

Cost of caffeine fix rises as area coffee shops adjust prices

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For The Post

Coffee — a staple of many college students' diets — has increased in price over the past year, and some Athens coffee-based businesses are beginning to feel the effects.

From July 2007 to July 2008, coffee prices have jumped 7.7 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For Brenen's Coffee Cafe, 38 S. Court St., prices have not been raised yet.

"Our supplier tries to keep costs low so the price stays low for patrons every year," said owner Josh Thomas.

"Like most Athens businesses, we re-evaluate prices every year in December, when business slows down," he added.

As an owner, the rise in price for items on the menu, not only coffee, is "just something you have to deal with," Thomas said.

Other coffee businesses have not had the advantage of stable prices.

"Less people were coming in to get luxury drinks during the summer but we saw a turn around with the return of students," said Chris Pyle, owner of Donkey Coffee and Espresso, 17 ½ W. Washington St.

Even with students buying more drinks, Donkey has still had to raise prices by 3 to 4 percent on most drinks.

In comparison, the Starbucks Corporation pays

\$1.46 per pound on average for its coffee whereas Donkey pays \$6 per pound for its fair-trade coffee, Pyle said.

"We'll have to keep raising prices with the cost of coffee, but people have a breaking point when they won't buy anymore," said Pyle.

Perk's Coffee House and Roastery, 49 S. Court St.,

has not seen a change in its number of daily customers. "Customers still come in consistently," said employee Kaitlin Armocida.

The main differences in business for Perk's are internal.

"We have had to raise prices on drinks by 5 cents per drink and per size. We have also cut hours from three people per shift to two," said Armocida.

"The rise in coffee price is absolutely worrisome," added Armocida.

Ohio University Dining Services did not return calls seeking comment on the Front Room.

Convenience is the main concern for most students on campus.

"My demand for coffee is inelastic," said Katharine Perko, a graduate student studying English, who buys coffee daily. "It is easier to buy out than make coffee at home, especially with the refill policy at

Perk's and Donkey."

"If prices rise more than \$1 extra per cup, I will start making it at home," she added.

For other students, price is not a barrier and their coffee buying routine will not change.

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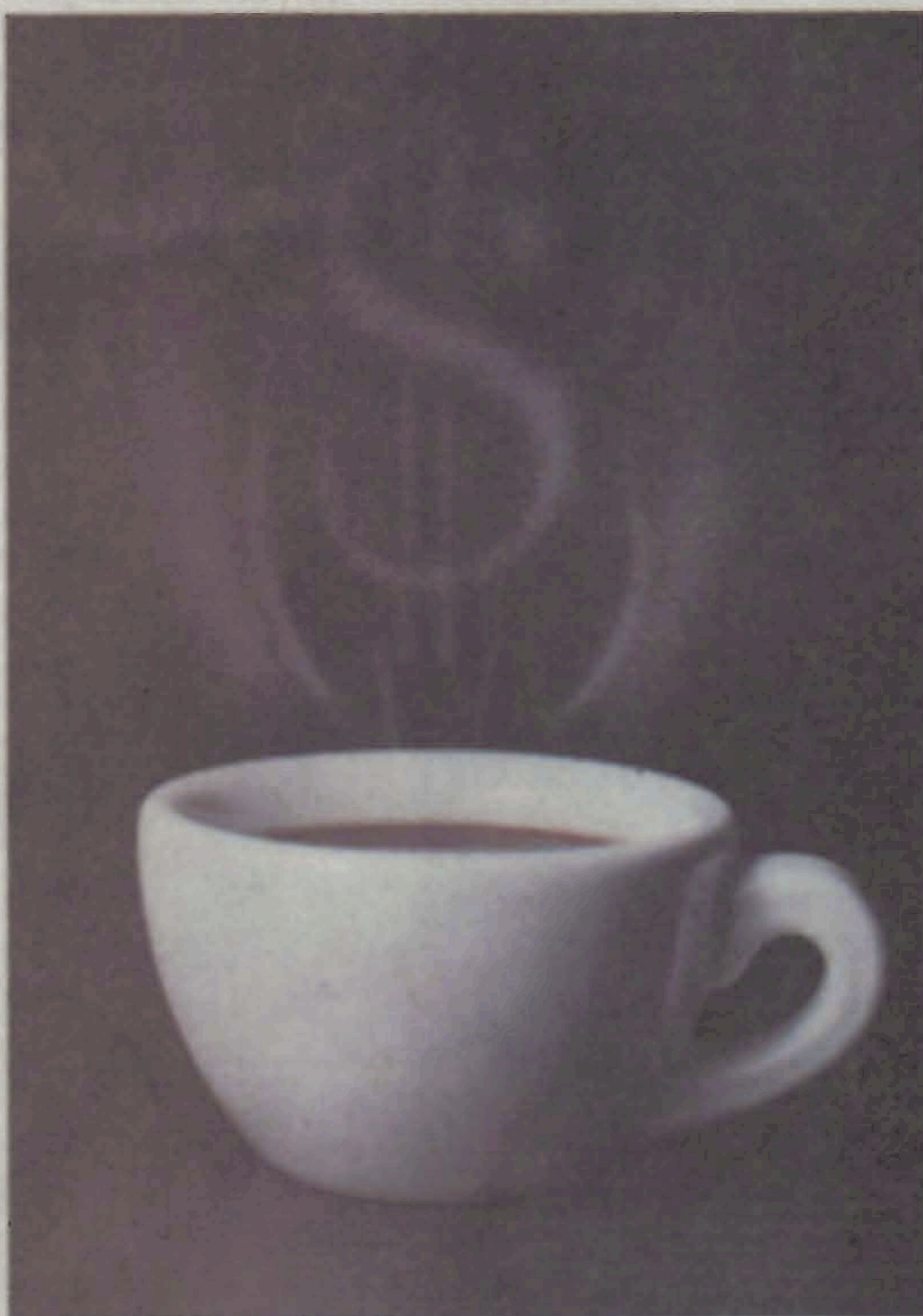


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