

Henfling's abruptly closes

Sale falls through; Ben Lomond landmark shuttered for now

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BEN LOMOND — Henfling's Firehouse Tavern, a nightlife landmark in San Lorenzo Valley for generations, has closed its doors — at least temporarily.

Operation of the tavern, known in recent years for its adventurous live-music concerts, has been suspended after a deal to sell the club fell through, said Craig Meyer, the

club's prospective new owner.

Meyer, who has been operating the club under a temporary license for six months, said a deadline to finalize the purchase of the club and its liquor license from owner Albert Kent passed last week without a deal. As a result, the club's property owner, the family of the club's late founder Frank Henfling, declined to extend the club's lease.

The state Department of Alcohol Beverage Control issued an order that Henfling's stop

selling alcohol. *1-14-05*

"Right now, everything is in limbo," said Meyer, who said he has had no communication with Kent or his representatives since the club was shut last Friday.

Meyer said he's hopeful the club will reopen in the near future. He would like to negotiate a new lease with the Henfling family.

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Henfling's, a Ben Lomond landmark and popular performance venue, closed after its sale fell through last week.

Henfling's

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"We're going to do everything in our power to reopen the club," he said. "My father used to go there. My grandfather used to go there. It means a lot to this community."

Kent could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Henfling's dates back more than 50 years in the San Lorenzo Valley; it was originally on Love Creek Road before moving to its current location on Highway 9 in downtown Ben Lomond. After Henfling sold it, the club went through a series of owners and developed a reputation as a roughneck bar, known for its heavy drinking, fights and drug busts.

The club started to turn around in the early 1990s when Tom Miller was brought in to

book live concerts. Miller used the opportunity to establish the International Music Series. On any given night, Henfling's might feature name acts in Americana/country music circles or exotic world-music acts from European gypsy acts to Tuvan throat singers.

Miller said late Thursday he has not been told about the status of the club and he has made no decisions regarding upcoming dates at the club.

Henfling's schedule of musical acts has been booked through April and includes such dates as the Janis Joplin Birthday Bash on Jan. 19, the Gitanos on Jan. 20 and Django-style guitarist John Jorgensen on Jan. 24 and 25.

Meyer said no decision has been made concerning the status of Henfling's employees.

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