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Staff

Q's clients march to own beat, with shoes

by Chris Drosner

\* Bar: IQ's

\* Address/phone: 715 S. Broadway, Green Bay (920) 437-1504

\* Open: 4 p.m. daily

\* The scoop: Just down from the Broadway district's main drag is IQ's, a bar that wouldn't seem right on any main drag. Located nearly under the Don A. Tilleman Bridge, the bar is an unqualified unique experience in the Green Bay area.

Owners Bill and Sandra Hickey have made IQ's a fun, intimate meeting place with a powerful good vibe. Candles and incense sometimes burn behind the bar. Upstart local musicians perform practically in the crowd, which often spills into the ill-defined stage area. Dreadlocks and sandals are rarely in short supply.

But when IQ's opened in October 1998, sandwiched between the slick upper Broadway district and rough-and-tumble lower Broadway, the bar struggled to attract a sizable following, Bill Hickey said.

"Our location was really a hard thing to overcome," he said.

What turned it around, Hickey said, was the grass-roots following that emerged from the frequent live music performances.

\* Atmosphere: The IQ's building has housed a tavern since 1908, and the huge back bar is the nearly century-old original. The decor is cozy and simple: a few tables, the bar and a tiny stage. Photographs taken by a Hickey family friend adorn one wall.

\* Crowd: "We have the nicest people in Green Bay coming into our club," Hickey says. That's probably about as precise as you can get, as patrons are of all ages and walks of life. Weekend nights attract younger patrons and a strong showing by the neo-hippie crowd.

\* Tunes: As a musician (his band, the Roadhouse Scholars, plays every Thursday), Hickey wanted to make IQ's a place to nurture local talent, remembering his early days of traveling and playing. IQ's is a fascinating live-music venue. The crowd and performers are packed so tightly together that interaction is a foregone conclusion. And it's never just background music dancing is practically required.

On nights without live music, a jukebox offers Lou Reed, Phish, John Coltrane, Tom Waits and several bands you've probably never heard of.

\* Brews and booze: The usual is on tap, plus a couple of Leinie's beers and Guinness.

\* Munchies: A limited menu includes pizza, homemade chili and other offerings.

\* Diversions: IQ's offers darts and a couple of video games.

\* Fun fact: Posted behind the bar, right under the sign saying sales tax is included in all drink sales: "Notice: Patrons must wear shoes."

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