

People spending less for fun in B-CS

by Beverly Hamilton
Battalion Staff

Although there is a saying that people spend more money on entertainment during recessionary periods in an effort to get away from it all and forget the current economic situation, it is not holding up for entertainment spots in Bryan-College Station.

Some of the entertainment hotspots in Bryan-College Station have felt the effects of the recession, while others have felt the effects of the recession.

Movie theaters in Bryan-College Station have not felt the effects of the recession, local theater owner Bill Shulman said.

Shulman owns the Shulman Manor East, Skyway Twin, Campus and Palace theaters. "We haven't had a drop in attendance," Shulman said. "We have the idea that if we show what they want to see, our business will do fairly well."

Tom Wheeler, manager of the Cinemas I and II in the shopping center, said people usually go to the movies during bad economic periods. "I haven't noticed anyone attempting to save money."

"There's an old showman's myth that during bad times people always go to the movies but I don't see them taking advantage of discount nights," Wheeler said. "I would expect more people to be here."

During the week, attendance has been almost nothing. But,

on the weekends people are used to going out and having a good time.

Attendance at area night clubs such as The RoxZ and Dallas has dropped, but Graham Central Station does not seem to be hurting in patronage.

Attendance at The RoxZ has declined about 40 percent on

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weeknights and 20 percent on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, Steve Graham, general manager, said.

"I'd say it is partly the economy and partly schoolwork," Graham said.

Texas A&M University is a more difficult school than most, he said, so students spend their time studying instead of dancing. However, The RoxZ does have incentives, like drink specials, to attract customers.

Dallas has experienced a drop in business, Gary Seaback, own-

er of the club, said.

"I don't know if it's due to the economy, but everybody (the clubs) is hurting equally," Seaback said. "The recession shouldn't hurt drinking establishments because people are going to drink when the economy's bad."

Patronage at Graham Central Station declined in September, Keith Lawyer, supervisor of the club, said.

"Club business prospers during hard times," he said. "People cut out other things to adjust so they can keep their entertainment."

Rebels Restaurant and Bar has definitely felt the effects of the recession, Gene Rouser, manager of the restaurant, said.

"With the economy the way it is, people can't afford to go out," he said. "Many of our customers who worked in oilfields are not working and cannot afford to come out here."

Rouser said business at Rebels was prosperous last year because people were spending money when the recession was in full swing.

"They've come to realize they can't do what they were doing before," he said.

"I think people in this town are very price conscious and they're looking for the best deal they can get. They're staying home, watching TV and trying to save their pennies."

Rick Elliott, general manager of Bennigan's Tavern, said the restaurant is feeling the effects of the recession a small degree.

"We're still doing fine, but ev-

erybody and his mother is opening up a new store," he said.

More people are saving money and going to the tavern just for a drink, Elliott said.

"Many people satisfy their needs by trading out food for liquor and having a couple of drinks at happy hour."

Doan Shockley, general manager of Baker Street Restaurant and Bar, said he doesn't feel the recession has hit Bryan-College Station as hard as it has other areas. However, he has noticed that more people come into the restaurant to drink than to eat.

"People are still drinking and our happy hour definitely draws more people in," he said.

Duddley's Draw, a College Station bar, has not seen the increase in business its management expected to see, bartender Tom Shields said.

"The bar business in general in this town has slowed down," he said. "There are more bars now and that spreads business out."

Mike Richie, owner of The Thirsty Turtle, said people are pinching pennies and budgeting their money.

"They're a little more picky about what they do. They're here, but not as much."

However, patrons don't seem to be making an effort to find bargains, Richie said. "I don't see the kids chasing specials. If they want to go to Graham's for a beer for \$1.75, they will."

Post Oak Mall hasn't felt any dent in business, Maria Polites, marketing director for Post Oak Mall, said.

"We've had no problems leasing and we keep having new businesses come in," she said. "I don't think there's been any kind of decrease. I think it's due to the fact that we have a variety and selection in the mall."

During the mall's grand opening in the spring, she said,

business was extremely good. It has leveled off since then, but continues to increase at a steady rate.

Libby Putnam, manager of The Curiosity Shop, said business has already started to pick up because people are shopping for Christmas gifts.

Travel has not been affected by the recent slump in the economy, said Diane Reid, group coordinator for American Express Executive Travel Service in Bryan.

"For many people, the worse the economy gets, the more they want to get away," she said.

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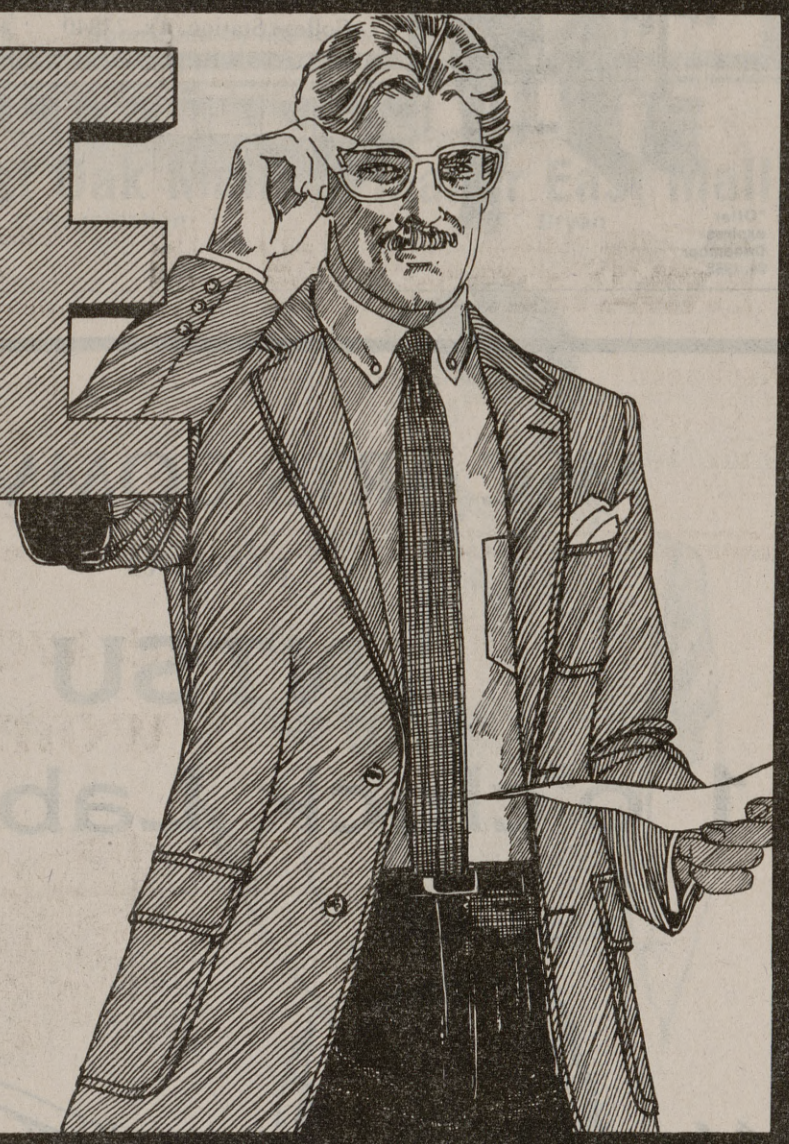
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