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The extreme side of southern Illinois



MANDY DALY ~ DAILY EGYPTIAN

Peter Lynch, left, Renat Geller and Will Austin play paintball at Area 51 April 6. The extreme sports facility also offers a skate park and BMX bike course.

Area 51 offers extreme sports

Mandy Daly
DAILY EGYPTIAN

When you think of the outdoors in southern Illinois, an image comes to mind: biking and hiking through the Shawnee National Forest, taking a walk around Campus Lake or enjoying a Sunset

Concert. There is one more image that can be added to outdoor activities in the region: extreme sports. Area 51 is an extreme sports facility in Elkhart, located just north of Carbondale. Area 51 has outdoor and indoor paintball fields, an indoor skateboard park and an indoor BMX bike course.

Fred Shadowen owns and man-

ages Area 51. Originally, the location of Area 51 was a sawmill built in 1965 where Shadowen worked alongside his father. The sawmill sat empty after it was closed until 2002 when the National Bike League approached Shadowen, asking to build an indoor BMX bike track in southern Illinois. Shadowen decided to turn it into a place where people in southern Illinois could enjoy the fun of

extreme sports.

"It just happened," Shadowen said.

The BMX track was first built and he realized it would be better with more extreme sports to attract people. He decided to put together the skate park and then the paintball courses came.

"It takes all three to make it," Shadowen said.

The BMX bike track is nation-

ally sanctioned by the National Bike League. It is also the only indoor track in Illinois. A street light hanging in front of the bikers turns green to signal the beginning of the race. The rack that holds the bikes in place drops, sending the bikers flying over the hills and careening around the turns. The cost of using the nationally sanctioned BMX track is only \$7 for 2.5 hours.

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Renat Geller aims for a shot while paintballing at Area 51 April 6.

There is also a \$1 helmet fee for those who forget to bring their own.

The skateboard park is between the indoor paintball field and the BMX track. It has a 4 foot halfpipe and quarterpipes. A funbox is in the middle. There are a lot of grindrails in the skate park including a 5 stair with grindrails. The price of skateboarding is \$6 for 2.5 hours of playtime. There is also a \$1 fee for helmets.

The paintball field inside is a professional sub-air speedball field, which contains large yellow and blue inflated bunkers to hide behind. The walls and rafters are covered in colored

plotches where it has been pummeled with paintballs.

Shadowen considers the main outdoor course to be a "bunker field". He also has two other outdoor fields, another "bunker field" and a wooded playing field. If you have your own paintball gun, the playing fee is \$15. Equipment (gun and helmet) can be provided for \$20, which includes the fee for playing. Although the paintballs must be bought at Area 51, the prices are actually the same or less than what one can buy at the store, starting out at \$18 for 500 paintballs.

Area 51 prices

BMX: \$7 for 2.5 hours, \$1 helmet fee

Skateboard: \$6 for 2.5 hours, \$1 helmet fee

Paintball: \$20, includes gun, helmet and playing time, \$15 for just playing time, \$18 for 500 paintballs



MANDY DALY ~ DAILY EGYPTIAN

The Phi Sigma Kappa group pick up paintballs to load them in their guns April 6. Area 51 offers outdoor and indoor paintball fields. The playing fee for paintball is \$15, and paintballs are \$18 for 500. A gun and helmet can be provided for an extra \$5.



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Puddles left from a recent rain reflect atop a bluff near the main entrance to Giant City State Park on Tuesday, April 1. The park website offers at least 8 trails ranging in length from one-third of a mile to 12 miles; the River to River trail also runs through the park.



A visitor to Giant City State Park jumps across the Devil's Standtable rock formation near Devil's Standtable Nature Trail Tuesday. This rock formation stands along a bluffline that is between 70 - 80 feet tall.

EMILY SUNBLADE
DAILY EGYPTIAN

Giant City State Park

Audra Ord
DAILY EGYPTIAN

Tree branches cast finger-like shadows on the sandstone bluff as the sun slowly sinks below the horizon. The woods are full of white noise; a stream can be heard burbling in the distance and the wind gently rustles some leaves nearby. The area seems almost magical in the fading light, a natural paradise and an escape from the noise of the town.

