

commitment as those who own.

Martin owned the Fajita Grille restaurant in the Post Oak Mall, but because it was a rental situation, he decided to close.

"That (the rent situation) made the prices higher than we thought was fair to the consumer," says Martin.

Martin says that his Fort Shiloh Steak House then became Fort Shiloh Grille and now the restaurant specializes in fajitas.

Business is doing well enough that the kitchen was recently remodeled and more renovations will take place in the near future, he says.

Besides Fort Shiloh, Martin also owns the two Pepe's restaurants and the steak house that bears his name. Martin takes his business seriously and puts the consumer first, and he says that's the key.

"We buy our property because we're committed, and because this is our home," he says.

One place where empty spaces are easily noticed is the Post Oak Mall, but mall officials say the emptiness is deceiving.

General Manager Maria Saccomen says that the Texas economy has nothing to do with mall vacancies because the city's economy is based on Texas A&M.

"Everyone is aware that Texas is having some tough economic problems," she says, "and even though we (Bryan-College Station) happen to be in a better situation than the rest of Texas, it's still difficult to talk to anyone outside the state and convince them of that."

Several of the summer vacancies are already being filled and others will soon follow, Saccomen says.

However, some spaces in the new wing have never even been finished on the inside and still have

dirt floors because leasing completed spaces is easier, she says.

Another reason for vacancies is the large size of some of the spaces. Saccomen says finding tenants who need 7,000 and 9,000 square feet spaces is difficult. She says that most people want between 1,000 and 2,500 square feet.

Charlie's Grocery, a Northgate business that was popular for decades, recently closed, but not for economic reasons.

Previous owner J.E. Robbins, better known as "Charlie," says that he sold the store because he was ready to slow down a little.

"I'm 62 years old," he says emphatically. "I was ready to slow down, but not quit, so I'm working part time at the bookstore. You might not think working five days a week is much of a slow down, but working 30-40 hours a week is slower than 50-60."

Robbins bought the store about 24 years ago from the widow of the original Charlie. He says he tried to explain to people that he wasn't Charlie, but he eventually became so busy he didn't have the time. Wearing the name doesn't bother Robbins, but he says that he mainly didn't want to give anyone a false impression.

The weakened Texas economy did have an effect on the grocery, he says, but that had nothing to do with his decision to sell.

"You see, if Dad is paying for everything and he isn't bringing home as much money, then sister and brother don't have as much money to spend," Robbins says.

As a long-time businessman, Robbins says that we see more businesses changing names today because of retirement and bad

management. Now people go into business not knowing how to run it, he says.

"A lot of people think

you just turn a key in the front door and then sit up on the counter or go fishing," Robbins says.

"Business is not done that

way. It's a lot of hard work. You have to use your brain and if you've got college training, that too."

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Aggienizing Answers

Are your entertainment needs met?

by Lauren Naylor

Ho Hum, ho hum. Yawn, yawn.

What to do . . . what to do.

Is this how you frequently feel Thursday evenings around 6?

Do you shower and sit? Sit and sulk? Sulk and finally surrender to sociology?

Do you linger casually by your phone waiting to hear what "the group's" gonna do? And, when they do call, and inform you of the plans, do you find yourself saying . . . AGAIN!?

If you suffer from what I call "done-everything-there-is-to-do-about-2,513-times-already"

syndrome, you're not alone. The majority of your fellow social peers, surveyed in this week's "How do you feel?" agonize from the same ailment. The issue being questioned: the adequacy of College Station entertainment.

"If you've lived up here a month or two, there's not much left to do," complains junior chemistry major Bob Horswell of Houston. "There seems to be too much emphasis on having a lot of clubs around here."

Horswell suggests a few changes.

"There isn't anything like a gocart track or something stupid like that," he says. "If I could bring anything in, it wouldn't be another club.

I would have something like Malibu Grand Prix in Houston come in, with bumper boats and the like. We need things like this that are more recreational and spontaneous.

"We need something exciting, not run-of-the-mill, something that can be done several times without getting bored with it."

Loss of interest in what I call the drink-to-get-drunk-or-linger-to-get-laid-club-scene appears to be the general consensus.

A&M students crave more live entertainment, comedy clubs, drive-in movies and . . .

CULTURE?

"I would like to see a little more fine arts-type things," says Tim Clarkson, junior economics major of Houston. "Maybe a ballet, or an outdoor theater.

"I get so tired of the clubs. The bars here seem to thrive on the 'party idiot' — if you will.

"We just need more to do," Clarkson continues, "whether it be something simple like going to the museum or the zoo, or going to a professional football or basketball game. I guess I'm just spoiled, being from Houston."

Clarkson may be right, because some small-town Aggies interviewed find night life in College Station quite fulfilling.

"I think College Station's a lot of fun,"

says senior sociology major Viki Caddel through her thick Tyler accent. "Where I'm from, there's nothing to do. Ozzy Osbourne tried to tour there, but the community threatened to burn the site down if he came. Well, he didn't come.

"All we ever get is country singers. At least here you get a choice."

Even though they make up the minority, Aggies who are happy with the town's entertainment say there is plenty to do if you just look for it.

"I think the management here caters well to the younger crowd," responds junior accounting major Rich Castranova of Plano. "I think there needs to be a newspaper guide, like 'The Guide' in the Dallas Morning News on Fridays, giving a listing of all the restaurants, plays and shows with a rating.

"There's enough going on in town, but half the time, people don't know what's going on or where to go."

Things the students do appreciate . . . dollar movies at Schulman 6, Flying Tomato's bucket of beer, MSC chicken fried steak night, and the many drink specials provided around town.

As one student commented about the Zephyr Club, "Those drinks are really good. It doesn't take very many to pull you under the table."