

# **ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET**

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-2008-0018

**HLC DATE:**

June 23, 2008

**PC DATE:**

July 22, 2008

August 12, 2008

**APPLICANT:** City of Austin/Steve Wertheimer, owner

**HISTORIC NAME:** The Continental Club

**WATERSHED:** East Bouldin Creek

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 1315 S. Congress Avenue

**ZONING FROM:** CS-1-V-CO-NCCD-NP to CS-1-H-V-CO-NCCD-NP

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from commercial services – liquor sales, vertical mixed use, conditional overlay, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan combining district zoning (CS-1-V-CO-NCCD-NP) to commercial services, liquor sales, Historic Landmark, vertical mixed use, conditional overlay, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan combining district zoning (CS-1-H-V-CO-NCCD-NP).

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommended the proposed zoning change from commercial services, vertical mixed use, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan combining district zoning (CS-V-NCCD-NP) to commercial services, liquor sales, Historic Landmark, vertical mixed use, conditional overlay, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan combining district zoning (CS-1-H-V-CO-NCCD-NP). Vote: 5-0 (Arriaga, Leary, and Rosato absent). NOTE: The Historic Landmark Commission heard this case before the base zoning change case went before Council on July 24, 2008 to change the base zoning.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** Pending.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The building is not listed in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:** August 21, 2008

**ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky

**PHONE:** 974-6454

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** South River City Neighborhood Association

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The ca. 1947 building has housed the Continental Club, a supper club, burlesque house, and live music venue, since 1955. It possesses significance in the areas of historical associations and community value.

**Architecture:**

One-story rectangular-plan flat-roofed masonry commercial building with a flat parapet, 4-light fixed-sash fenestration with glass brick wainscoting and a central double-leaf entry.

**Historical Associations:**

There is a city building permit to a Mr. L.M. McWhorter for the construction of a masonry store building on this lot, but it is undated. However, it falls between building permits in the same block from the mid-1940s. The 1935 Sanborn map does not show a building on this site, but it does appear in the 1961 update. The building is believed to have been built in mid-1947. The 1947 city directory does not show an entry for this address, although addresses for older buildings on either side of the present Continental Club are listed. The 1946 Southwestern Bell telephone book does not show a listing for the first known business on this site, the Laundromat Half-Hour Laundry, which was run by Selig Ginsburg. (There was another Laundromat Half-Hour Laundry at 1504 West Lynn Street). Telephone books for 1947, 1948 and 1949 show the Laundromat at this address, but by 1950, it had moved its operations to the West Lynn location. The occupant of the building is unknown for 1950, but by the time of the publication of the 1951 telephone book in December of that year, the Paul Wright Electrical Company is listed at this address; the electrical contractors maintained their location here through 1953; the city directory and phone book of 1952 show them here. The building was listed as vacant in the 1954 city directory, but in 1955, the Continental Club first appears at this address, with Clair E. Evans listed as the manager. The Continental Club is not listed in the December, 1954 telephone book, but appears in 1955. The first known newspaper ad for a dance at the Continental Club appears in the Austin American of February 26, 1955 – the club was open to members and their guests.

Originally a posh supper club with live musical entertainment, the Continental Club was located adjacent to the Terrace Motor Hotel, which was a reputable establishment in its heyday, unlike other lodging establishments on South Congress. The Continental Club had a house band, the Bill Taylor combo, but also booked major touring bands of the era. The club is also believed to be the first bar in Travis County to sell liquor by the drink. City directories for 1955 through 1963 read: "Continental Club – beer" indicating that the club, like most in Texas at the time, allowed patrons (usually members of the private club) to bring in their own liquor, but could only sell them set-ups. The 1956 telephone book ad advertises the Continental Club as having dining, dancing and entertainment, offering "Austin's Finest Combo Music" and charcoal-broiled steaks. The ad describes "the Club with the Purple Doors" as catering to the college crowd and private parties. The 1957 telephone book leaves out the "catering to the college crowd" reference. The 1958 telephone book advertises "dancing to the latest hi-fi recordings, with the Bill Taylor Combo "Austin's finest" playing Fridays and Saturdays and a jam session every Sunday afternoon. The 1959 phone book ad invites patrons to dine and dance at "Austin's most beautiful night club", noting that the club opened every day at 5 p.m., but was now closed on Sundays. The Bill Turner Combo was the headliner in the 1960 telephone book ad – "Music for easy listening, nice to remember – for a wonderful evening of entertainment" at "Austin's finest" night club. The club did not advertise in the phone books from 1961 through 1968, but the 1969 phone book

