

State and Local

Movie house to become rock club

Local saloon owner buys theater

By Amy Couvillon
Staff Writer
and
Jennifer Friend
Reporter

Night life at Northgate could have a new twist this fall with people dancing in what were formerly the aisles of the Campus Theater, says a Northgate saloon owner who plans to open the old theater as a rock 'n' roll club.

"It's going to be a fun, college bar," says Don Ganter, who owns the Dixie Chicken saloon, the Chicken Oil Co. restaurant and Sticky Chins ice-cream parlor.

"It will just be a good, solid place for college kids to go and rock 'n' roll," he says.

Ganter bought the Campus Theater last summer from William Schulman, owner of the Bryan-College Station movie-theater chain.

The theater was built in 1947. Although it is something of a historical landmark, it has been unoccupied for about three years.

Before, it showed mostly X-rated movies through the late 1970s and early 1980s until it was closed and put up for sale in 1984.

William Schulman's son, Morris, says he thinks the Campus has been in every aerial photograph ever taken of the Texas A&M campus.

The family bought the theater in 1961.

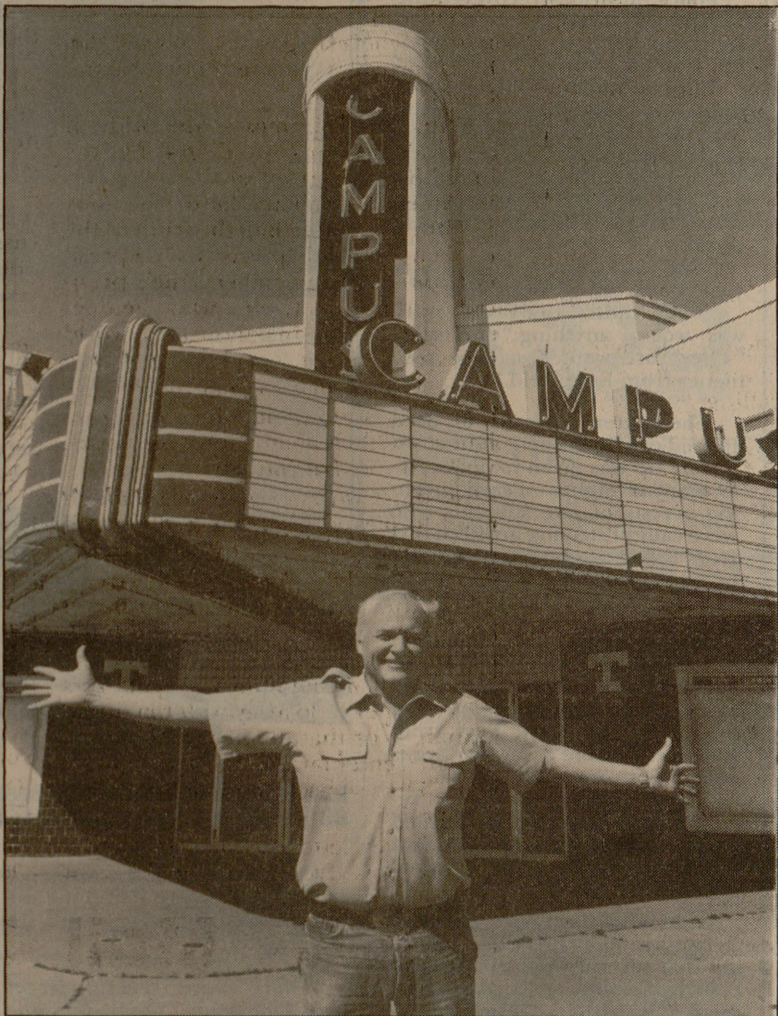
Ganter says he wants to preserve the theater's history.

"I plan to keep calling it the Campus," Ganter says. "I don't want to change the outside of the building. It's kind of an old landmark around here."

Ganter says he plans to submit his building plans to the College Station Project Review Committee in early summer.

The remodeling could be complete by September, he says.

Shirley Volk, College Station planning technician, says the review committee will consider such factors as available parking and the impact of the business upon the area before it approves the remodeling plan.



Don Ganter shows off his latest piece of property.

Photo by Jennifer Friend

Each use of the Northgate area is considered individually, Volk says, because it is a special historical zone and has to follow less stringent zoning requirements than other commercial zones.

"That whole area is handled differently," Volk says.

Ganter says he has talked to the College Station building inspector about his remodeling plans.

Because the building is more than 40 years old and has been unused for so long, he says, the original wiring and plumbing need to be replaced.

"Right now we're just getting the kinks out," Ganter says. "We will be ready to open by the time school starts in the fall."

The Campus club will follow the formula of low prices and an unsophisticated atmosphere that has been successful in Ganter's other businesses.

"It's not going to look like neon-city in there," he says. "There won't be a crystal ball hanging over the dance floor, and there won't be flashing lights."

Anyone over 18 years old will be admitted, he says, and there will probably be a \$2 or \$3 cover charge.

Rock music from the 1950s through the 1970s will be played, and a band will play a few times a month, he says.

"It's not going to be an expensive place to go," he says. "We're not going to have any of that garbage like \$6 cover charge for guys while girls get in free."

The cover charge may be a little higher when there is a live band, he says.

"We're not going to be trendy," he says. "I don't know what they're doing down the street and I don't care."

