

Donkey Coffee features free trade coffee, entertainment

by GALLAGHER

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Bars too smoky? Prefer a shot of espresso over a shot of Jaegermeister? Looking for a place to gather with pals and discuss the future of pig American capitalism? Then check out the Donkey, a new coffee house located next to the Athens Office Supply store at 17 1/2 West Washington St., down the sidewalk from the sheriff's office. It's a cozy, laid-back den where caffeine is a recreational drug, and poetry readings and open stages are mini-revolutions against the established clichéd "two and half kids, Dodge Caravan and a dog named Spot" lifestyle.

Chris Pyle and his wife Angie, along with their friends and business partners Matt and Jessica Moore, are brewing their own dream — owning a coffee shop in Athens where students and locals alike can take their shoes off, sip a hot Joe and unwind like Beat poets decked in black.

"My hope is that this place has the flavor of Athens," said Pyle. "I love the idea of community. It's my desire to not only reach college students, but the local community as well."

The coffee shop, which opens tentatively this Friday, will feature baked goods made by the local community.

All the coffee is from Costa Rica and Ethiopia, with an emphasis on fair trade. The coffee is sold directly from a supplier that works with the farmers directly, so a greater percentage of the money finds its way back into the hands of the farmers.

The coffee shop will also feature smoothies, and eventually hopes to have ice cream as well.

With over 2,000 square feet of lounging

room, there should be plenty of space to rub elbows without knocking your neighbor in the jaw. The front is the busy area, a place to grab coffee and pastries for a quick slurp and bite on the run.

The back room is a good study area, and will also feature bands and poetry in the evening. This Saturday night features Cactus Pears and Southeast Engine. The entire shop will be smoke free, so second hand smoke should find its own coffee shop and leave the rest of us alone.

"There's not a whole lot of places in Athens to see bands that's smoke free," said Pyle. "I like to see bands in bars, but the smoke just kills my eyes."

And shows will start early and end by midnight so we can all get to bed early and start counting sheep.

One night a week will be dedicated to open stage, and another night will be saved for a poetry reading. The back room will also be an art gallery, featuring work by local artists for sale. Each month will feature a new artist.

In between the two main rooms is a smaller couch area, a good place to kick back and crawl into a good book.

There are even plans for a film night. Local films, independent films and documentaries will be shown on a movie screen in the back room.

Encouraging social justice both locally and globally is a big priority of the coffee shop, Pyle said. There will be a table set up with pamphlets of local charities, action groups and other service groups that aide the community. The table will also feature empowering quotes from people as far ranging as Martin Luther



The Donkey, a coffee shop co-owned by Chris Pyle and Matt Moore, opens this Friday. Stay up late on Thursday night so you can properly appreciate their coffee Friday morning before that ugly physics class.

King, Jr. and punk rockers.

"We will have information from groups that serve the community, especially the poor," said Pyle. "We live in a strange area, with the university on one end and the poverty of a lot of Appalachia on the other."

The Donkey will be open from Monday

through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 1 a.m., on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 1 a.m.

The shop's opening day, scheduled for Friday, will feature free drinks from 8 to 2 p.m. as the crew is trained on the fine art of coffee distribution.