did not have the display ad of previous years, noting only in the listing under "Night Clubs" "Band & Go-Go Girls Nightly" and the 1970 telephone book makes no mention of exotic entertainment. Newspaper ads from 1955 through 1965 advertise live music dances at the club. An ad in the Austin American, June 1, 1967 advertises a live band with exotic dancers. An ad in the American of August 3, 1968 advertises "Dance to the Entertainers – also Go-Go Dancers." Local legend has it that the Continental Club was the first topless bar in Austin, and the first to be shut down.

When the One Knite Tavern, a venerable Austin live music venue at 8<sup>th</sup> and Red River (where Stubb's is today) closed in 1978, the proprietors formed a new association to lease the Continental Club and transformed it into the successor to the One Knite, where Stevie Ray Vaughn and others had played. Bands playing the Continental included Stevie Ray Vaughn, Lou Ann Barton, Joe Ely, Kinky Friedman, and W.C. Clark, with local boys Charlie and Will Sexton occasionally sitting in with the big names. Roosevelt "Grey Ghost" Williams was a fixture at the piano at the Continental in his last years. Mark Pratz and J-Net operated the club from 1983 to 1987, transformed the club into a cutting-edge venue of the new wave and alternative music scene, booking bands such as The Replacements and Social Distortion. Pratz and J-Net went on to own and operate the Liberty Lunch, and the Continental Club was on the verge of closing in 1987 when it was purchased by current owner Steve Wertheimer. Wertheimer refurbished the interior of the club, restoring the original murals meant to invoke fanciful scenes of Europe dating from the time it was a supper club. He has continued the club's long tradition of providing a venue for Austin musicians as well as traveling shows, and special events ranging from annual birthday parties for Elvis Presley, Wanda Jackson, and Buck Owens to car shows. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Continental Club has become known as Austin's premier venue for country, swing, blues, and rockabilly bands, with well-loved local favorites Alejandro Escovedo, Junior Brown, Toni Price, Casper Rawls, and the Mother Truckers maintaining a regular presence in the club. The Continental continues to attract major touring bands to Austin, with appearances by Link Wray, Kris Kristofferson, Candye Kane, Raul Malo and the Mavericks, BR-549, Southern Culture on the Skids, and many others. There is no doubt that the Continental Club is one of Austin's most famous and enduring night spots.

**PARCEL NO.:** 03000103070000

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** The center 30 feet of Lot 2, Block 9, Fairview Park

**ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT:** \$1,710 (income-producing); city portion: \$414.

**APPRAISED VALUE:** \$224,425

**PRESENT USE:** Night club

**CONDITION:** Excellent

**PRESENT OWNER:**

Steve Wertheimer  
1315 S. Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas 78704




**DATE BUILT:** ca. 1947

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** None apparent

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** L.W. McWhorter (1947)

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** None.



 **SUBJECT TRACT**  
 **ZONING BOUNDARY**  
 **PENDING CASE**

**HISTORIC ZONING**  
**ZONING CASE#: C14H-2008-0018**  
**ADDRESS: 1315 S CONGRESS AVE**  
**SUBJECT AREA: 0.000 ACRES**  
**GRID: J21**  
**MANAGER: S. SADOWSKY**



This map has been produced by GIS Services for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.



