

# The Artsy "Roadhouse"

PAIGE HAGGARD Staff Writer

Are you a bit bored with the Five Points scene? Tired of the same bar, with the same things, every time you go out? Do you long for something a little less...collegiate? Well, you obviously haven't tried the Art Bar.

Owned by Clark Ellefson and Jeffrey A. Helsley, the Art Bar opened three years ago. The Congaree Vista Visitor's guide says the Art Bar is "Columbia's only self-proclaimed urban roadhouse." But that's not even the beginning.

The Art Bar is located at 1211 Park St., and it's easy to spot. It's yellow and has a lot of Christmas lights. Christmas lights are in the front window spelling out "Art Bar," around a little tree in the front, draped around the top of the building and even around a statue on top of the building.

The inside is funky to say the least. Again, there's the Christmas light motif; lights weave along the ceiling — and these aren't small dainty lights, but the big, bold older outdoor sort. There are several booths in the front and two S-tables that are quite comfortable for lounging on

after a long night. Adding to the visual texture of the bar are two chandeliers shaped like jacks.

Further inside is an island bar. The island top is surrounded by crumpled metal, and object lights dangle from the top. These lights sport everything from zebras and dresses to, my personal favorite, a piece of toast with a pad of butter.

Art decks the walls. In one particular

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piece with a fish, the more you stare at it, the more you see. This can be an evening's entertainment in and of itself.

The back room is a dance floor/band room. Images in day-glow paint fill the room. A projector throws pictures onto the back wall, to create a unique dancing experience.

Connected to this back room is a lounge that furthers the Christmas light

theme. It contains many comfortable patio chairs and a couple of couches. This room also houses the "Back Bar," which is open Friday and Saturday nights.

Some kind of music is always playing. The type of music depends on the bartender and the crowd, but there's something for everyone. For example, last Friday's playlist included 10,000 Homo DJs, Elastic, Naked Eyes and Afghan Whigs.

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Fridays and Saturdays are dance nights. The nights have very distinct personalities, but both are full of energy and dance music.

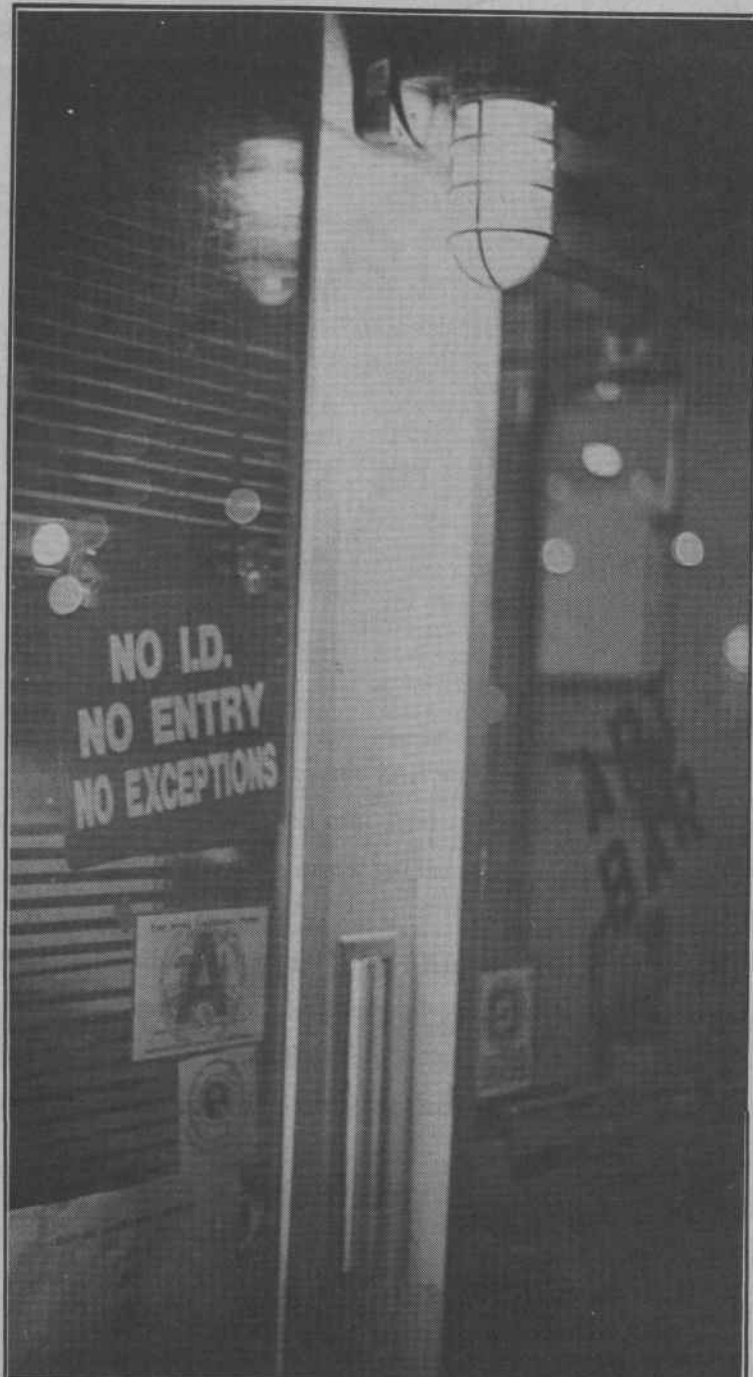
Happy Hour is Friday from 5 to 8 p.m. It's a good time to check out the Art Bar's wide variety of liquid refreshments at a discount.

