

All up in your business

Part of a periodic update on local businesses

Compiled by City Editor Chessa DeCain
Photos by Melissa Key



Rathskeller will not re-open again

The most recent attempt to revive The Rathskeller has failed.

Mary Stockwell, building manager for the 157 E. Franklin St. property, said she terminated Diane Fountain's lease on March 9. Fountain had hoped to reopen "the Rat."

Stockwell said Fountain did not pay her rent.

She also said it was unlikely the Rat restaurant would ever more back into its old site, due to the high cost of repairs needed to reopen in that space.

She said estimates put the cost of repairs between \$800,000 and \$1 million.

"We have started considering other possibilities for the space," Stockwell said.

Fountain said in an email that Stockwell failed to make any repairs to the building. But Stockwell said she has been working on permanently fixing the building's structural damage.

"It's the landlord's responsibility to provide a safe building," she said.

Fountain said in an email she plans to try to open the Rat in another location.



Gumby's space still vacant after closing

Though landlords were hopeful that the former home of Gumby's Pizza, at 306 W. Franklin St., would be filled by August, they have not finalized a deal yet.

The space has been vacant since June, when Gumby's was shut down for failing to pay rent after operating there for 18 years.

The building is owned and was taken over by Zapolski Real Estate after Gumby's shut down.

Sabrina Jones, director of East Coast Operations of Zapolski Real Estate and property manager for 306 W.

Franklin St., said they had several problems with both the current and some of the former owners.

"I have fond memories of Pokey Stix," she said. "I know the students will miss those."

Jones said they were looking at offers from different businesses to lease the space.

She said it is likely a lease with a new tenant will be signed by the time schools reopen.

But that doesn't mean a new business will be ready to open at that time, she said.

"We're just not sure at this point," Jones said.



Mellow Mushroom opening delayed

When Karen Halsey and Kent Hodges decided to open a new Mellow Mushroom in Chapel Hill, they hoped to have it running in time for the new school year.

But an unknown sewer line pushed the date back by at least 4 months, said Hodges, co-owner of the Wake Forest, Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill Mellow Mushrooms.

"We were hoping to be open by August," he said. "That's not going to happen, obviously."

The sewer line was found under the restaurant's patio — which will be located where Ham's used to be at 310 W. Franklin St. — prevented the owners from moving forward in the construction process.

The pipe serves both what will become the Mellow Mushroom and the Shortbread Lofts, which is also being developed.

Hodges said they need to apply for a building permit to begin construction, but can't until the pipeline is moved.

Plans for the new Mellow Mushroom include a patio with a live stage, about 15 indoor televisions and a beer selection of mostly local breweries.



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