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Karaoke regular Ron Dinkelmeir belts out "Brick" as the mirror ball spins in the background.

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Karaoke: Fall will bring students

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night scene of many bars and American pop culture. There is even a weekly karaoke television show filmed out of Las Vegas that is sponsored by the Player's Club International as well as a magazine devoted entirely to karaoke.

The Red Lion Inn first caught on to the craze seven years ago by hosting karaoke two nights a week, the lounge's bartender Donna England said.

Although England said the lounge normally draws a non-student-age crowd of "regulars," she said a younger crowd flocks to karaoke nights during the school months.

England, who has been the lounge's bartender for the past 23 years, said that the student-aged crowds are usually more hesitant

to step up to the mic. The lounge's laid-back feel won't ease some patrons' jitters, and she gave a wry grin with the typical solution: "Sometimes we get a couple of kids that need a few drinks."

The bar spans the length of one wall of the lounge, and it has 12 microbrew and domestic beers on tap as well as a wide array of other alcoholic drinks.

But what keeps the crowd going on a typical karaoke night is the voice behind the microphone who introduces the tunes and performers.

Ronny Turrell has been playing multiple parts behind the microphone, ranging from disc jockey to back-up singer to performer at the Red Lion for the past six years. But the keyword in describing Turrell is "playing."

"It helps to be an outrageous extrovert like me," she said. "I play for a living. All I have to do is put discs in the machine and enjoy the show."

Turrell, who is also studying to be an actress, said that she likes to get out in the crowd and interact with the familiar patrons when she performs a karaoke song.

And although the Red Lion's lounge is normally a place where everybody knows each other's names — with patrons calling out for Ronny and Donna — both Turrell and England grinned sheepishly when asked if they get tired of hearing the same old songs.

"You just learn to tune them out," Turrell chuckled. "It's the new people that don't know what is the old stuff."

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