

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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An alternative Northgate

Bryan aims to revamp downtown as its clubs gain word-of-mouth popularity

By Teresa Weaver
THE BATTALION

Keith Gentry, a graduate geology student, cannot stand the crowds around Northgate. When Revolution Café and Bar opened near his house in Bryan, Gentry said he found exactly what he was looking for in a bar.

"At Northgate, it always seems like a meat market," Gentry said. "There are too many people with no interaction. At Revolution, complete strangers can come up to each other and strike up conversations."

Revolution Café and Bar is a coffee shop and bar that specializes in alternative music styles, such as jazz and funk. Gentry came to Revolution one night to hear Wish Found Nation, a local reggae band, play on the patio.

"I like the outside stage," Gentry said. "People walk around barefoot on the gravel; it's such a laid-back, open place."

Although Northgate may always be the first place most students think of when they want to go out at night, many are choosing to venture past Bottle Cap Alley and explore new clubs at the other end of town, in the historic downtown Bryan district.

Halo Video Bar and Revolution Café and Bar are two new clubs that have caught the attention of college students in the past semester. Both venues have become popular among students looking for an alternative to the country and western theme found in the area.

Halo is located at the corner of North Main Street and William J. Bryan Parkway. One block south is Revolution, with the entrance at Carnegie Alley near the railroad tracks.

Situated quietly behind South Main Street in Bryan, Revolution caters to a different crowd of college students.

"The bar has a conversational atmosphere where people can sit down and talk with their friends. I'm trying to bring a more cultured, Bohemian atmosphere to the area," said owner Rola Cerone, a former student of A&M herself.

Revolution is not a large club, and most of the seating is outside at wooden park benches, with a few circular tables located inside. A normal night at Revolution could include anything from playing a game of chess to dancing with the hula-hoops found against the back wall.

Michael Cheyney, a senior sports management major, just started coming to Revolution.

"There really isn't another place like this in the area, and I've been here for five years. There's definitely a different type of music here."

Revolution is not the only kind of alternative entertainment in the area. Halo Video Bar, run by Jeff Harmon and Scott Muhlig, opened last July. Students say that Halo is an open environment that has become an important hangout for the gay and lesbian community in the area.

"We create an environment where anyone can come and feel like they're in a big city club," Harmon said. "It's the only place people can come and not feel any kind of discrimination in a 100-mile radius."

Bryan's historic downtown, where both clubs are located, is



BRIAN WILLS • THE BATTALION

Revolution Café and Bar owner **Rola Cerone '02**, above. Revolution is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10 to 2 a.m. with Wednesday nights as singer/songwriter nights with an open mike. Halo is open Thursday to Saturday from 9:30 to 2 a.m.

currently experiencing a period of renewed growth, thanks to a 10-year restoration plan implemented by the City of Bryan.

John Hendry is the executive director of the downtown Bryan project. "We want to bring back the downtown area," said Hendry. "Phase one was to fix up the streets, landscape and buildings. Next we plan to rebuild Bryan Street in the same way."

Besides Revolution and Halo, the new downtown district also includes the club Third Floor Cantina and a new restaurant, Madden's Casual Gourmet. The Charles and Bryan Hotels are also being renovated to create loft apartments in the area.

"A&M is such an important part of the community, but most students don't even know this area exists," Hendry said. "College students are very important, and we will continue to appeal to them."

Halo has two floors: A downstairs area that has a calm, lounge feel to it, and an upstairs dance floor. Harmon said Halo incorporates advanced lighting and smoke effects with the most cutting-edge dance music to create a club atmosphere typically reserved for clubs in areas like Houston or Austin.

Jennifer Langum, a senior elementary education major, said she was tired of the dance music at other clubs so she decided to try out Halo.

"I come to Halo and feel like I'm at a club in Dallas," Langum said. "The DJ is amazing here and the atmosphere is really safe. I don't have guys constantly coming up to bother me."

Harmon said Halo did not do any advertising when the club opened, and the news of its existence spread solely by word of mouth.

"People show up because we are an open environment," Harmon said. "They bring their friends who may not be gay, but are open-minded and word travels like that."

Harmon said the majority of the club's clientele is college students, with about 40 percent being heterosexual.

Sergio Martinez, a sophomore political science major, has been coming to Halo since February.

"I want to have fun with all my friends," Martinez said. "I know everyone out here will support me, and it's so great to be yourself and have fun."

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Clinton book breaks records on first day of sales

NEW YORK (AP) — He's no Harry Potter, but Bill Clinton is still a record breaker.

Clinton's "My Life" sold more than 400,000 copies in the United States on its first day of release, the most ever for a nonfiction book and double the believed previous record holder, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Living History."

Bill Clinton's publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, announced an additional printing of 725,000 copies, bringing the total to 2.25 million. More printings are likely.

"We are seeing exceedingly strong sales for 'My Life' not only across the country but around the world," Knopf president Sonny Mehta said in a statement Wednesday.

Clinton's book has topped the Amazon.com best seller list in the United States, England, France and Japan. The audio book, an abridged version read by Clinton, sold 35,000 copies in the United States, also a first-day record.

Still, the unchallenged king of book premieres remains "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," which sold an estimated 5 million copies on its opening day last year.

The 957-page "My Life" was published Tuesday, with thousands lining up in New York alone to receive an autographed copy from the former president, who appeared at bookstores in Harlem and Rockefeller Center.

Most reviewers think his book is a bore, but Clinton will almost certainly earn back his reported \$10 million advance, and the print run for "My Life" already approaches that of "Living History," which came out last year. Sen. Clinton's book has 2.3 million copies in print, according to her publisher, Simon & Schuster.

"My Life" is actually helping sales of "Living History," which on Tuesday reached the top 10 on Amazon.com.

The large print edition of "My Life" has a first printing of 100,000, more than the regular print run for most books.

Queen Elizabeth II sits for holographic 3-D portrait

LONDON (AP)— Queen Elizabeth II has posed for many artists in her time, but she stepped up the technology ladder for her latest portrait.

The 3-D laser-light hologram, titled "Equanimity," was commissioned by the Jersey Heritage Trust. Designer Chris Levine's blue monochrome portrait shows the monarch wearing a crown, pearls and ermine cape.

Levine, who has previously designed high-tech laser representations for rock stars such as Liam Gallagher of Oasis, took more than 10,000 images of the queen.

"She took to it very well," he said of the photo shoot. "We were able to chat about how far technology had moved on. She was surprisingly well informed."

The process of hologram design is complex and time-consuming with a high resolution and 3-D computer scanner used to capture the figure.

Levine said the queen had to stay perfectly still for eight seconds to get a usable image.

"It was quite nerve-racking," he said recently. "She

was really obliging given that a strange man was telling her what to do."

Eric Clapton to auction guitars to benefit drug recovery center

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua (AP) — Eric Clapton will auction off 56 of his guitars in New York on Thursday to raise money for a new drug treatment center in Antigua and Barbuda, a manager of his center said.

Proceeds from the auction at Christie's will go toward the recently completed 16-bed Bevon House, a center for recovering patients that is an expansion of Clapton's Crossroads Center, said Kim Martin, the center's marketing manager.

More than \$500,000 is needed to finance the construction, and money raised through the auction also will go toward paying for patients who can't afford the program, Martin said.

Clapton, who overcame his own heroin addiction years ago, underwrote the Crossroads Center, which opened in 1998 in the Caribbean country where the guitarist has a home.

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