

The Free Tangent

Free University Group Acquires The Tangent; Additional Investors Sought From Community

A group of private investors, consisting partially of Midpeninsula Free University members and aided by a \$1,500 investment by the MFU, have acquired the business of the defunct Tangent restaurant at 117 University Avenue, Palo Alto, and will reopen it in early February, under the tentative name "The Free Tangent," as a community kitchen, meeting place and coffee house. Free University member Mark Jensen is the principal investor and formal leaseholder, and will manage the business himself. He will be assisted by a Board of Advisors drawn from the community, representing, hopefully, as many community interests as possible. According to Jensen, the community consists of "those people, young and old, who want to participate in the decisions which affect their eating establishment." The investors have reaffirmed their earlier hope to broaden community participation beyond the Free University alone, to provide a "lack of exclusivity necessary and valuable to the business and to the community." The Free University will elect a representative to the Board of Advisors, which will also, Jensen hopes, represent such groups as Stanford faculty, graduates and undergraduates, the Involvement Corps, Palo Alto downtown businessmen, area High Schools, the Free high School, civic, cultural, and recreation agencies and other interests.



Jensen

MANAGEMENT

The manager will be directly responsible for all aspects of day-to-day operation. The Board of Advisors will have the authority to terminate or renew the manager's contract every six months, and to regularly advise the manager on all operational aspects, particularly on financial matters. The Board's meetings will be open to the community. The Board, in turn, will be elected by the community

every six months. The community is also expected to provide continuing feedback regarding operations, principally through monthly meetings scheduled for 6:30p.m. on the first Sunday of each month. Decisions of these meetings will be binding on the board, but not on the manager. "The board will bear the burden," says Jensen, "of demonstrating to the community that policies which are not implemented are unfair, not feasible or otherwise impossible."

In exchange for its contribution, the Free University has been granted right of first refusal on the use of any of the leased premises for organizational office space.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

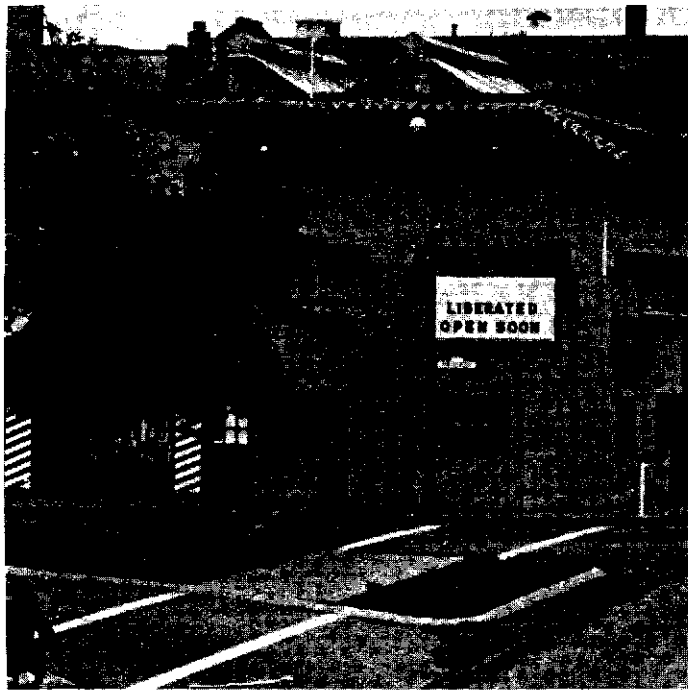
The Free Tangent, as defined by its organizers, is a "cooperative of ordinary people," run on a nonprofit basis by, and for, the midpeninsula community. It's yours, your voice can be heard, and your money will count. The initial investors have listed some immediate priorities:

1. MONEY. An additional \$5000 is needed, very urgently, to meet the goal of \$15,000 initial capital. Small investors - \$100, \$200 or more - are sorely needed to complete this initial starting sum. If you're interested, call Sherri Black after 1 PM at 854-6009. Ask your friends!
2. LABOR. We are undertaking an extensive cleaning and redecoration. We need skilled and unskilled help of many kinds. Contact Mark Jensen at The Free Tangent or the MFU, 328-4941.
3. MEETINGS. Meetings for interested persons will be held at The Free Tangent on Sundays, beginning at 6:30 PM.

