

**The Kansas City Star**

## **Think drink in solid form**

**By Hearne Christopher**



To the list of world-famous inventors like **Mary Anderson** (windshield wipers), **Archimedes** (the Archimedes screw) and **Karl Benz** (petrol-powered automobile), add **Fast Eddie Crane**, bartender and co-owner of Westport's Blanc Burger + Bottles and the Drop in Martini Corner. After years of deliberation, followed by experimentation, Crane has concocted a new way to enjoy what most people refer to simply as a cocktail.

While the idea is not entirely unique, Fast Eddie's creations are uniquely his, through months of experimentation and trial and error.

“What they are is solid-state alcohol creations — they're essentially full-potency alcoholic drinks,” Crane says. “They have the same volume in a solid as they would in a liquid, the idea being that you can pick them up with your fingers and eat them. Like I make one that's a mojito — and it's really a mojito — it's the same as the liquid mojito.

And I make a Bailey's and coffee, and it's a Bailey's and coffee, but you can pick it up and eat it. But it's not a frozen ice cube. It's more like a truffle. Think more like gelatin. You can pick it up in your hands, but it melts in your mouth.”

So it's like **Thomas Edison** inventing the light bulb?

“Uh, Thomas Edison actually adopted the light bulb and improved on it,” Crane corrects. “But I guess you could say that.”

” he says. “It’s not a coincidence.” The name of Crane’s new game: “I call them ‘drops,’

Crane plans to roll them out via a kickoff party at the Drop (409 E. 31st St.) July 24.

The process wasn’t as simple as it may sound.

“I started thinking about liquid nitrogen, and I started freezing alcohol and made like chocolate martini dipping dots,” Crane says. “The problem was, they were so cold they would freeze to my tongue. I wanted to make something that was doable on a practical restaurant scale, so everyone could get a hold of it, sort of like the Model T, so to speak.”

Available flavors thus far include the Mojito; Baileys and Coffee; Godiva-Gran Marnier Truffle; and Port & Hazelnut, a red Port wine and hazelnut liqueur.

“There’s going to be six, so I have two more spots to fill,” Crane says. “Some of the runners-up so far are Dirty Martini, Lemon Drops and Strawberry Balsamic — fresh strawberries, balsamic vinegar and strawberry-fused vodka.”

Here’s how it will go down:

“There’ll be six on the menu, and you can pick three, and it will come on a slender plate, like sushi, for \$12. And you get three pieces of each flavor, and each flavor will have one and one-half ounces of alcohol in it. I wanted it to be a good value.”

Crane’s bottom line: “The goal of this was not just to be nerd-centric. ... This is definitely a social item to talk about, to show and to share. It’s meant to be shared and enjoyed. One person is not going to get a kick out of this alone, unless they’re writing a review on it. My take is, it’s going to be popular among groups and parties.”

**9 1/2 Weeks?**

There's no getting around the fact that consuming Fast Eddie's potent little "drops" at the Drop are a "sexy new way, a more tactile way, to enjoy your beverage," Crane says. "Some people will see the '9 1/2 Weeks' value in it, but you can't do the '9 1/2 Weeks' thing at the restaurant."

For the uninitiated, "9 1/2 Weeks" is the R-rated **Kim Basinger/Mickey Rourke** movie that came out in 1986 that one online review characterized as being "not for kids, the timid or people on a diet."

In the movie, a number of foods are consumed in a body sushi-like, erotic manner.

Speaking of which ...

Wouldn't Crane's new "drops" be too cold to rest upon bare skin?

"This isn't really cold," Crane corrects. "It's like cold, as in refreshingly cool. In fact we were thinking about doing a body sushi presentation for the launch, but we decided to focus on the product. But body sushi would be very doable if that answers your question."