With temperatures rising and the trees blooming, the outdoors is becoming more appealing to those who have been cooped up indoors all winter. There are several opportunities to take advantage of the natural beauty of the southern Illinois region.

Giant City State Park, located 12 miles south of Carbondale, is a 4,000-acre park that offers a variety of recreational activities, including hiking, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, fishing and rappelling.

"It's a great place to go and hang out with friends and get out of the house, because a lot of students seem to just take that for granted," said Fisnik Zumberi, a junior from Palatine studying

mechanical engineering.

The park is named for its most prominent natural feature, a group of sandstone bluffs with hallways running between them. The rock reminded early visitors of city streets and buildings, hence the name "Giant City."

Giant City offers activities for everyone from the casual hiker to the serious outdoorsman. There are seven trails in the park that are two miles or less, and most of them are easy to moderate hiking.

Bob Martin, the site superintendent for the park, said the Giant City Trail is a great trail for beginning hikers. He said the trail is a mile of moderate hiking and it takes hikers through the "streets" of Giant City.

Also on the Giant City Trail is the infamous Fat Man's Squeeze, a narrow hallway between two bluffs that has become the subject of many double-dog dares.

Martin said people occasionally get stuck in Fat Man's Squeeze, which narrows to a width of less than one foot at its narrowest point. The only way to get through is to walk sideways, and it is impossible to turn your head or pivot your feet.



A creek flows down a bluffline near picnic shelter #1 in Giant City Park Tuesday. The park map shows at least seven different areas within the park with picnic tables or shelter pavilions.
EMILY SUNBLADE
 DAILY EGYPTIAN

“A young man last year — we didn’t know if we were going to get him out,” Martin said. “We had dumped two gallons of oil on him, chicken oil, and still had troubles pulling that boy out.”

A popular destination in the park is the restaurant at the Giant City Lodge. The restaurant serves food daily, though Martin suggests making reservations on the weekends.

“The food here is so good ... it’s country-style. Sunday is the best day; it’s really cheap,” said Amanda

Anderson, a sophomore from Belleville studying marketing.

In addition to hiking, Giant City also caters to hunting, fishing, horseback riding and many other recreational activities.

Guided trail riding and pony rides are available through the Giant City stables, or riders can bring their own horses and ride the 12-mile equestrian trail.

Zumberi said he likes to go out to the park with friends to grill out, play lacrosse or play his guitar.

“It’s very scenic; it’s a great place to just sit down with your guitar and play some music while being surrounded in serenity,” Zumberi said.

Giant City State Park is open from 6 a.m. until p.m. daily, though the trails and the water tower at the lodge close at dusk.