## OCCUPANCY HISTORY

### 1315 South Congress Avenue

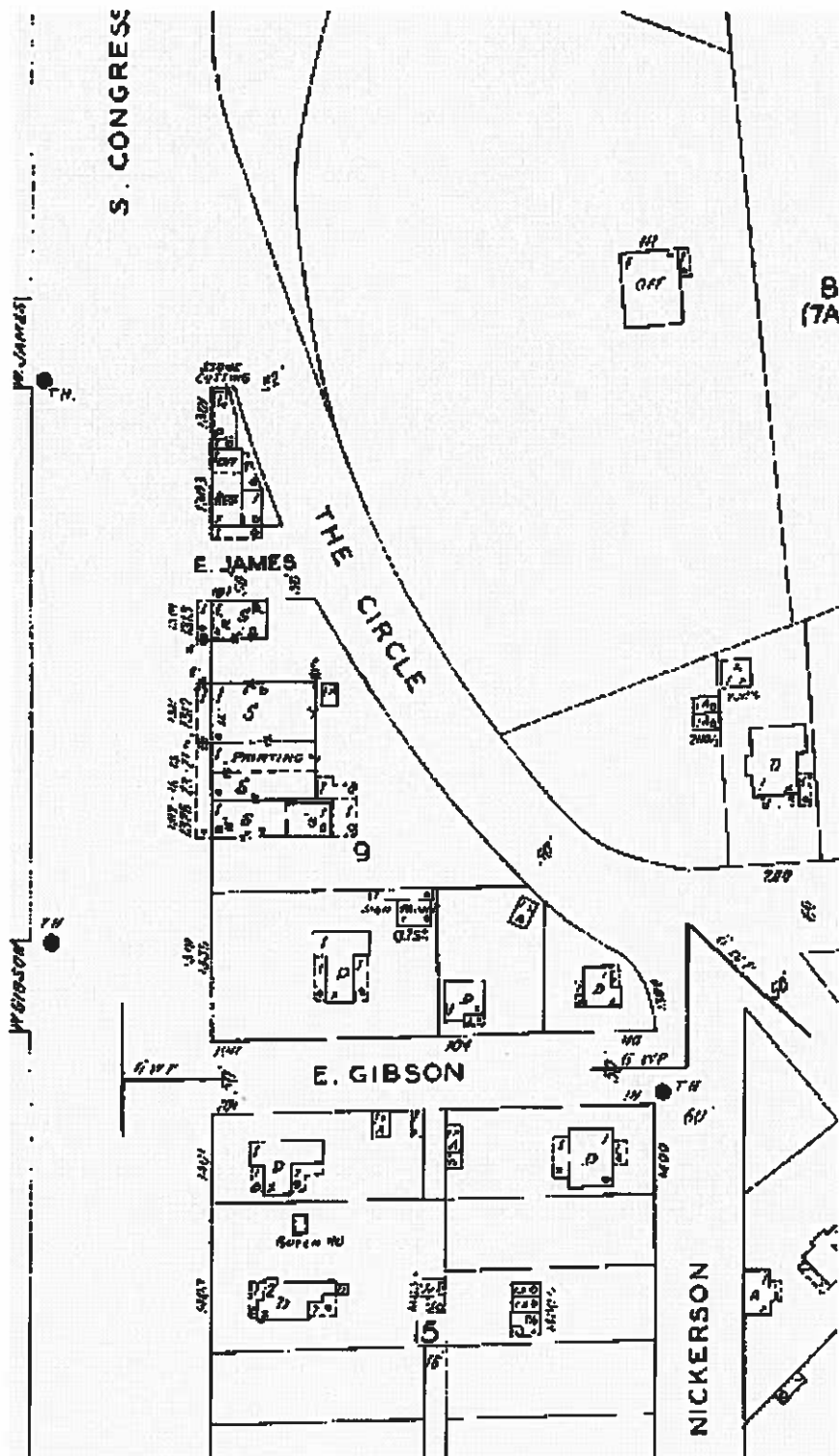
### The Continental Club

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
 By City Historic Preservation Office  
 June, 2008

1987	Continental Club
1981	Continental Night Club Roger Collins, manager
1975	Continental Night Club Martin Schuler, proprietor
1969	Continental Night Club No proprietor or manager listed
1963	Continental Club Beer Joe Malear, proprietor
1957	Continental Club Beer Morris J. McCandless, proprietor