"I hope their clubs are full every night as long as mine is, too."

The club will have a big dance floor, a few bars and some pool tables, he says.

Since the floor of the theater is steeply sloped, different levels must be built to level it off, he says. The lowest level will be the dance floor.

"The dance floor will take up one-third of the building," he says. "Considering the size of the building, that will be a huge dance floor."

A horseshoe-shaped balcony may be added, he says, with pool tables and a bar on the balcony.

"One day when I was driving by the Campus Theater I saw Mr. Schulman's truck out front," Ganter says. "I went in, we got to talking and we struck a deal."

"We just shook on it — that's better than any lawyer."

Financial records of student lobbyists remain in question

By Frank Smith
Senior Staff Writer

Leaders of Texas A&M's chapter of the Young Conservatives of Texas say they still question the legality of an A&M lobby group's finances despite a meeting in which the lobby group submitted its financial records for YCT scrutiny.

YCT leaders say they may ask University officials to help correct what they think may be a violation of state law by the Legislative Study Group, a Student Government agency that researches higher education issues and lobbies the Legislature.

YCT leaders say they had wanted to make sure the LSG wasn't drawing from public funds to conduct its lobbying activities.

Leaders of both groups met on Friday, and LSG officials complied with a YCT request to look at the lobby group's financial records for 1986-87.

LSG officials have contended that although they're not sure lobbying with public money violates state law, they have reimbursed Student Government for all costs incurred during the year that might be tied to state-mandated student service fees.

Dick Lonquist, YCT vice chairman, says the Friday meeting initially convinced him and YCT Chairman Dennis Rudder of the legality of LSG operations.

"But then we talked to our legal counsel this weekend and we feel it might still be illegal what they're doing," Lonquist says. "Once you get private funds and put them into a public account, they become public funds. So we feel like they're back to square one with using public funds."

"All their bank accounts are public because they're a part of Student Government."

Lonquist says LSG officials contended in the meeting that other state schools are in Austin lobbying with public money.

"We just sort of feel that's wrong," he says. "Just because everyone's doing it doesn't make it right."

Alan Moore, LSG director, says he wasn't aware the YCT still had

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— Dick Lonquist, YCT vice chairman

questions about his organization. But he says that he thinks YCT officials may have misconstrued his group's point about other education lobbyists.

"The point that was being brought across was that nearly all state agencies have some form of representation before the Legislature," Moore says. "When higher education issues — budget cuts, appropriations — are being discussed, you'll generally find that most universities will have a representative in Austin to express their points of view."

"I was in no way trying to say that just because someone else does it makes it right. I'm still not certain as to whether this whole argument with us is valid or not."

Lonquist and Rudder say they may ask administration officials to look into the matter.

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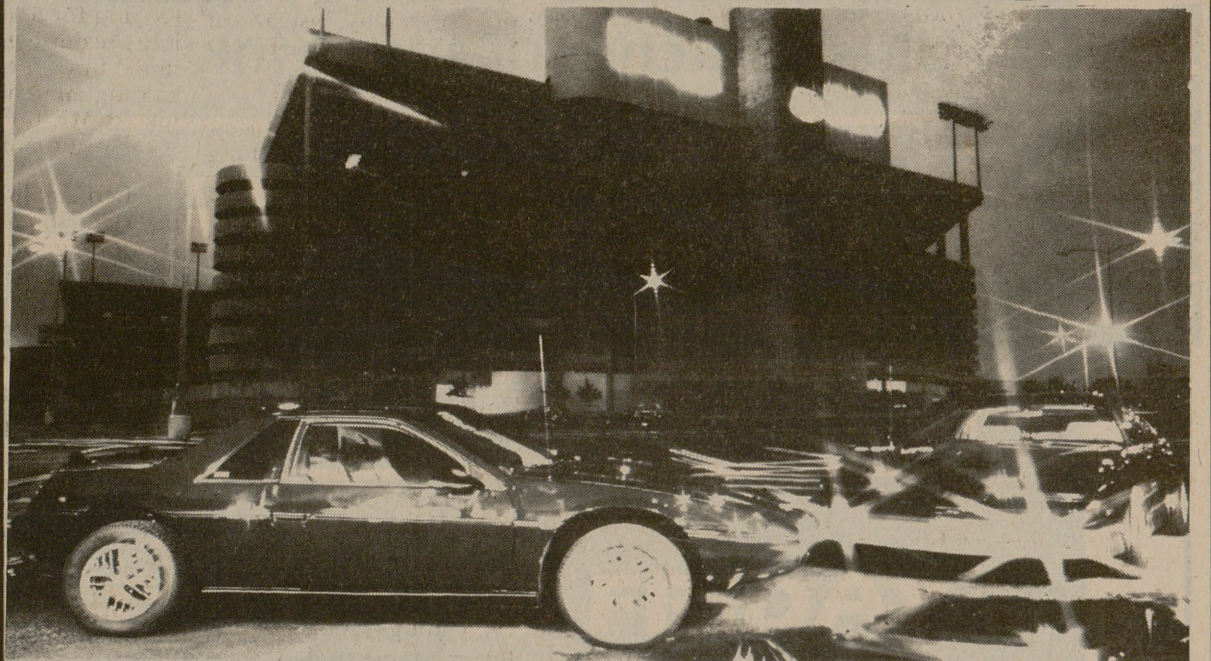
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