

# Focus on Reaganomics

By Betty Frazier

On special assignment for the Collegiate I set out to interview college students on several campuses in the area to learn their thoughts on the current political and economic issues. I was especially interested in ascertaining their views on Reaganomics. I chose a random sample of students from several areas of study. Following are excerpts from some of those enlightening interviews.

My first interview was with a forestry major who has her eye on a slot in the Department of the Interior. She was very philosophical about our national dilemma. "It's going to take us a while to get out of the woods. Those senators and congressmen keep sawing back and forth over the issues. They just can't seem to see the woods for the trees."

An education student made the following observation. "I don't believe the people know what the president is trying to

accomplish. We need to educate the people."

Also interested in the people was a student of political science. I asked him point blank if he thought the "New Federalism" would work. "I'm all for helping people myself. Young people and old people and middle-aged people need to pull together for the common good in this great society. We need a man who can lead us out of the morass of debt and despair." At this point, hinting at his political aspirations for '92, he handed me his calling card.

I found one student clearing tables in the school cafeteria. Even as we spoke, her frustration was apparent. "If they keep cutting back on student aid, I'll have to get another job. I haven't had a real chance to study since the second week of September."

Not everyone is feeling the pinch of Reaganomics. A campus jock cracked his knuckles

and confided that he was not all that concerned about the economy. "I just signed a contract to play football next year for \$500,000. Me and Merrill-Lynch have got it made."

In our area agriculture plays a significant role. I wondered how serious students of agri-business felt about the threats to commodity supports. "This issue has been milked to death for political effect. Of course, I personally know of a lot of farmers who will be raising Cain if those Big Boys mess around with their tobacco allotments." My respondent punctuated his remark by spitting a healthy cud of Red Man into a near-by bush.

I interrupted a young man who had been studying for an accounting quiz for five straight hours. Adjusting his glasses, he admitted he wasn't sure, but he was inclined to go along with Dave Stockman. "Figures don't really matter. It's the bottom line that counts."

Next I interviewed Billy Bob, the son of a former KKK leader who voiced his father's opinions. "The white people of this country ain't being treated right. Look at all them plants laying off hard-working, God-fearing white folks. It's enough to make folks want to burn a cross on the White House Lawn."

How do future members of the medical profession feel about the measure that are being taken? I encountered mixed reactions. One young pre-med student felt that the budget needs more surgery to stop the cancerous growth of deficits. Another took an opposing view. "There is no panacea. It seems to me that all this rhetoric about cutting taxes is merely a placebo."

One coed fingered her add-a-bead necklace and appeared very thoughtful when I asked her about Reaganomics. "Actually, I don't know much about it. But," she enthused, "I love Nancy Reagan's great clothes."

Approaching an intelligent looking young man with a far-off look in his eyes, I posed the question "What does the concept of 'trickle-down' mean to you?" "Aw, Man," he replied, "That reminds me I need to go quench my thirst."

How do members of the Geritol generation feel about Reagan policies? I encountered several students between the ages of 30 and 65. There were more female than male students among this group. I spoke to an attractive lady beginning to spread with middle-age. "It's so fascinating to be back in school learning all about the exciting world of business and professions. I really don't have too much time to read about Reaganomics. Though I was glad to see the president appoint a woman to the Supreme Court. I definitely think it was a step in the right direction."

A distinguished gentleman, graying at the temples and carrying a copy of "Gourmet Cooking" under one arm, spoke of the needs of older Americans. He was especially concerned with the need to reform Social Security. "As one grows older, one needs to feel secure about the future. A future in which each individual can find his own space."

What did I learn from this in-depth study? Does the proximity to Academe promote greater insight and agreement? my observation is that it all depends on where you're coming from.

# Helms and East an Embarrassing Team

By Johnny Johnson

Prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, civil rights depended on lawsuits and local officials to enforce them. The Voting Rights Act represented a drastic change. Now it is the duty of federal officials to register voters, see to it they are allowed to vote, and to make sure the votes are fairly counted. Since 1965, Congress has twice extended and strengthened the Act. It is due to expire this year unless Congress extends it.

The total impact of the Voting Rights Act is not clear. But as far as blacks are concerned, the law has been one of the most effective laws ever passed. However, the need of such a law is now being studied in the United States Senate.

Led by North Carolina Senators Jesse Helms and John East, there is a movement to allow the Act to die. Helms calls the Act "no longer necessary." There is not one piece of evidence to support this preposterous claim.

On the contrary, for the first time ever there is no legal obstacle for blacks to register and vote in every district in the United States. And since the Act's enactment more than four

million blacks have registered in 11 southern states.

John East, a former professor of Political Science at East Carolina University in Greenville, thinks the Act is unconstitutional. Ironically, the text book East used for American National Government (Introductory Political Science) clearly points out in the chapter on civil liberties that the Act has been challenged in the federal courts and found to be, in fact, constitutional. The case was South Carolina vs. Katzenbach in 1966. Perhaps East would have been better off simply saying "Jesse is against it, so I am too."

It is indeed sad to think that a nation like ours has seen the necessity of a Voting Rights Act as it did in 1965. It is even more deplorable that anyone would think that it is not needed, or that giving people the right to vote could somehow be construed as unconstitutional.

Unfortunately this is not the only archaic idea Helms and East have. They do not want busing for any reason. The mere fact that the Supreme Court has limited busing to school districts

that have intentionally discriminated against minorities (de jure segregation,) and where busing is required to eliminate past official acts of segregation is obviously not important. Helms and East think abortions for any reasons should be illegal. They must still believe that pregnancy from rape is impossible. And finally, they do not think minors should be allowed to obtain information on birth control. These North Carolina senators must think that if you do not know you can get pregnant, you can't. Perhaps we should stop researching cancer. After all, following the ludicrous ideas of Helms and East, if you don't know about cancer, you can't get it.

The day of reckoning for Jesse Helms is coming. He will be up for reelection in 1984. Already, Helms's Congressional Club has almost out-spent the entire Democratic Party. Votes cannot be bought, however. North Carolina has the opportunity to remove these two "national embarrassments" from the Senate. Don't let a chance like this slip away!

## Editorial Policy

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The editorial staff welcomes student, faculty and staff responses. Letters to the Editor must be turned in Fridays by midnight. Letters must be signed and addresses included. A phone number must also be included but will not be printed.

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