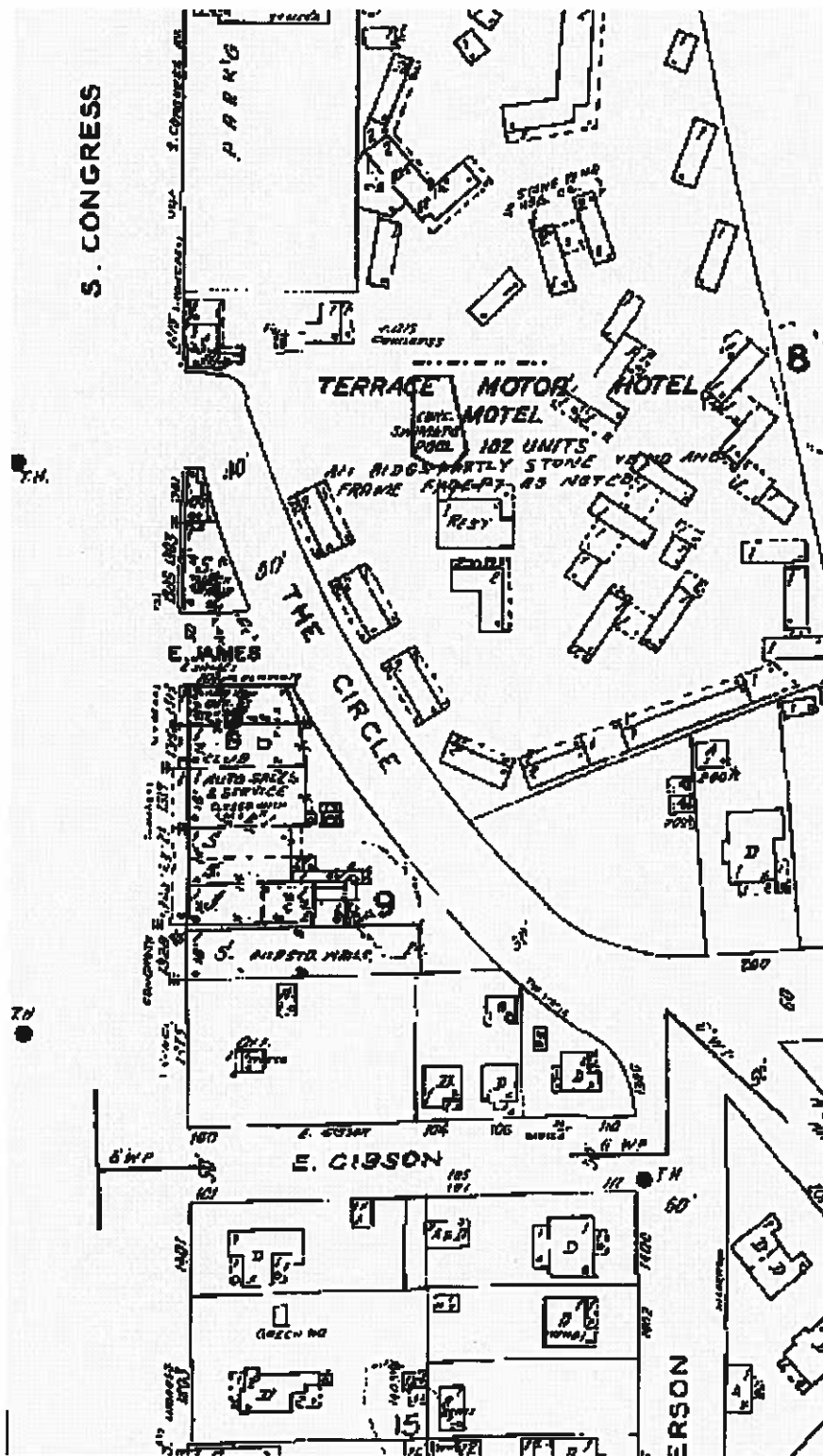
NOTE: Morris J. McCandless was also the proprietor of the Wonder Trailer Park,  
2211 Post Road.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1955 | Continental Club<br>Beer<br>Clair E. Evans, manager   |
| 1954 | Vacant  |
| 1953 | Paul Wright Electrical Company, Inc.<br>Electrical contractors<br>Louis B. Hardeman, vice-president; Harold K. Smith, secretary/treasurer                       |
| 1952 | Paul Wright Electrical Company, Inc.<br>Electrical contractors<br>Louis Hardeman and Harold K. Smith, managers  |
| 1949 | Laundromat Half-Hour Laundry<br>Selig Ginsburg, proprietor<br>NOTE: There was another location of the Laundromat Half-Hour Laundry at<br>1204 West Lynn Street. |
| 1947 | The address is not listed.  |