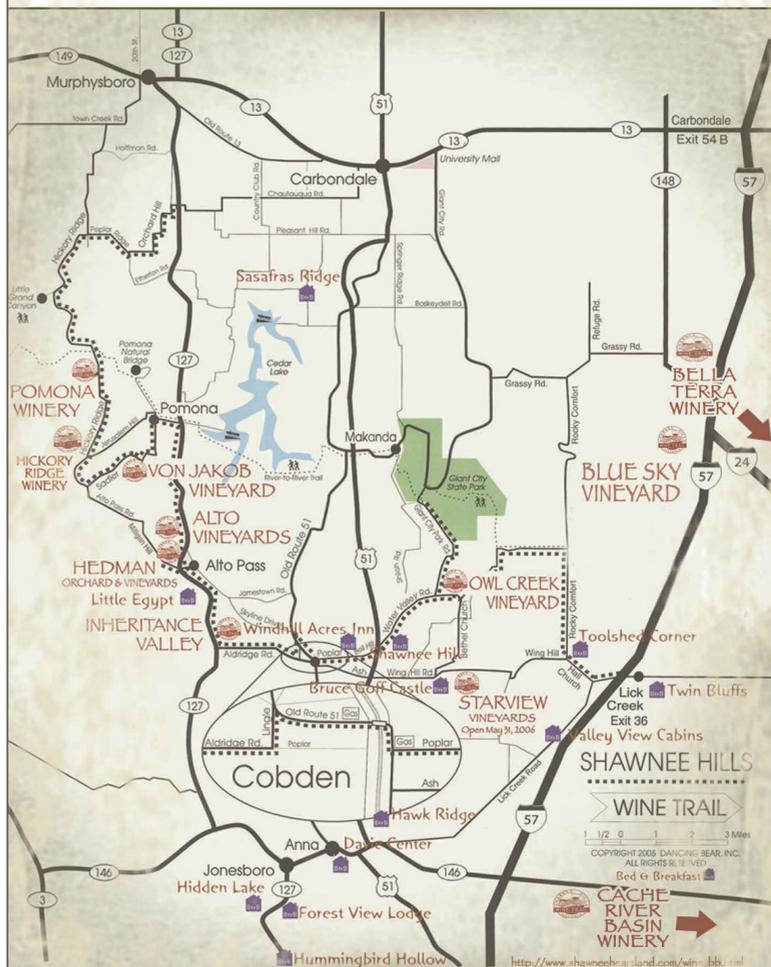
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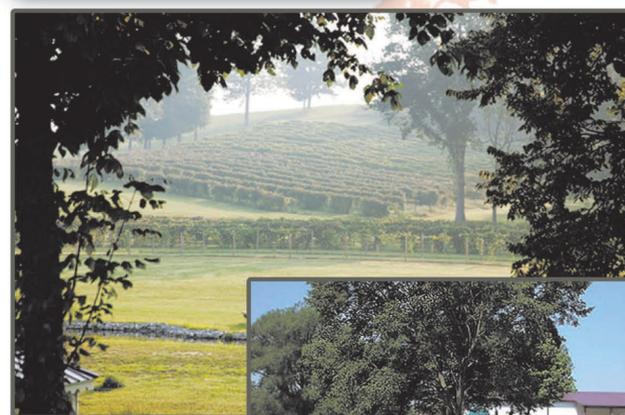
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Booby's has been supporting the local music scene since 1985. We offer submarine sandwiches, deli delights, appetizers, and deserts. We also have daily drink specials. Enjoy live music Friday and Saturday nights in our beer garden. Come by during our new hours. We are now open until 2:00am Thursday – Saturday and will be delivering until 2:00am as well. Stop by and enjoy Booby's.

Bella Terra Winery

Bella Terra Winery is family owned and opened for business in June 2007. Located 3 miles north of Tunnel Hill, IL, Bella Terra Winery boasts 80 acres of rolling hills, a lake view, and 11 acres of beautiful vineyard. We produce both dry and sweet wines. For outdoor enjoyment, we have a regulation bocci ball court and horseshoe court. We offer inside seating for over 100 guests. Enjoy a sandwich, pizza, or ice cream from our kitchen. If you prefer the outdoors, bring your own picnic and enjoy one of our many shade trees. We are the perfect place for wedding receptions or family gatherings.



Located in Cobden, Illinois, Starview Winery is a great place to come and get away for a day. With a large inviting deck to sit on or under the large oak tree, you can enjoy the most scenic and breathtaking views that Southern Illinois has to offer. Take a walk around their large pond and see the Koi, turtles, and other wildlife that migrates through. Sample their fine wines, which is free of cost Monday-Friday. Their tasting room and gift shop are open year round and in the cooler months you can sit inside by a real wood burning fireplace or outside on the enclosed, heated deck. If you are hungry, you can order from their seasonal menu or select a variety of gourmet treats that we sell in our tasting room. Large groups, busses, and tours are welcome with advance notice. If you are arriving in a limo, ask your limo driver to call ahead so we can receive the very best service. Graduating students bring your families and come celebrate at Starview Winery.



Cache River Basin Winery is located 5 miles south of Vienna, IL and is 17 miles north of Metropolis, IL. The winery offers a serene and scenic atmosphere. Next door to the winery is its latest addition, Wineaux's Restaurant, which opened in October of 2007. Wineaux's Restaurant is upscale and affordable specializing in food cooked using wine. It seats 60 people on the outdoor deck and 80 people in the indoor facilities. This can all be found overlooking the vineyard and large wine bottle-shaped pond. Come enjoy great wine and delicious food in a relaxing and scenic atmosphere.



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The sun sets over Crab Orchard Lake at Propeller Point on Tuesday, April 8. According to the refuge website, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge has an estimated 1.2 million visitors annually and is a major contributor to the local eco-tourism.

