

ONCE UPON A TIME in the town where I grew up, there was a bar by the side of the highway. There were office buildings nearby, and a playhouse, and a shiny new movie theater, and a hotel, and the bar never lacked for custom.

The drinks menu had eighty pages, and the food menu had eight. Many people celebrated their 21st birthday among friends there. There certainly were some tasty things on the drinks menu.

That was then, and long ago.

There are more offices and shops now, and two more live performance stages and another hotel, but no movies. There is still a restaurant at that address, and it has the same name, and it never lacks for custom.

And the drinks menu has eight pages and the dinner menu has twenty-eight. The old patrons have grown up, and their children bring their kids to celebrate their 12th birthday.

There certainly are some tasty things on the dinner menu. But I remember the old drinks menu at T.G.I. Friday's as fondly as I remember anything from the Eighties.