1935 Sanborn map – the current building is not shown





1962 Sanborn map – the building is denoted as a club (second south of the intersection of E. James Street between Congress Avenue and The Circle)

Mr. L. M. McWhorter 1315 South Congress Ave.  
126 ----- 9 --- 8.30.5' of 1 &  
N.5' of 2  
Swisher Addition  
--- Masonry store building ---  
--- 28292 --- \$6,000.00  
Harold Eitze  
4

Undated building permit to L.M. McWhorter for the construction of a masonry store building at 1315 S. Congress Avenue (believed to be 1947)

Appearing Nightly  
**THE TRI-TONES**  
Straight From Houston's Montage Club  
at the  
**CONTINENTAL CLUB**  
1315 South Congress  
Open to Members and Guests Only

First known ad for the Continental Club  
Austin American, February 26, 1955

**CONTINENTAL  
CLUB**  
1315 S. CONGRESS  
Presents the  
**BILL TURNER TRIO**  
Featuring  
"Tempos by Turner"  
For Reservations  
Phone GR 6-3364

Austin American  
June 8, 1956

The **Continental CLUB** AUSTIN'S FINEST  
RETURNED BECAUSE OF  
GREAT DEMAND  
AUSTIN'S FUNNIEST  
**FLOOR SHOW**  
**THE GEEZINSLAW BROS.**  
APPEARING FRIDAY & SATURDAY NITE  
WITH THE  
**BILL TURNER COMBO**  
BROADCASTING FROM THE BANDSTAND  
FRIDAY AT 10:15 P.M.  
**K.T.B.C.**  
JAZZ CONCERT—SUN. 8 P.M.  
1315 SOUTH CONGRESS  
FOR RESERVATIONS  
HI 2-0601

Austin American  
April 16, 1960

**Dancing . . .**  
AIR CONDITIONED  
**Continental**  
Presents  
**BILL TURNER  
COMBO**  
Featuring  
TEMPOS  
BY  
TURNER  
1315 S. CONGRESS  
GR 6-3364

Austin American  
July 19, 1957

**THE CONTINENTAL CLUB**  
1315 South Congress—GR 6-3364  
Presents  
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY  
3 P.M. UNTIL MIDNIGHT DANCE  
**Barney Tall & Roger Beck**  
50¢ Cover Charge After 8 p.m.  
NOW OPEN AT 10 A.M.

Austin American  
October 1, 1965

**CONTINENTAL  
CLUB**  
1315 S. Congress HI 43750  
With  
**EXOTIC DANCERS**  
Playing Every Night  
**Rhythm Heirs**  
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Austin American  
June 1, 1967

# CONTINENTAL CLUB

1315 S. Congress HI 4-2754

**DANCE**  
TO THE  
**ENTERTAINERS**  
— ALSO —  
**GO-GO DANCERS**

Austin American  
August 3, 1968

# THE CONTINENTAL CLUB

**Tonight**  
**THE LIFT**

**+  
THE JITTERS**

**442-9904**  
**1315 S. Congress**

Austin American-Statesman  
November 20, 1981

# THE CONTINENTAL CLUB

**Tonite**  
**From Above (The Mando & LP)**  
**KILKENNY KATS**  
**FLAT DUO JETS**  
**BARBECUE KILLERS**  
**GLASS EYE, THE WILD GUNS &  
THE DOWNBOW**

**443-7141**

Austin American-Statesman  
July 31, 1987

1315 SOUTH CONGRESS  
"The Club With the Purple Doors"

**Continental**  
CLUB

DINING - DANCING  
ENTERTAINMENT

Offering  
"Austin's Finest  
Combo Music"

CHARCOAL BROILED STEAKS

Catering To the College Crowd  
and Private Parties

1315 S. Congress — Dial GR 6-3364

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1956

This is the first ad in a telephone book.  
The club is listed in the December, 1955  
telephone book, but with no ad.

