

Not hot for a crowd? Check out cool cities



PETE MARHOFER is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

Spring break offers students a chance to do much more than go to the usual hot spots with crowded beaches, \$15 cover charges, and the lingering smell of urine and vomit. There are some great values for students who would like to go someplace new, but not necessarily warm.

The best value for your money is to drive to Kansas City, Mo., and fly to San Francisco. Western Pacific airlines offers a round trip fare of \$127, based on a 21-day advance purchase.

San Francisco offers a wide range of cultural diversity with many clubs, art, and historical districts. A Napa Valley wine tour is a must, offering samples from America's best winemakers.

A drive down the Pacific Coast Highway, featured in movies like "Vertigo" and "Basic Instinct," gives spectacular views of the California coastline. Dinner at Fisherman's Wharf will offer a chance to get some great seafood. Cable cars offer easy transport around the city. Hotels, except for those downtown, can be reasonably cheap.

Southwest airlines offers great fares to Chicago and St. Louis, two of the Midwest's greatest cities. Based on a seven-day advance purchase, round trip flights run as low as \$76 from Omaha to St. Louis, and \$98 to fly into Chicago Midway.

St. Louis has a great subway system that allows quick access to the

downtown and entertainment districts. St. Louis can put any spring break hotbed to shame with its 4 a.m. bar time.

The Landing offers a slew of different bars and dance clubs to keep a visitor entertained. Its historic jazz clubs are some of the Midwest's best. The Gateway Arch is a must-see, giving a great view of Missouri and Illinois. Hotels surrounding the airport can be very inexpensive, and the Metro is a quick 20-minute drive downtown.

"St. Louis offers a lot for a person to do. From taking a Budweiser Brewery tour, seeing the Arch, or listening to some of the great music that we have here," said Maureen Rone, who works in the visitors' bureau.

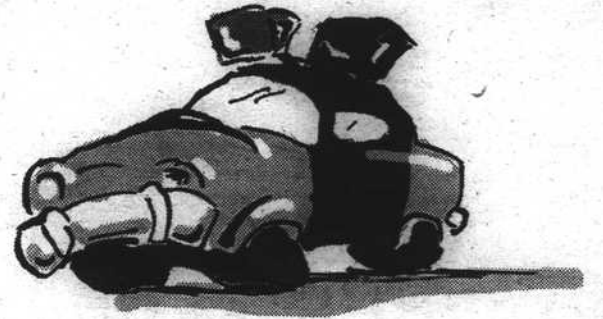
Chicago offers everything to a visitor. Great restaurants, bars, clubs, sports and history. A Chicago spring break can be very expensive, but if you take advantage of all the low-cost offerings, you can have a great vacation.

The Museum of Art is free, as is The Museum of Science and Industry. Tickets for the taping of the "Oprah Winfrey" or "Jenny Jones" talk shows are also free and can be obtained by calling the studio in advance.

A trip to the top of the Sears Tower is inexpensive, and on a clear day offers a view of four states. The Aquarium is inexpensive and offers a good look at the fish of the Great Lakes. Chicago's bars and clubs offer a wide variety to satisfy anyone.

Chicago's elevated train system makes commuting around the city quick and easy. Staying in a hotel near an elevated train route, will make a quick commute to anywhere in the city.

For the sports aficionado, the Final Four falls on March 29 in Indianapolis, a short 10-hour drive. Obtaining a ticket is difficult, but the atmosphere will be worth the trip.



South Padre Island police promote 'partying smart'

By ERIN GIBSON
Senior Reporter

South Padre Island, Texas, is a spring break legend thanks to the week-long, drunken parties it hosts for college students every March.

The island's tourism industry spends months on publicity and invites everyone to enjoy the wild, "don't-tell-your-mama" fun.

But business owners aren't the only ones who will welcome you to the island.

So will its police officers. E.E. Eunice, police chief of the South Padre Island Police Department, said spring break's rampant partying presents few problems for island police officers.

"We accept this as part of the tourism trade," Eunice said.

Eunice said students are welcome to join the island parties.

"We're generally very tolerant and understanding of people who are intoxicated," he said. "We want them to party smart, and we want them to have a good time."

Between 135,000 and 150,000 people are expected to visit the island during spring break, and share

the island's 6,000 hotel and motel rooms. The heaviest traffic comes in mid-March, during the "Texas weeks," he said.

During these weeks, about 300,000 university students in Texas are out of school for spring break. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln will miss the heaviest tourist time with its late March break, he said.

But even at the end of March, the extra tourist traffic means busy police officers, Eunice said.

As a result, island police do not interfere with party-goers' revelry, unless drunken tourists become dangerous to themselves or others.

Eunice said sober students are often trusted to take care of their intoxicated friends, and only combative, belligerent or disorderly tourists should have a conflict with the police.

Underage drinkers also present a slight problem for island officers, and those caught by a police officer will be prosecuted, he said.

"If they do it long enough they're probably going to get caught," Eunice said. "But it's not something we target."

He said bar owners take care of

about 95 percent of the underage drinking problem.

But all those drinking should remember to keep their I.D.s handy, he said, and remember to "party smart."

Eunice said the island is generally safe for party-goers, but police are still concerned about safety.

Eunice said students should remember the following "party smart" tips:

■ Use the buddy system when out partying. To help avoid assault, women should be extra careful to keep a friend nearby if they're drinking, he said.

■ Know limits on alcohol consumption.

■ If driving a car to the island, assign a designated driver, Eunice said. Otherwise, taxis will drive students anywhere on the island for \$3, and free shuttles run to popular bars and clubs.

■ Don't go to strange condominiums, hotels or motels with people you don't know.

If students keep in mind those tips, South Padre Island should be a great spring break trip, he said. And the police will help remind you to enjoy the party.

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