But that's not all the Art Bar has to offer. Two Worlds Collide is an open-mike night where participants get a chance to read poetry or short fiction, to play acoustic music or to just sound off. The Art Bar sponsors the Art Bar Players, an improvisational troupe, and a venue for "other-worldly" happenings with Psychic Sundays. For specifics about these events, call the Art Bar at 254-4792.

One other important fact about the Art Bar is that admission is free. That's right — there's NO COVER CHARGE.

However, the best thing about the Art Bar is that it's always changing. Each night is marked by the different personality of the different crowds. People of many ages (though not under 21...sorry, freshmen), backgrounds and lifestyles can be found at the Art Bar.

So, what are you waiting for? Pick a night and see how eclectic the Art Bar really is.



TYSON PETTIGREW The Gamecock

The Art Bar, located at 1211 Park Street, features a funky decor and variety of different events for anyone over the age of 21.

## Clinton calls for TV rating system

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Getting pledges from the TV industry to rate programs for violence and air more educational shows for children are among President Clinton's goals for a proposed meeting next month with TV executives, according to administration officials.

Though telecommunications legislation, expected to become law this year, would require the industry to rate shows, the industry has vowed to fight the provision in court.

A voluntary ratings system would be one way for Clinton and other anti-TV-violence supporters to hedge their bets. But past efforts by members of Congress to persuade the industry to rate programs on its own have failed.

Still, administration officials hope they can put pressure on the TV

industry by thrusting it into the national spotlight.

But Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., said in an interview he doesn't think a lot could be accomplished at the meeting Clinton wants to have with TV executives.

"I have misgivings. It's just another delay where people get together and talk about more studies and commissions and blah blah blah."

Broadcast and cable executives are reluctant to rate programs, saying it would be a logistical nightmare — for instance, trying to keep up with program changes at the last minute — and would threaten advertising revenue.

In his State of the Union speech Tuesday, Clinton invited media and entertainment executives to a White House meeting next month "to work

with us on concrete ways to improve what our children see on television. I am ready to work with you."

No date for the meeting was set. Clinton has said he wants the TV industry to air at least three educational shows for children a week. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed Hundt has been pushing for such a rule, but he lacks support among his fellow commissioners on the issue.

Broadcasters are opposed to required programming.

The telecommunications bill awaiting final action in Congress would go far to crack down on TV violence. But a White House aide said if the bill becomes law as anticipated it would be several years before any of the provisions took effect.

The bill would require new TV sets

to be equipped with a chip that recognizes programs electronically rated for violence, sex and other objectionable content. And, it would require the TV industry to rate its programs. If not, a panel would create a ratings system for broadcasters to use.

Then parents using remote control-like devices could block out whole categories of programs or specific ones.

A group of Democratic lawmakers — including Sens. Kent Conrad of South Dakota and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Reps. Edward Markey of Massachusetts and James Moran of Virginia — will ask network and cable executives in a letter today to drop their resistance and work on a ratings system.

## Three sisters come to Workshop Theatre in Tony award winning play

JESSICA NASH Staff Writer

This weekend, Workshop Theatre will usher in the new year with its production of the Broadway hit "The Sisters Rosensweig," by Wendy Wasserstein. Produced by Diana Price and Amy Lavine and directed by Ellen Douglas Schlaeffer, the community theater project promises to be a success.

The Tony award winning play revolves around three very different sisters who are united by their common past. Around the family drama, events of modern, historical and political significance unfold. This play is a must-see for patrons of the latest in theater.

Sara Rosensweig is an American banker living in a stately English house, and her 54th birthday brings together an eclectic mix of guests — whether she invites them or not. Her sister Pfeni, a world traveler who used to write about oppression, breezes in with an unusual entourage. The third sister Georgious, a radio psychologist in Boston with no real credentials, bustles in during the midst of seeming chaos. Sara's daughter and the various men in the sisters' lives add to the diverse company.

The stage is set for an odd, yet heart-warming birthday party, which serves as an occasion for nostalgia among the three sisters. The birthday weekend coincides with the August 1991 coup in

the former Soviet Union and demonstrations in Lithuania. The play also touches on today's humanitarian and social concerns, such as world hunger and the emerging feminist voice.

According to producer Diana Price, the loveable story portrays three sisters who have a history together but are extremely different.

"They reflect on their pasts and look at it in light of the present. And then they look forward to the future," Price said.

Schlaeffer has always wanted to do something with a Wasserstein work, and when the rights for this play became available in 1995, she snatched the opportunity for Workshop.

"She has definitely had her eye on this one," Price said. "And I'm impressed with the people she has put together for the show. They really look like a family up there. It's a good thing for Workshop."

Price said rehearsal is going well, and Columbia should expect a "very funny" opening night.

"The Sisters Rosensweig" opens Jan. 26 and runs through Feb. 8. Evening performances are at 8 p.m., and the Sunday matinee is at 3 p.m. Ticket prices are \$11 for adults and \$8 for students. For more information, call 799-6551.

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