

yourself with thousands of books that cover almost every topic imaginable. Each book has the potential of taking you to places you've never been and expanding your mental boundaries. But the best part about the library is finding that great book then slipping into that quiet corner where you can disappear into your own world. (Edell Fiedler)

BEST YODELER:

"Lonesome Ron" Affolter, he of the many songs in many styles. (John Rezmerski)

BEST SPOT FOR OFFSITE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Dunn Bros. on the Hilltop. Good atmosphere, perfect floorplan, good sandwiches with your high octane coffee, lots of other folks doing the same thing. (John Rezmerski)

BEST SUPERMARKET BAKERY:

Hilltop Hy Vee
Serious bread for serious eaters. They understand that crusty bread in various flavors doesn't need to be limited to baguettes, and doesn't necessitate a trip to a separate store. Panera's has a bigger assortment, but HV is just as good for flavor and texture. (John Rezmerski)

BEST LOCAL BAR TO CATCH AN ESCAPED SEX OFFENDER

Spinners Bar in North Mankato
(Nathan Wardinski)

BEST SECOND-HAND STORE:

Again
A wider range of stuff in better condition, and a cheery uncrowded atmosphere. (John Rezmerski)

BEST MOVIE THEATER:

Carmike Cinemas
Located in the University Square, Carmike features digital projection,

stadium seating, and an excellent sound system. Its auditoriums are clean, the films consistently run on time and glitch free, and non-film related commercials are kept to a minimum. (Nathan Wardinski)

FUNNIEST LOCAL RADIO PROGRAM:

"The Five Count" on 89.7 KMSU FM
Although Tim and Shelly of "Shuffle Function" have a great musical mix, the funniest comic duo on the local airwaves are Dustin Wilmes and Ton, hosts of KMSU's Saturday night program "The Five Count." The humor of the show goes beyond the two of them, extending out into the community with listeners who call in. The show's combination of idiosyncratic music, colorful conversation and a deadpan sense of irony that Mark Twain would be proud of makes "The Five Count" a community-wide inside joke open to all who wish to listen. (Nathan Wardinski)

BEST LOCAL DJ IN A BAR:

Mark Holman, Mettlers
It might seem an unusual pick, but Mettlers' DJ Mark Holman crosses the threshold from simply being a DJ to a full-fledged entertainer. Watching Mark work, one gets the impression of a ringmaster in a circus, directing audience attention, transitioning between acts, and coordinating events. For those who pay attention to this sort of thing, Mark's mixing of tunes is flawless and he demonstrates a gift for entertainment with an impeccable sense of comic timing and his ability to build rapport with dancers and audience members alike. (Nathan Wardinski)

BEST BAR SERVICE:

Blue Bricks
The staff of Blue Bricks is consistently on top of things, providing service quickly and always with a pleasant, gracious attitude. Their kitchen is open

late and the food is some of the best in downtown Mankato, scrimping neither on quantity or quality.

BEST FITNESS CLUB

X-Force Fitness

Looking for a place to get in a few cardio sessions in each week, free from the pressures of the gyms packed with preening, posturing muscle heads? A small club, X-Force Fitness always has machines available and is never overcrowded. The membership fees are extremely cheep and the staff is always available and willing to help. X-Force Fitness is a great place for those of us trying more concerned about our health than our ego. (Nathan Wardinski)

BEST TRAFFIC LIGHT TO AVOID WHEN YOU ARE RUNNING LATE:

Stop light on Cherry Street at Riverfront Drive

I am sure the engineers have a great reason for making this light so long, but I always hit it at the worst times and am forced to sit there, cursing at myself for taking this route, and watch the walk signal count down . . . 10, 9, 8, 7, 6 . . . (Cathy Tatge)