-Up front-



By JENNY LIVINGSTON

This is a tale of three cities. It could be called the best of times and the worst of times for the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill live music scene. The Triangle, host to three major more Ph.D.s than anywhere else in the world, seems to have more bands than it knows what to do with.

Connells, The Accelerators, The Pressure Boys and The Bad Checks are all beginning to enjoy national reputations. And among the lesserknown set are literally hundreds of

more bands playing the clubs than anything new?" there are fans to fill them.

the audience."

of local rock 'n' roll. Many won't make not. it past the garage stage, but those to success.

angle bands now, as always, is that are limits to the strategy. elusive first gig. They face the task

Many booking agents are reluctant. ... won't bear it out." he said.

wants to book you if you don't have experience, but you can't get expe- through the Triangle. Rumors of a rience if nobody wants to book you.

sions," said Ruth Nix, booking agent for Under the Street. "You want to to attendance that couldn't keep pace book these local bands — after all, they are our existence — but on the other hand, they don't always bring

Indeed, the band could be as good day on MTV — a somewhat less than Herculean feat these days — but if body loses. The club loses money, the band gets minimal exposure and all those would-be music fans miss out

But even in the face of such a rich show less established bands. The Cave less about who's playing up the street supply, it is perhaps the worst of and The Fallout Shelter often have when calculating their risks. But on times for area music clubs. Business weekly lineups without a single big the other hand. The Pier seemed to

clubs. Raleigh has The Brewery and play," said Scott Zekanis, booking enthusiasm of the audience would The Fallout Shelter. Chapel Hill has agent for The Fallout Shelter. "They often spill over into other aspects of Cat's Cradle and The Cave and can't just start out at The Cradle or the local music scene. One good show Durham has Under the Street. Plus. The Brewery — there have to be the would spur people on to see more all three cities have a number of smaller venues like us to start out bands in other clubs. smaller live music clubs. The only in. How do people expect the music But why aren't people going to see problem is that there seems to be scene to keep going if they won't try the bands now?

"There are plenty of venues," said venues that tend to suffer the most owners agree that the change in the Ed Morgan of Black Park Enterprises, when the audiences stay home. The drinking age a year and a half ago booking agent for The Brewery. bigger, established acts will always had something to do with it. But Where the support is lacking is in draw a crowd. Somebody's always some clubs allow anyone over 18 in, going to go out to see Guadalcanal and some, like The Fallout Shelter. These days every garage on the Diary or Fishbone or C.O.C., but what are for all ages all the time, with block booms with the beat of ever- about The Insurgence or Soul Train others offering the occasional all-ages hopefuls practicing their own brand or The Wallabouts? Maybe. Maybe show. The catch is, the underage

who do face a veritable obstacle trend by booking more of the big outcourse in front of them on the road of-town acts. According to Morgan, But there has to be more to the The Brewery shows as many out-of- mystery of the disappearing scene. The first obstacle that faces Tri- town bands as local bands. But there

fewer of the big bands will be coming new large-venue club abound, but so

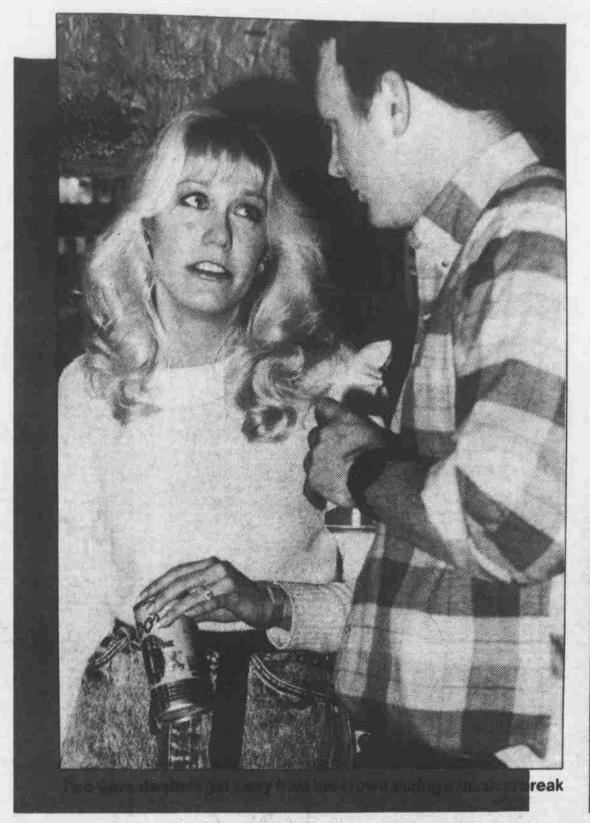
The Pier folded late last year due Mission Valley location.

"The Pier brought in a lot of the larger bands that usually wouldn't route themselves this way," said Debbie Cecil of Pro Motion Concerts, former booking agent for The Pier. "A lot of the bands used the Raleigh shows to pay for gas money between

Some clubs are more willing to surviving clubs. They have to worry stimulate the market when it was There's certainly no shortage of "The new bands need a place to around. After seeing a major act, the

Plenty of clubs, plenty of good Unfortunately, it is these smaller music, but no takers. Why? Most club people can't drink there, so they Many of the clubs respond to the might be less inclined to go out at

Is this new healthy, trying-to-bewealthy, future yuppie generation "The touring bands look at a club's more interested in GPAs and resumes of convincing a booking agent that gross potential," said Morgan. But than having a good time? Are they even though nobody's ever heard since the club can only hold so many afraid to see something new and their music, or maybe never even people, he said, to make enough different? Is the local fringe contingheard of them, they still deserve a money for the band would require a ent to be banished into oblivion, high ticket price. "The market just swallowed up in a mire of sameness? It would be a tragedy for more than to be the first to showcase direct. And now that the main outlet for just the bands — our three cities from nowhere, brand-spanking new the harme-recognized touring bands. would be poorer for it.



Photos by Matthew Plyler



