

# Bleeding Marooned

Northgate record store manager Chris Penn works toward shattering the country music stereotype in Aggieland

BY JENNY VRNAK  
THE BATTALION

The subject is alternative music in Bryan-College Station, the name Chris Penn is probably not far behind.

Many people living in this area may not know who Penn is, but his name is familiar to many local bands and fans of alternative music. Penn is the manager of Marooned Records in Northgate and has been involved with music for most of his life. Some local music lovers say that he has been instrumental in bringing alternative music to the Bryan-College Station area.

Matt Beaton, a member of local band Lewis and a senior environmental design major, credits Penn with much of the group's success.

"Chris really helped Lewis get shows at the Bradford Opera House," he said. "He allowed us to meet a lot of other alternative bands in Texas, too."

Beaton, who has known Penn for about three years, said he has a laid-back personality.

"He works really hard, but he still knows how to have a good time," Beaton said.

Penn said he has always loved music, although his tastes have changed over the years from heavy metal to punk rock to alternative. He said the music business is constantly changing.

"The big trend right now is electronic music," he said. "Bands like Prodigy and the Chemical Brothers, where they don't use drums or guitars, just keyboards and synthesizers. I think that is going to become really big."

Penn noted that even the bigger bands like Smashing Pumpkins are following these trends, too. He also said there are a lot of "one-hit wonders" on the air waves.

"I see a lot of people coming into Marooned and buying CDs where the band has only released one song off of it," Penn said. "Most of these same people come back a few weeks later and try to sell them back."

Penn, a class of '93 graduate of Texas A&M, said he hopes to use his education in the music business.

"I knew A&M had a good business school when I came here," he said. "Maybe one day I'll be able to use my marketing degree in music."

Beaton credits Penn with helping to change the country music stereotype associated with College Station. He has booked shows including such bands as Sixteen Deluxe and Tripping Daisy and is constantly trying to give alternative bands more exposure.

"He has really been instrumental in helping out local bands," Beaton said. "Chris is really bringing the alternative music market to College Station."

Penn said he thinks many of the country music stereotypes related to the city are not as large

as most people believe.

"Many people think that alternative music isn't very popular here because they have heard or seen how strong country is," he said. "But when you've got a university that has over 50,000 students, you're definitely going to find a lot of people that do like it."

Penn's favorite band is Tripping Daisy, although he said he also enjoys the music of UFOFU and many of College Station's bands. He also likes to take road trips around the state to hear other bands that do not have shows in town.

Penn himself recently bought a drum set, but he said he has no definite plans for it.

"I'm just banging around on the drums," he said. "No real plans—I'll just see what happens."

Although he is not promoting bands as heavily as he has in the past, Penn still stays involved in the music scene and helps out whenever he can. He books bands for in-store performances at Marooned and assists some local bands in getting shows in town. Penn said that he does promoting because he enjoys the music and the people, not the money.

"It makes you feel like you are a part of something important, something bigger," he said. "I just do it because I love the music."

**Chris is really bringing the alternative music market to College Station.**

**Matt Beaton  
Local band member**



PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT MCKAY

Chris Penn has contributed to the B-CS music scene by working with many local bands.

## Getting fit for summer swimwear brings annual frustration

Summertime means swimsuits. And swimsuits mean it is time to diet.

Recently, a good friend of mine and I were watching TV. A commercial came on advertising that we could lose eight pounds in eight days. My friend decided for both of us that we would accept the challenge.

Day One: We started off drinking a shake for breakfast and a shake for lunch, just like we were supposed to. As the afternoon rolled around, my stomach erupted. It wanted nourishment, not milk that tastes like what's left over from a bowl of Froot Loops.

So, my sensible dinner wasn't all that sensible. And it wasn't really a dinner, either. It was more like a fast food feast.

Day Two: The rules were officially changed. We decided if we drank our shake with pizza for lunch, it negated the pizza and we could still eat dinner. I got a little excited and started making

new rules right and left. If we only ate one piece of pizza, we got an extra meal for the next day. And, if we drank three shakes a day, we could have dessert with our sensible dinners.

Day Three: I decided I didn't care anymore. Eating good food makes me happy, and I would rather be happy than eight pounds lighter. I'm not talking about a health problem here — this is the difference between a little red dress and baggy jeans.

I mean, seriously, is someone not going to be my friend because I weigh a few pounds more than my height requires? Am I going to lose my job because I don't order fat-free dressing on my salad at restaurants? Okay, that was misleading. It must be obvious by now I don't order salad at restaurants. My mother likes to tell people, especially those of the male variety, that her little April is just a "meat and potatoes kind of girl." How charming. God created us to look the way we look. Some

of us are big-boned, and some of us aren't. It's like having a different eye color or haircut than someone else — our shapes are part of who we are.

Besides, being thin is expensive. These eight-day diets come in packages of 10 cans, which results in either leftovers or yet another eight days of slow slimming. Also, one package of diet shakes costs more than a month's supply of fried chicken and cheeseburgers. And what the cute, 6-foot-tall, 95-pound beauty on the commercial doesn't tell us is that in order to lose the eight pounds, we also have to sacrifice more money, time and energy exercising. I'd rather curl up on the couch with a good book and a pint of ice cream.

And why is it that it's always women on the weight loss commercials? I've seen plenty of male beer bellies at the beach that should be covered. If women are going to torture themselves to look good in a swimsuit, men should, too. The only men I know of that diet only do it because their wives force them to. And I have never, ever seen male mallwalkers.

And the corruption is starting younger. I chaperoned a high school youth group party last weekend. A swimming pool was made available to the kids, but many of the girls didn't want to swim because they were insecure about their bodies. They either covered their swimsuits with T-shirts or didn't swim at all.

Now, that's just sick. Here I am, flaunting myself and my belly with no shame, and these 14-year-olds with 10 times my energy are afraid someone will notice their bellies or, heaven forbid, label them flat-chested. My advice, if it means that much to someone, is to get a WonderBra and forget about it.

My father and I joke about how some day my whole family is going to be on some really lame talk show discussing their 600-pound relative and how they saw it coming back when I was in college and couldn't even finish an eight-day diet. True, that is not something I wish to happen.

But, for now, I'm young and I'm hungry. And my mom always said I had a good personality.

Lifestyles Editor



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