

NEWS

Chapel Hill merchants await students, dollar influx

By SCOTT GREIG
City Editor

While some Chapel Hill merchants prepare for the students' return to the UNC campus and the Franklin Street area, some of their fellow businessmen say they didn't feel the effects of the long summer drought that annually afflicts merchants who depend on students as customers.

For Kathy Sapp of Carolina Pride, it has been "a great summer," but for Richard Layne, whose Record Bar store is less than half a block away, it has been "boring as hell."

Sapp, who manages Carolina Pride, 151 E. Franklin St., said the store, which specializes in clothing and souvenirs aimed at the UNC fan, has done very good business all summer.

"All in all, it's been a very good summer for the store. With all the camps and other things going on this summer, they've kept us busy the entire time."

Sapp said she does not expect the jump in business at the beginning of the upcoming semester to be that significant for Carolina Pride.

"Students have other expenses to worry about at the beginning of the year," she said.

"They have to buy books, supplies and whatever else. Students don't have money to be throwing around downtown when they first get here, but we are expecting a few big weekends when parents come into

town for football games or, other activities. Nobody can leave Chapel Hill without buying some sort of Tar Heel item, so we do a good, steady business."

Sapp said the only increases of any significance she expects will be in the area of customized t-shirts and other speciality items for dormitories or fraternities.

Layne, manager of the Record Bar at 131 E. Franklin St., said he was probably being very conservative when he estimated his expected rise in business to be about 40 percent when the students flock back to Chapel Hill.

He said he hasn't seen any of the business that Sapp had mentioned coming from the various University-run camps on campus.

"It's gone from slow to slower," said Layne. "People around here just aren't finding Franklin Street like they do during the regular year."

Asked if new specials or other advertising devices were used to draw in customers during the slow, summer months, he replied that they run specials all year long and have a "happy hour" every day with reduced prices.

"We couldn't survive without students," Layne said.

"It's about time they started coming back now. I think everyone around here is glad when the students first leave for the summer because it's a little break.

"We all take our vacations during the summer because we have the time to. But that feeling doesn't last long. Pretty soon they want the students back again because students represent business."

But for some merchants, students are only a part of their clientele, and they are able to survive the summer months without them. That's not the case for the majority of Franklin Street businesses, however.

"I don't think Franklin Street's stores could survive in this town for a really extended period of time without students around to pump money into them," Mary Logan, a

local shopper, said.

"You'd end up having a stretch of town with nothing but one or two gas stations, a few scattered drug stores, maybe a clothing store and a restaurant or two. There really aren't any operations on Franklin Street that don't rely heavily on students for over half of their income, probably. You can walk down the street and it just feels dead compared to the regular school year. People aren't here and merchants are feeling it."

Restaurants, bars, music stores and clothing boutiques are part of the everyday life of the 20,000-plus students, faculty, and others associated with UNC. It's as if the town

were a commercial village built up around the campus to supply the needs of the University. When school is in full swing during the fall and spring semesters, local merchants feel the influence of all that money floating around. When 16,000 students leave for the summer, and only summer school students remain to support those businesses, the merchants feel the influence in a different way, but just as much.

For now, local businesses wait out the remaining two and a half weeks until the new crop of UNC freshmen arrive, money in hand, followed closely by the returning upperclassmen.

Students should know their rights to avoid poor lease arrangements

By DWIGHT MARTIN
Staff Writer

During the next few weeks thousands of UNC students will become part of an important legal contract — the rental agreement or lease.

Signing a lease is not something to be taken lightly. A UNC Student Consumer Action Union publication reads, "The majority of leases are typically one-sided — and it's not the tenant's side (that is favored)."

The purpose of the one-sided lease is to make the tenant think the landlord is all powerful, SCAU reports.

But that is not the real story, reports "The Southern Part of Heaven: A Housing Guide to Chapel Hill and Carrboro," available in SCAU's office, Suite B of the Carolina Union.

The one-sided lease is only effective when tenants do not know their rights, according to the SCAU. A thorough understanding of the lease and its language is the beginning of such knowledge.

The SCAU publication offers several lease reading tips:

- Read every word in the lease. "More often than not, it's the sentence buried 16 lines down within a paragraph that tells you what you really should know."

- Be aware that sections of the lease, divided by subtitles, are not consistent. "The sections seem to be

thrown in at random with no logical order." One section might prohibit excessive noise, but the consequence — eviction — may appear several paragraphs down in another section.

- Be aware that a "substantial violation" refers to an evictionable action.

- Be aware that all changes to the lease made by you or the landlord need to be made in writing. Both parties should initial the altered sections.

Tenants are legally protected in this state, according to SCAU. The Rental Agreements Act, passed in 1977, requires landlords to provide housing that is safe, sanitary and habitable.

After the act was passed, some landlords attempted to dodge the requirements of the law by evicting or threatening to evict those who complained about their living conditions to them or local housing officials, SCAU says.

The Retaliatory Eviction Act, passed in 1979, makes it illegal for landlords to evict tenants who pursue their rights to safe and decent housing, according to SCAU.

SCAU's guide also translates several phrases often found in leases from legal language. Many leases contain these phrases:

- "The lessee shall render the lessor harmless for any damages which may arise and accrue however caused

whether in whole or in part to acts of negligence on the part of the lessor."

This means that if someone is hurt or something damaged due to landlord negligence, the tenant agrees not to bring suit. However, tenants may still have recourse against the landlords in such situations. UNC students can go to Student Legal Services for details.

- "The tenant hereby pledges to the landlord all the goods and chattels of said tenant which are upon the premises as security of payment of rent."

This means the landlord may claim the tenant's belongings if for some reason he does not pay his rent. But it is not that easy for the landlord to obtain all the tenant's "goods and chattels." The landlord cannot lock you out or enter your apartment without a court order.

- "In the event there shall be an increase in (costs) the tenant shall pay his proportionate share of said increase."

This means that the landlord can raise rent, but the landlord must apply a formula to the rent increase and itemize the specific cost increases. A reasonable proof of cost increase must be established.

After you have signed your lease and moved into your apartment, SCAU recommends a straightforward approach to landlord communication. This type of communication maintains your personal credibility and acknowledges the landlord's rights and concerns.

SCAU stresses that off-campus living should be a rewarding experience. Planning adds to the rewards. Before choosing an apartment, consider whether you want to live quietly and privately or be part of an active social scene.

Library classes

UNC's Health Sciences Library has designed several one-hour orientation sessions to introduce faculty, students and staff to the library. Sessions will be held in the afternoons Aug. 11, 14, 19, 22, 25, 28 and Sept. 2, 5, 8, 11, 16, 19, 22 and 25. Call the library at 962-0700 for more information.

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