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## Chapel Hill coffee shop owner closes store, plans move

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CHAPEL HILL -- Lex Alexander closed his 3Cups coffee shop Sunday, June 1, at The Courtyard in downtown Chapel Hill.

Alexander, the founder of the old Wellspring stores (now part of the Whole Foods Chain), had been feuding with landlord Spencer Young over parking and had been paying his rent into an escrow account. Young locked the business out for a day a several weeks ago and last week served it with eviction papers.

Alexander plans to reopen the shop at 227 Elliott Road, near the ABC store in Village Plaza. That shopping center also houses Whole Foods.

Young's dispute with Alexander is tied to a larger dispute Young's been having with businessman P.H. Craig. Young owns The Courtyard in the 400 block of West Franklin Street, but Craig owns most of the parking attached to it.

Young won't pay Craig rent for the spaces, and Craig won't sell the lot to Young. Since the middle of 2007, Craig has blocked off his portion of the lot with railroad ties and piles of gravel, cutting the available spaces from 79 to 23.

And that's not enough to support a business, Alexander said last week.

"We're coming up on a year of this parking fiasco," he said. "I've lost most of my customers who were in their 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s."

Alexander said students and younger customers have kept the business going with walk-in traffic, but he said he has had to cancel lucrative evening wine tastings because of the parking.

The parties were in court last week over an extension to a temporary injunction that among other things would keep Young from locking out the business. The judge ruled in favor of 3Cups but said it would have to post a \$35,000 bond in case a future court ruling finds in Young's favor, Ivey said.

On Wednesday, Ivey filed a summary eviction notice.

**Lousy Landlord**

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**Feuds With Everyone**

Alexander hopes to open the new store in the early fall.

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