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Party's On, Buckeyes. Now, How to Be in Two Places at Once?

By *MELISSA HOPPERT*

Melissa J. Bond The Danger Brothers playing at the Hineygate at the Holiday Inn on Lane Avenue. The hotel was sold during the off-season, and the event's sponsor and the band are going their separate ways.

[The Hineygate party](#) has been an Ohio State tradition for 26 years. This year, however, will be decidedly different.

Fans heading to the Holiday Inn on Lane Avenue in Columbus who are expecting a sea of scarlet and gray and the familiar sounds of the [Danger Brothers](#) will be greeted by police officers. A whole bunch of them. (Or greeted by students and a whole bunch of police officers.)

In the off-season, the university, embarking on a \$250 million residence hall renovation project, bought the hotel for housing about 500 students.

"When they indicated that they were selling their facility, we quickly recognized that this space would be ideal for a residence hall, given its location pretty much near the heart of campus," Jim Lynch, an Ohio State spokesman, said.

"We recognize that Hineygate has been a tradition for many alumni and fans over the past 26 years. But we're first about students, and it just didn't make sense to have the world's largest tailgate party in front of a residence hall with 18-year-olds."

The former hotel serves as a staging area for the police on game days starting Saturday, when the Buckeyes host Navy. But the Hineygate picture is a bit muddled. [WTVN-AM](#), the original sponsor of the party, moved the outdoor event a few doors down to the Thirsty I.

"There was just no way I was going to let this tradition die," Mike Elliott, the executive producer of WTVN, said.

WTVN promises live bands; two big-screen TVs; flowing beer; the analysts Earle Bruce, Art Schlichter and Stanley Jackson; and plenty of debauchery.

"When you're across from the stadium and you have cold beverages and live entertainment, it's hard to go wrong," Elliott said.

But a key ingredient is missing: the Danger Brothers.

Tom Smith, a vocalist and drummer for the band, said they were approached all summer by fans asking, "What's going on with Hineygate?" and "Where are y'all playing?"

He said, "We're touched that it means so much to them."

When an agreement with WTVN could not be reached, the band teamed with the owners of [Across the Field](#), an Ohio State shop housed in a charming brick church (built in 1870, the year Ohio State was founded) about a mile and a half from the stadium. They brought in Marty Simms, the former food and beverage director for the Holiday Inn, to help.

“We’re nervous and yet very excited,” Smith said. “It was uncomfortable saying goodbye to Lane Avenue, but we had to do what’s right for us.”

The Across the Field party will have the familiar elements of the original Hineygate — food, beer, big screens, blocked-off streets, music before and after the game, and perhaps even flying bras. Each game-day event will cost about \$30,000.

“We’re pretty darn confident that we’re going to have a crowd,” Smith said.

But some revelers may be scared off by the location, at Ackerman and Olentangy River Roads.

“There will be people that don’t come because of the tradition of their tailgate parties and the younger people who don’t care about the Danger Brothers,” said Matt Lucas, a 32-year-old alumnus and an owner of Across the Field.

“But people love tradition — meet, see Danger Brothers, go to game,” he said. “The advantage of us is with the Holiday Inn closing, the five closest hotels to the stadium are in our backyard.”

Lucas said his event, which includes shuttles to and from the game, will do just fine. In fact, he said he would like to add hospitality tents.

“It’s the same people, the same party, but even bigger because we have more property,” he said. “I think it’s going to be better. It’s one party and one band, and it’s open and not restricted. As long as there’s people around, we’ll be fine.”

The people involved with the two Hineygate-type parties insist that there are no hard feelings. In fact, neither would rule out reuniting in the future, especially because WTVN might lose its spot next season because of problems between the Thirsty I and the university, which owns the land.

“They’ve been our house band for 26 years,” Elliott said of the Danger Brothers. “We’ve had a great relationship with them.”

And if it is possible, the Danger Brothers will be even busier this season. For the first time, they will be playing for away games, at [Martini Park at Easton Town Center](#). They will also hold a pep rally there on Sept. 11, the night before the Buckeyes play Southern California.

But for now they are focusing on starting new memories at Across the Field.

“The thing we have is tradition,” Smith said. “It’s totally off the hook. There are first, second, even third generations that come to see us play. People who had their first beer at Hineygate.”