Jensen expects the lease to take effect on February 1, and a \$5,000 community-directed renovation program will begin immediately. The one-year lease covering the premises, equipment and ancillary rights will cost \$1,000 per month. Jensen plans to apply for transfer of the old Tangent's beer license, and has indicated that renovation plans include restricting sale and consumption to a single room at the rear of the building. He has also expressed the hope that strong management and the infusion of new community participation will reduce the loitering/vandalism problems prevalent on the Tangent-Poppycock block during the past year. "Believe me," he has said, "we have a heavy concern about conditions on this corner. There are no present plans for booking full-scale live entertainment, although a sound system may be installed for future use. Jensen has indicated that the Illegitimate Theatre, an improvisational group formerly based in the old Tangent, may be welcomed back.

NONPROFIT OPERATION

The investors intend the Free Tangent's operations to be nonprofit, with primary emphasis being placed on service to the midpeninsula community. If food service facilities are sufficient, the Free University



will probably move its Thursday Coordinating Council meetings to the new location, and other groups will be welcome under the same conditions. The manager will post publicly the policies he's charged with implementing, and his staff will be hired, whenever possible, from within the immediate community. The investors have listed an order of priorities for The Free Tangent:

1. To provide a viable and attractive service to the community.
2. To provide emotionally and economically satisfying work for the staff, who are members of the community.
3. To create an environment which respects individual freedom and encourages inclusiveness. "The success of this operation," Jensen concludes, "depends on how much the entire community wants to build something for itself." In this one instance, the community's wishes won't be diverted by the need for profit; the community's first chance to direct its own business will be at the first monthly meeting, Sunday, February 1, at its own Free Tangent.

Fred Nelson

COURTS

From page 16

attributed to them, and because of their political beliefs. "I cannot ignore the entire picture," said Reisch, and a public defender retorted that "these men are being sentenced for their political beliefs, beliefs that none of us is equipped to judge... who knows, twenty years from now their beliefs may be shared by our whole society, maybe not... these people are patriotic, not criminal in nature... nobody was physically hurt by them...we should treat them accordingly."

McGee, referred to repeatedly as the leader of the group, was the most visibly shaken of the seven, and tried to withdraw his guilty plea when he learned the extent of his possible sentence. He was particularly upset by accusations in the probation reports, and by the probation officer's apparent charge that he had not cooperated with the probation survey.

Mc Gee's lawyer contended that he had been afraid to talk openly because of public notoriety that already had "Grey Line tours going by the defendant's home every day." McGee had also expected a much lighter sentence, and was reminded by the Judge that "nobody promised you anything less than statute maximum." McGee and the others came into the courtroom through the public door and left through the rear, in chains. When offered a chance for final testimony, McGee just waved weakly over the barricade at his wife and children and said, almost inaudibly, "I just want to be with my family," and was led off. All of us felt for him, all of us except his wife Donna, who left to the stand and shrilly demanded the return of her confiscated guns. McGee, Peddy, Neher and Lake have appealed, saying they were sentenced on the basis of evidence extraneous to the crimes for which they were actually convicted. Donna McGee, charming to the end, is demanding an attorney general's investigation of law enforcement processes, claiming officials used her to force her husband to plead guilty and saying, "When we as law-abiding citizens observe on television and in the newspapers other demonstrators disrupt, destroy and mutilate people and property without fear of prosecution, we can only assume it is legal for everyone to do the same."

The Free University has been joined in its suit by Robert and Carole Cullenbine, Gail Teel and Jeanne Friedman, and cites four specific assaults on the MFU as well as loss of registration income, expenses incurred during the MFU's lengthy stakeouts, loss of other income and danger to "mental and emotional well-being" incurred during the attacks and the exhaustive defensive effort mounted against them. The suit was filed by attorneys James Wolpman and Andrew Cohen of Menlo Park, and pretrial discovery procedures will begin soon.

cont. on page 18



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