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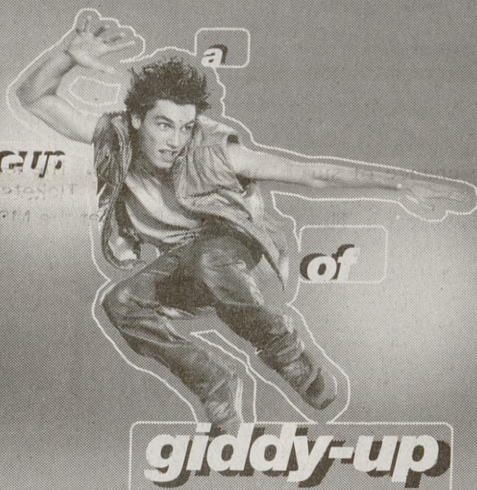
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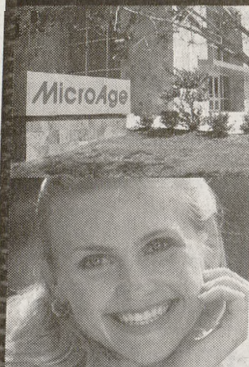
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Live and direct

J. Goodin shakes up Northgate music scene

By BROOKE HODGES
The Battalion

Music enthusiasts looking for a live performance need not look further than Northgate.

Every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday night, the Crooked Path comes alive with local performer J. Goodin.

Goodin's show consists of classic rock covers, folk music and modern favorites. The audience also gets to peer into this gifted singer's mind by listening to his original songs.

Great music makes for a good show, but Goodin's shows are entertaining because of the way he interacts with the audience. Goodin does not spend the evening performing for his audience — he spends the night having fun with his friends.

He usually starts his shows by making an observation, such as last Thursday's "It's gonna be a drinkin' night." The observation ended with Goodin and his audience raising their glasses and shouting, "salud."

"Salud" is a common thing, occurring after almost every other song. Thursday, 30 "saluds" were counted, give or take a few.

Goodin takes requests during the show. There is no formal set list for the show, but some songs do require an incentive to be played.

"If you want to hear Dave Matthews, you have to talk to my manager," Goodin said, holding up the plastic tip bucket.

Tipping is a very important part of Goodin's show.

He said audience members tip by buying him drinks, dropping cigarettes in the bucket, or throwing in a few bucks.

If audience members happen to drop a \$5 bill into the bucket, they receive a copy of Goodin's original CD, *Symptom Addict*. The CD consists of seven original tracks, three of which can be downloaded from his Website.

Goodin said the CD is "based on loving and losing on Northgate, but mostly losing."

Tipping decides what song is played last. Thursday's show closed with last call by the bartenders and bidding for the last song.

Bidding for the last song is a Goodin ritual, and this race was between Don McClean's "American Pie" and anything else. The bidding is done by people placing tips in the bucket with Goodin keeping track of which request has raised the most money.

"American Pie" won with more than \$20 in bids.

The regulars at Goodin's show always sit front and center. He refers to them as "the band" and joins them when he takes his "five-minute smoke

break." These breaks usually last longer than five minutes, but no one in the audience seems to mind, including Goodin, who converses with his friends. Everyone in "the band" knows every song Goodin plays and sings along through the entire show.

Of the songs he plays, two stand out for their audience involvement: Shel Silverstein's "Freaker's Ball," and an original written by Goodin's friend Beatnik called "Passion." These songs start amid applause from the audience, and everyone who knows the songs sings along.

Goodin attributes his musical talent to his upbringing. He said his parents were traveling sign painters,

and he moved around quite a bit as a child.

"All I had was a radio as a friend," he said.

Goodin said his favorite singers to cover are Tom Waits, Jim Croce, Ben Harper and Elvis Costello. He said he gets the most requests for Tool, Alice in Chains and Waits.

"I'm happy [about being asked to play the Waits], he said. "I've tried to school this town."

Goodin said his favorite part of playing at the Crooked Path is the laid-back atmosphere.

"Everyone is there to drink, relax and have a good time," he said. "It's a party atmosphere."

In fact, Bill Phillips, a senior computer science major, enjoys the show so much he tries to attend all three shows each week.

"I'm a country fanatic, but J. gotta be one of the best singers I've ever heard," Phillips said.

Phillips said he thinks Goodin could make more money in another town, but Goodin said he likes Bryan-College Station.

"I like playing a town that pays the rent," he said.

Heather LaMotte, a senior marketing major, said she enjoys the show because of Goodin's singing abilities.

"He has a great voice, and I love acoustic guitar," LaMotte said. "I love to just sit and listen to him and forget about everything."

Goodin said he originally set out just to sing, but decided to take up the guitar to back himself up.



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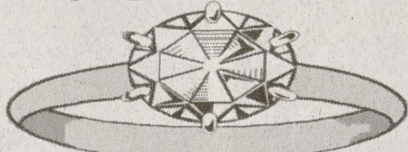
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