Crab Orchard and Kincaid Lake

Audra Ord
DAILY EGYPTIAN

Looking across the lake, it is difficult to distinguish the gray water from the overcast sky. The fisherman casts; his lure hits the water and disappears below the surface, sending rolling ripples across the otherwise placid lake.

A cool wind blows, threatening rain, and Brandon Mills reels in his line.

"I'm just trying to get started fishing before the weather turns nasty," said Mills, a senior from Flora studying administration of justice.

Mills said he frequents the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge to fish and hunt during deer season.

Both Crab Orchard and Kincaid Lake offer numerous outdoor recreational activities for everybody, including fishing, boating, hunting, hiking, camping and wildlife observation.

Crab Orchard is a 44,000-acre area between Carbondale and Marion that is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals.

Refuge stickers must be on all vehicles while in the refuge area; day stickers as well as annual passes can be purchased at the refuge visitor center.

Because it is a wildlife refuge, the area is primarily managed for wildlife purposes and the recreational activities are dependent on the wildlife, said Karin Magera, a park ranger at the refuge.

"We have so many people in the area and the lake that we manage the recreation for the people at the same time," Magera said. "We can do both without harming wildlife too much."

The refuge receives more than 1 million visitors annually, though the number of visitors depends on

the season, Magera said. She said hunters come in the fall and locals make day trips to the refuge on weekends when the weather is nice.

Magera said Crab Orchard is unique because of its location. She said it is in a rural location, but it is close enough to town that many people can enjoy it.

"Here we have this sort of rural community surrounding the refuge, so you don't have the urban problem that you have in bigger cities but at the same time we have this huge population that can enjoy the refuge," Magera said.

Andrea Dryden of Energy said she goes a couple times a week to walk the trails. She said she enjoys it because it is peaceful and there is usually nobody around.

"It's very nice to enjoy the nature walks, and it's healthy," Dryden said.

Kincaid Lake, located about three miles northwest of Murphysboro, offers several recreational activities primarily focused on water but also includes camping, hiking and equestrian trails.

There are approximately 30 miles of hiking trails in the Kincaid Lake area, including the 15-mile Kincaid Trail.

The Kincaid Trail goes into the remote fingers of the lake and ends up near the Crisenberry Dam, said Linda Hauser, administrative support clerk for the Forest Service.

"Southern Illinois is a diverse area and Kincaid Lake is one of those areas that highlights the diversity," Hauser said.

Hauser said the spillway located near the southern end of the lake is a well-known area that is often frequented by students.

Whether you want to hike, bike, fish, boat or just find a quiet place to study, Crab Orchard and



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A coot swims in Crab Orchard lake April 8. Coots are common waterfowl in southern Illinois and are abundant in the Crab Orchard area.

Kincaid Lake offer several options.

"There are so many resources you can take advantage of for a minimum price," Mills said. "You might as well get yourself outdoors and get active."

Audra Ord can be reached at
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FERNE CLYFFE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Reynolds said one or two of the trails are still closed from damages caused by the ice storm earlier this year, though most trails as well as the roads and campgrounds are open. For updates on trail cleanup, call the park office at 618-995-2411.

Cave-in-Rock State Park, near Golconda, is named for a large cave that has been carved into the sandstone bluff along the Ohio River.

The cave is 55 feet wide, 40 feet tall at the entrance and 350 feet deep. It was discovered in 1729 by a French explorer and was a hideout for outlaws, bandits and river pirates until the mid-1830s, according to the park Web site.

"I enjoyed the pirate cave and the sheer cliffs that overlook the majestic Ohio River," said Garrick Haywood, a senior from Washington, Ill., studying special education.

Two trails lead hikers to the cave, though other unmarked trails are open to hikers as well. There are also opportunities for picnicking, boating, fishing and camping in the park.

The trails to the cave are currently closed because of the high water level of the river, but the park is still open to visitors, said Mike Gullett, the site superintendent.

Gullett said the river will most likely return to its normal level in two weeks.

