

Local spots provide diverse night life

By Marsha Larsen and George Yanoshik

When a size 16 course load strains the seams of your size 10 term, blow off a few pounds at the night spots in the Harrisburg area. Contrary to popular belief, nightlife does exist in the here, and following are some styles to choose from.

TRIED-AND-TRUE: As the term implies, these clubs have survived fads, trends, and tests of time. Heavily advertised, their names immediately pop up, or should pop up, when someone suggests, "Let's go out."

Cahoots — Wicker chairs and dim lighting set the mood for an evening of laid back dancing or listening pleasure. Entertainment is booked for several weeks at a time offering a unique blend of oldies, Top-40, disco, etc. Bookings there allow you to return over and over again when you find a band you like. Enjoyable for all ages. Marriott Hotel, Harrisburg.

Metron — This cavernous retreat for the trendy crowd has recently re-opened after being closed several weeks for "renovations." Popular local bands such as the "Sharks" appear for enthusiastic and jumping crowds. South Cameron Street, Harrisburg.

The Mariner Inn — "Tacos and Tequila" and "Beat the Clock" nights in the lounge with D.J.'s from local radio stations are dessert to the seafood specialties served in the dining room. Photo I.D.'s are required and take-out menus are available for those who choose not to stay. Route 230, Middletown.

V.I.P. — The Ghost of Disco Past rattles its chains here. In the back of this "entertainment complex," you can still see girls in skin-tight jeans and high heels thump-thumping on a lighted plastic disco floor. Live bands perform in the flashy front section, appealing in a chrome-and-glass sort of way. The V.I.P. is home for a set of state-worker sophisticates. Some might say it's for strivers. Strawberry Square, Harrisburg.

UP-AND-COMING: Tired of mainstream spots like the V.I.P.? Try these places. They're more California than New York in flavor — wood and plants as opposed to cold chrome and leather.

Syd's — As clubs in the heart of town tend to be, Syd's is just a bit overdone with multiple bars and carpeted levels. But it's smaller and more laid back than Metron or the V.I.P. People don't necessarily come here to be

seen. The happy hour crowd has a few years on the crowd at the V.I.P. Holiday Inn, Center City Harrisburg.

Van Zandt's — New Hummelstown rock club featuring popular live bands from Philadelphia, York, and virtually all over the area all month long. Its rustic interior, which is still being renovated, provides the setting for some high-powered dancing and listening excitement. Catering to the 21 plus rockin' crowd. Across from Indian Echo Caverns, Hummelstown.

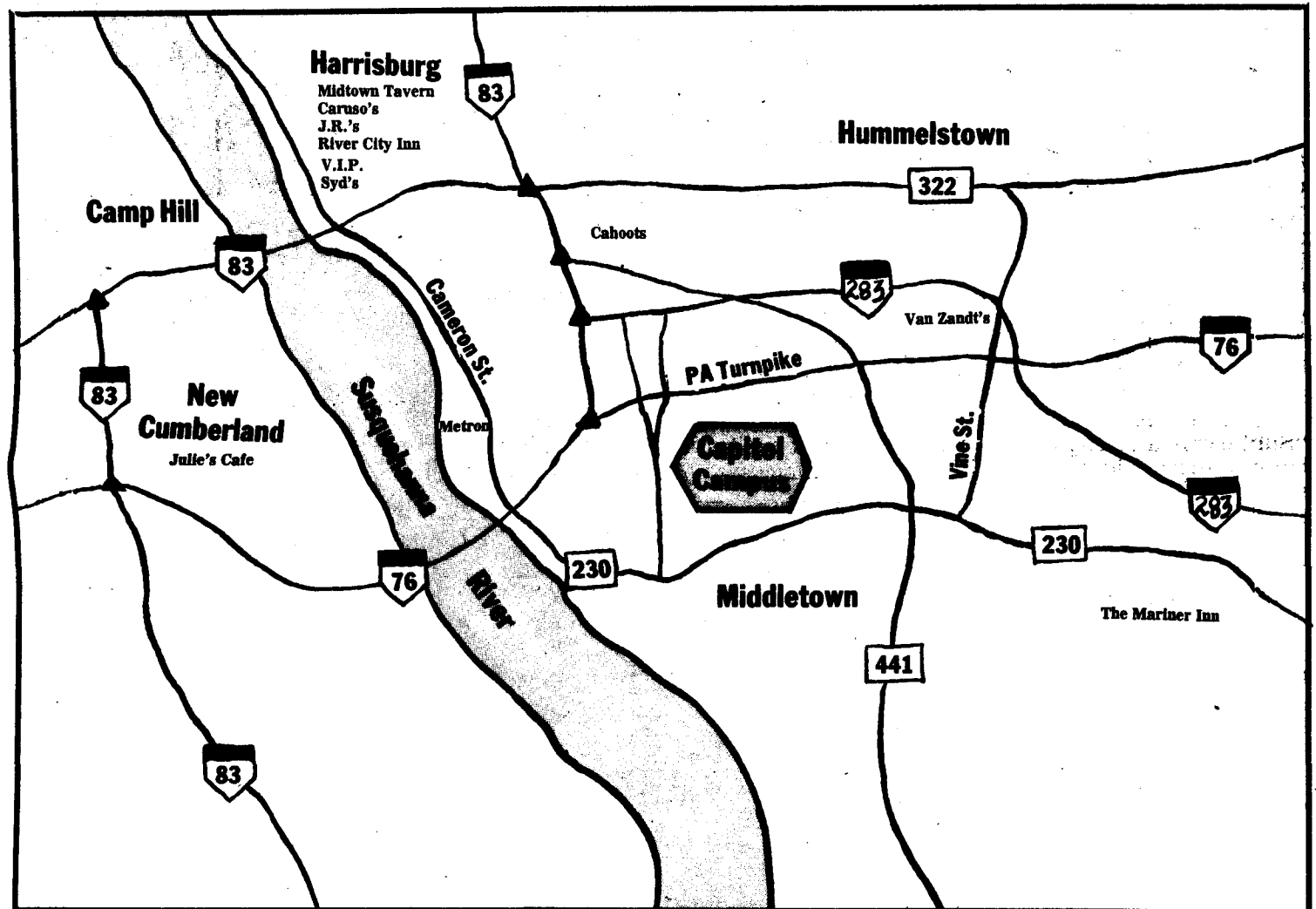
still jumps on Tuesdays but, alas, without "Animal." He's sorely missed by the crowd who used to enjoy his sartorial surprises. At 114 Bridge in New Cumberland.