Dine & Dance at  
**THE Continental**  
CLUB

"Austin's Most Beautiful Night Club"

LIVE  
ENTERTAINMENT  
NIGHTLY

OPEN DAILY  
5 PM  
Closed Sundays

Dial  
HI 4-1646

1315 S. Congress

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1959

(Continued Next Page)

NEXT DOOR TO THE TERRACE  
MOTOR HOTEL  
"The Club With the Purple Doors"

**Continental**  
CLUB

DINING - DANCING  
ENTERTAINMENT

Offering  
"Austin's Finest  
Combo Music"

CHARCOAL BROILED STEAKS

AUSTIN'S  
FINEST COCKTAIL LOUNGE

1315 S. Congress — Dial GR 6-3364

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
July, 1957

AUSTIN'S FINEST

**THE Continental**  
Presents

Music For  
Easy Listening  
Nice To  
Remember

For A Wonderful Evening Of Entertainment

1315 S. CONGRESS HI 2-0601

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1960

"The Club With The Purple Doors"

Open To The Public - Daily

**Continental**  
CLUB

DANCING - to the Latest  
Hi-Fi Recordings

Fridays & Saturdays -  
The Bill Taylor Combo  
"Austin's Finest"

Jazz Session Every Sunday PM  
(Austin's Top Musicians on the Stand)

Private Parties Accepted

1315 S Congress — Dial GR 6-3364

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1958

CLUB SEVILLE 111 E 1-----478-9611  
Continental Club The  
Band & Go-Go Girls Nightly  
1315 S Congress-----444-2754  
Continental Night Club 1315 S Congress---442-9202  
NAME WARD 1315 S Congress  
Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1969

**THE CONTINENTAL  
NIGHT CLUB**

OPEN  
EVERY  
NIGHT  
DANCING  
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

**442-9283**

1315 S CONGRESS

Southwestern Bell Telephone Directory  
December, 1970





# Continental Club packs a punch into its farewell

As the days dwindle down to a precious few, the Continental Club refuses to go gently into that good night. The South Congress watering hole, which shuts its doors this weekend, is going down swinging. This evening, the club presents its last Hoot Nite, with the Wild Seeds (now signed to Passport Records), Michael Maye and Joe, and Seven Samurai. Wednesday, the show features Balled Shamblies, Do Dat and Javelin Boot. Thursday's bill includes the Wagoners, Two Hoots and A Holler, and Zydeco Ranch, while Friday funks out with Skank, Do Dat and Jamtron. Saturday, the Continental rings down the curtain with three perennial favorites, Zeitgeist, the Wild Seeds and Glass Eye.

Rhonda Critch Dent: The problem



## Music

John T. Davis

years ago Ayres compiled an album for his Glitch Records label of young, unsigned local bands. The effort proved so successful that Ayres followed up with a second album. And then, tapes pouring into his office, a third. Now, glutton for punishment that he is, Ayres is soliciting contributions for a fourth Glitch Sampler. Interested parties should submit a cassette of two or three songs to Ayres at P.O. Box 4429, Austin 78766, in the next few weeks. Copyright information, ad-

artist H.R. Giger.

Go West, Young Singer/Songwriter, Folk-Rock, Guitar/Vocalist Dept.: The last female musician to make the trek from Austin to the Left Coast, Eliza Gilkyson, returned from Los Angeles with a five-record album deal. Now, Mandy Mercier is hoping lightning will strike twice. Mercier is taking a sabbatical from the local scene to try her luck on the Golden Shore. Mercier hopes the trip will help consolidate her image in the minds of local listeners. A little absence making the heart grow fonder and all that . . .

Like a lot of Austin musicians Mercier has gone through a series of incarnations in search of her own sound. Some of her fans recall her from folk-singing days at Kerrville, some from her sojourn with

Austin American-Statesman

August 25, 1987

(Left column only)