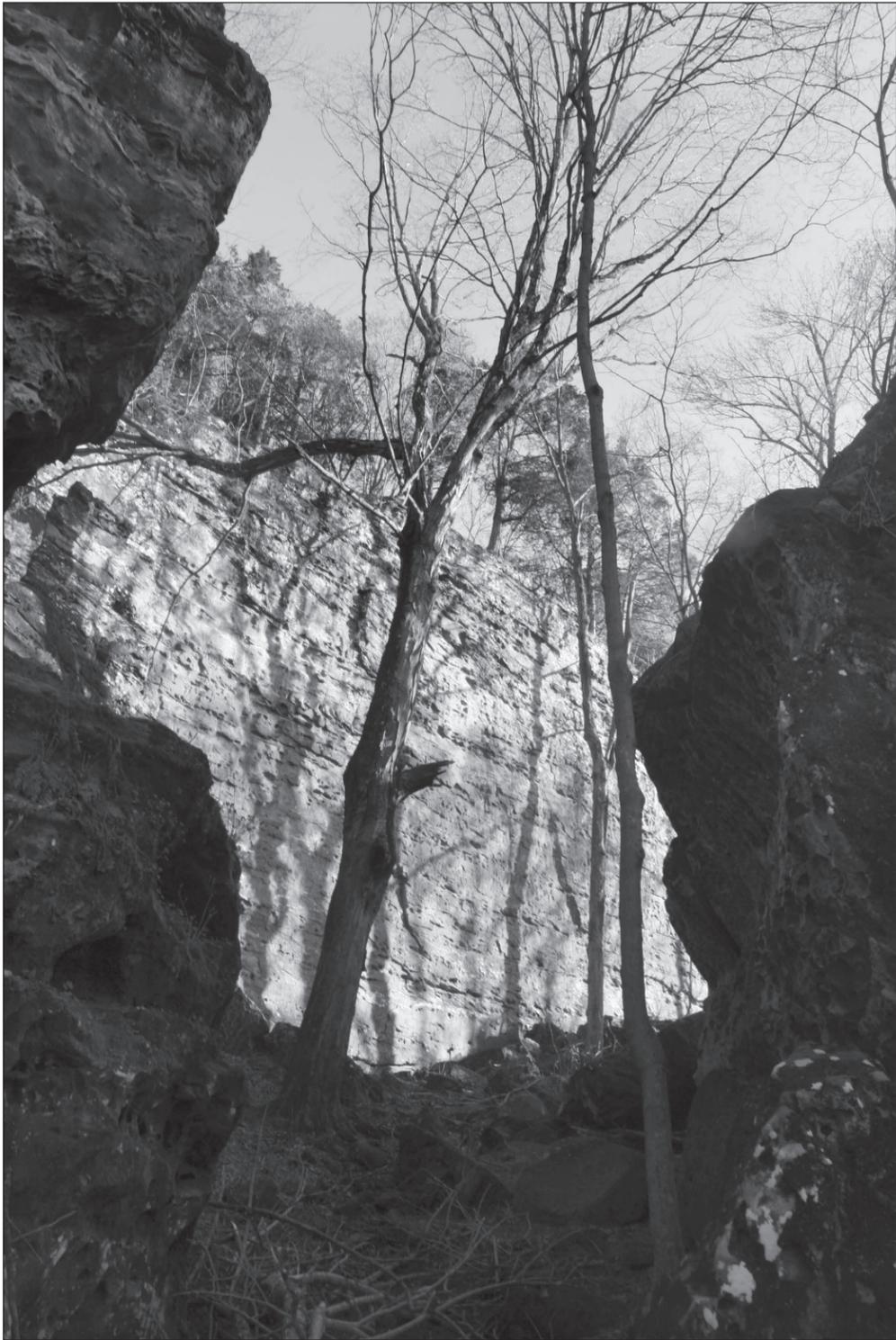
Until the cave trails are open, visitors can stop by the park lodge and restaurant to try the "greatest blackberry cobbler you've ever had in your life," said Gullett.

For restaurant reservations or to reserve one of the eight rental cottages, call the park office at 618-289-4545.

With the weather warming, now is a great time to visit either Ferne Clyffe State Park or Cave-in-Rock State Park.

"There is so much more to southern Illinois than Carbondale," Otten said. "It's a real shame for people to come here to school and never experience anything outside The Strip and Carbondale. There is so much beauty out there."

Audra Ord can be reached at 536-3311 ext. 275 or at amarie06@siu.edu.



