

# dinkytown



students hippies  
crowds in restaurants

## small town friendliness

by Karen Jarvis

Students, Hippies, Crowds in restaurants, Old men and cranky ladies eating cereal and toast in Bridgeman's, Sexy waitresses in Sammy D's, Boots and clothes in small shops, Spring—"Medium Cool" with cold weather.

Dinkytown is unique. But more than that is in a unique location. It combines small town friendliness with big city style, fast food places and traffic jams.

The roots of the intellectual and radical community are there with the staunch Stenvig supporters and conservative businessmen.

There is a good police force. The officers are friendly and helpful—more so than in other communities. When I neglected to report me for not having my driver's license or my glasses. However, one other time I wasn't so fortunate. A patrolman threatened to give me a ticket for going through a red light on my bicycle at 2 in the morning.

What makes Dinkytown like the rest of the city is the grave traffic problem. The tremendous population of student drivers adds to the regular city traffic and makes for a chaotic world. And there is a ten track train yard running right through the middle of Dinkytown.

The main emphasis of Dinkytown are the stores and the shops. Some of the older ones have been there for over 20 year.

When you walk into Sammy D's you immediately feel at home in the small restaurant, where crowds at any time of the day are not unusual.

Italian music blares out from the juke box.

The walls are covered with paintings and photographs and newspaper articles. In the corner there are several autographed pictures of football stars.

Sammy D's is a fine Italian restaurant. The food is distinctively good and distinctively Italian. "Mama" D, a short plump, gray haired woman with a strong accent makes some of the food herself and also helps to serve it. The huge yeast donuts she makes are deliciously covered lightly with sugar.

"Mama" D keeps her waitresses in line by yelling at them. But she is yelling only as an Italian mother to her daughters.

When you are depressed or sad, Sammy D's is a good place to go. You can always find someone to talk to. It's easy to make new friends. One day I came in alone and sat down. A few minutes later a young man, about 20, came up to me and said: "Hi, I want to meet a new person every day and today I'm meeting you." He smiled. At first I didn't know how to react to him but I finally gathered up enough guts to introduce myself. We talked about music and art and our lives. He said he was an artist. I told him I was a student. When I was finished eating I said goodbye and was on my way.

Another time I met a couple of freaky high school kids there. They are my best friends now. What a small world it is.

Some of the waitresses are old friends from the radical movement. I can get a little extra care taken to my roast beef sandwich or spag-

getti. And maybe some extra bread and a fee glass of lemonade.

Proceeding on my way, I go across the street to Bridgeman's for a maple-nut ice cream cone. It looked the same as ever when I went in. The same lonely old ladies and men are there ordering the same cup of coffee and saying the same things: "The weather is really nice, but I think it's going to rain. The clouds are dark gray."

"This toast is overdone. And you gave me too much ice cream. I only wanted a very small dish."

"You know the newspaper says Nixon is taking some troops out. I don't know what this was will come to." It is like an absurd play being repeated over and over again with no seeming beginning or end. A few freaks sit in the corner booth laughing. Nothing is different.

When I worked in the place last year I liked waiting on the people and talking to them. But the boss was mean.

He would stand there with a lit stogie in his hand and yell at me for taking a few minutes off to talk to customers. He teased me about the pipe I smoked. "What have ya got in that pipe, anyway Karen?" he said, slowly raising his eyebrows. I didn't answer.

One night near closing time when I was cleaning up, the one customer left in the store started to talk to me about his wife as if I was a good friend.

The old man, with a wrinkled face sipped some of the black coffee from the cup and set it down still grasping it tightly with his hands. Casually and without show of emotion he said:

"My wife died last week and I got the death certificate today."

I felt sorry for him with as much feeling as I could with the boss towering over me, yelling at me to hurry with my work. I wanted to talk to the man but by the time I was finished with my work he was gone. But he'll probably be back again, I hope.

The Taco Factory is a fairly new restaurant, but it doesn't do much business. The owner, Ted, a young Mexican fellow, is a good friend of mine. I worked for him for a while but was layed off during slow months. I first met Ted when I hitched a ride from him last summer. I talked to him about the draft and the war and the schools and by the end of the ride he was a convinced radical.

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