sophistication and complexity in the city, yet comforted by the simple negative energy of the Midwest. He was confusing many things with his feelings about Jill.

Like a loner, Linden looked down at the table when Gloria Hyst, once Linden's lover, walked into Rue de la Grind, wet. Now he wished to avoid her.

"Lame," Linden said out loud to himself.

Linden drank nothing from a cup once having held coffee. Human Sexuality was at 7 p.m. He thought about the Human Sexuality films he watched during class: elephant sex, horse sex, cat sex . . .

Jill was gone. She was with Chevec, he thought.

He felt a sense of exhilaration and sadness at the thought of Fred, Max, Edlin, Piper and Jennifer moving to San Francisco; sad because he would miss some of them and exhilarated because he thought the local social puzzle might fit differently. Like the removal of some pieces from the game Tetris, the changing of local cliques created a temporary promise of possibility.

Linden's sense of love . . . "Oh, I have no sense of love," he said out loud to himself.

"Linden," said Groover, in the vicinity.

"Groover," Linden said, looking up.

"Hey man, you're communicating with yourself. I always do that," Groover said.

Linden laughed.

"Maybe all four of us can get together man," Groover said, sitting and laughing.

"Hi Linden," said Gloria, her recently purchased cup of coffee dripping down the side of the cup.

"Hi," Linden said.

Gloria sat.

"Gloria, this is Groover," Linden said.

Groover smiled.

"Hi Groover," said Gloria, her eyes squinting. "You look familiar.

Have we met?"

"You both went to high school together," Linden said.

"Southeast," Gloria said.

"Southeast High School," Groover said, nodding his head briefly in agreement.

Gloria smiled, bonding vaguely with Groover as if they had just discovered that they both owned the same type of bicycle. She couldn't remember him.

"Are you going to Lincoln University?" asked Gloria.

"Man, I've got to tell you. Yes, I go there. But I'm moving to Telluride, Colo., to teach English," Groover said.

"Really? I didn't think you'd even graduated, Groover!" Linden said.

"Yah, man, I've got a master's degree, and taking classes has just been a hard habit to break," Groover said.

Gloria smiled and turned her head slowly toward Linden.

"Hi," Gloria said.

Linden thought she had asked him if he felt like he was a failure. He was silent.

"Everyone's moving," Linden said.

"Yah, I heard Fred, Max, Edlin, Piper and Jennifer were moving to San Francisco," Gloria said.

"Minneapolis," Groover said.

"I heard San Francisco," Linden said.

"They changed their minds," Groover said.

"Oh," Linden said.

"Did Cute Peter go with them?" Gloria asked.

"I do not know," Groover said.

Linden stood up and walked toward the counter of the Rue de la Grind, filled his coffee cup and put a quarter into the fish.

"Hi," Linden said to the woman with long hair and a bag of coffee grinds in her hands.

"Hi, Linden," the woman said.

"Are you going to the benefit?"

"Tonight? I don't think so. I have a class," Linden said.

"You should skip it, Linden; eight bands and poetry readings. It's only \$3," the woman said.

"Maybe I'll see you there," Linden said.

Linden smiled and walked back to Gloria and Groover.

"Let's drive," Gloria said.

"Where to?" Linden asked.

"I've got something for you," Gloria said. "Let's go."

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