A few trees grow amongst the bluffs at Fern Clyffe State Park. Fern Clyffe is located 12 miles south of Marion on Illinois Route 37.

EMILY SUNBLADE
DAILY EGYPTIAN



A fern plant grows on the side of a rock formation in Ferne Clyffe State park in Goreville, Ill. According to the Illinois DNR website, over 700 species of plants exist within the park.

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Southern Illinois ... naturally

Ferne Clyffe and Cave-in-Rock State Parks

Audra Ord
DAILY EGYPTIAN

As you progress down the trail, what began as a barely audible burble has increased in volume to a constant crashing as the water falls upon the rock.

A few more minutes and the source of the sound — a 100-foot-tall intermittent waterfall — comes into view. You stand mesmerized, watching as the water flows from the top of the cliff and drops from ledge to ledge before becoming a part of the stream below.

This waterfall is a feature on the Rocky Hollow Trail, a popular hiking trail in Ferne Clyffe State Park.

Both Ferne Clyffe State Park and Cave-in-Rock State Park boast unique geological features that draw several thousand visitors annually.

Ferne Clyffe is a scenic park that is easily accessible, said Bill Reynolds, site superintendent at the park.

The park is situated near Goreville, 12 miles south of Marion, five miles off of Interstate-57 and 2 miles off of Interstate-24.

Reynolds said his favorite areas of the park are the Rocky Hollow Trail, which leads to the waterfall and the Hawks' Cave Trail, which leads to Hawks' Cave, a 150-foot-long shelter bluff.

"A lot of young families or elderly folks still want to be able to see something really unique and a lot of these really unique geological features, like waterfalls and shelter bluffs, are along these trails," Reynolds said.

The park has approximately 22 miles of equestrian and hiking trails, five campgrounds and a 16-acre lake. In addition to camping and hiking, other recreational activities include hunting, fishing, picnicking and rappelling.

"I like to sit on the cliffs; it's relaxing to sit and chill up there and it's really pretty," said Leah Otten, a junior from Frankfort studying dental hygiene.

See FERNE CLYFFE, Page 11



Sandstone cliffs are a prominent feature in southern Illinois, like this one in Ferne Clyffe State Park. Rock features and formations can be seen on almost all of the park's 18 trails.

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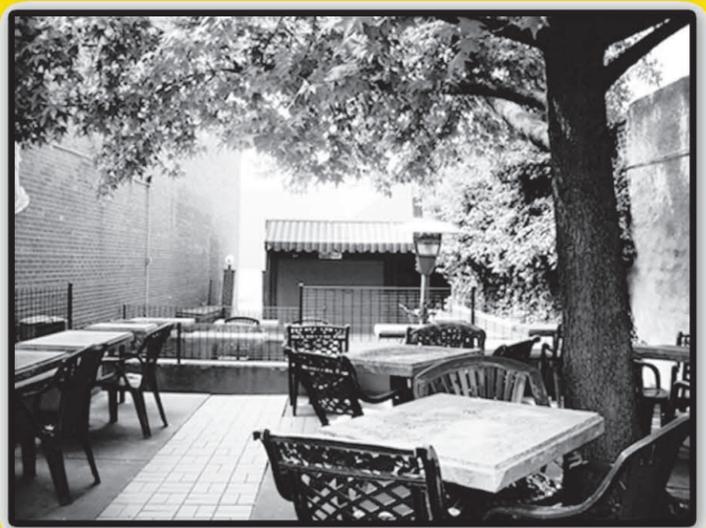
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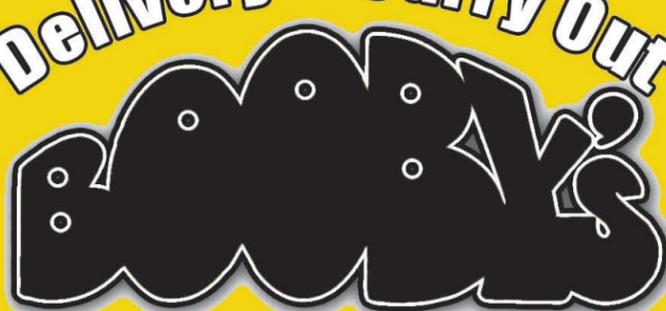
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