Midtown Tavern — Renovations (from the inside out) only got as far as the front door. Don't let the exterior put you off; inside, this place is fine. The Midtown really is a tavern, more and more known for its Greek gyros (pocket sandwiches). During the week only the jukebox blares, but on Friday and Saturday nights, live groups play to

frequent these spots. Their toes will tap only to bluegrass and to Nashville and Texas strains of C & W.

J.R.'s — Pure out-of-the-way pleasure. The bartender's friendly as a Southerner and the waitress swift as a ropin' horse. Some describe J.R.'s as seedy, but regulars prefer to say it has character. At 3914 North Sixth Street, Harrisburg.

River City Inn — River City's new; its crowd's mixed and boisterous; and its payment policy's ridiculous: you can't run a tab. But when you're not dig-



Graphic by Karen Muro

Zee's — Former home of Dante's Downstairs, Zee's is a 50/50 proposition. It's half eatery and half bar. Jeans here don't have to be paired with silk blouses or designer blazers. Hiking boots are allowed. Cedar Cliff Mall, Camp Hill.

OUT-OF-THE-WAY: The level of sophistication of a bar anywhere can be measured by the difficulty of locating its restrooms. The more sophisticated (because of mirrors, partitions, or other interior decorations), the more difficulty. The restrooms at these places are not hard to find!

Julie's Cafe — Two things used to distinguish Julie's. First, it was the only club in the area that had bands on Tuesday night, and second, it's the only club that had "Animal" the bouncer — a huge, bearded guy who changed outfits every time the band took a break. Well, Julie's

the motley-est crowd in Harrisburg. In the 1100 block of North Second Street, Harrisburg. (Right across the street from the Castaways Massage Salaon. No kidding!)

MOSTLY MELLOW: For those who only want to drink quietly and listen.

Caruso's — Most know it as one of the best restaurants (northern Italian) in town. It has a bar, too. Upstairs and to the right. Formerly open to restaurant patrons only, the bar now welcomes those who show up just for the jazz. Caruso's, stylish and small, attracts some folks nearly as old as the brandy it serves, also jazz buffs of any age from 21 up. At 310 Chestnut Street, Harrisburg.

KICKER BARS: So named because of the s*#t kickers who

gin' for change after every round, you can swing your partner to live music on the good-sized dance floor, or play pinball and Pac-Man in the game room. Yep, right here in River City, the 3500 block of Upper Walnut.

So, whether you're into dancing up a storm, relaxing over a nice dinner and drinks, or sampling a variety of different flavors of music, the Harrisburg metropolitan area has a nightspot for you! The places mentioned above are not all-inclusive. They can serve as your starting point for a night out relieving some of the pressures and anxieties that may build up during the week. Word of mouth, they say, serves as the best guide for finding "the places to go" in any area. You now have a few of our suggestions. Go out, have fun, and enjoy. There IS a place out there for you, regardless of your tastes!