

# Growing Senior Numbers Might Strain System

BY WARD CONVILLE  
STAFF WRITER

With the battle of health care insurance reform in full swing on Capitol Hill, another battle concerning health care may be looming in the distance. The new clash will center on young workers financing care for a growing elderly population.

There are currently 32.3 million American citizens over 65, according to Tom Otwell, spokesman for the American Association of Retired Persons. That number will grow to 35.3 million by the turn of the century and to more than 50 million by the time the baby boomers reach the age of 65 in the year 2020.

Pete Seep, director of media relations for the National Tax Payers Union, said a dispute over paying for the growing number of seniors was inevitable.

"With the elderly population growing as a whole, and especially in comparison to the number of younger workers, programs like Medicare and Social Security

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are going to have to be capped," Seep said. "The ratio of workers to retirees is getting smaller and smaller."

He said the problem would have to be addressed soon by politicians in order to curtail the building tensions between the generations involved.

"Certainly, we think that more government involvement is not the answer," Seep

said. "Medicare expenses should not be allowed to grow faster than inflation."

Seep proposed using means testing for Medicare benefits to set strict income levels at which a person would be ineligible for assistance. "A majority of Americans agree that we should limit (Medicare benefits) for those making over \$50,000. This would save \$100 billion," he said.

Otwell said a conflict between the young and the old was unlikely because the health care problems that the elderly faced were not strictly elderly problems. "The idea of intergenerational warfare is ridiculous because these problems of caring for the elderly will eventually effect us all," said Otwell.

Otwell stressed that the AARP was not seeking the inclusion of unfair or unreasonable goals in health care reform.

"The two things we are most concerned about are provisions for long-term care and prescription care," said Otwell.

William Ritz, spokesman for the National Committee to Preserve Social Security

and Medicare, said the elderly were looking for fair and evenhanded treatment in health care reform, but warned that seniors would react loudly if they felt they were not treated in an equitable way.

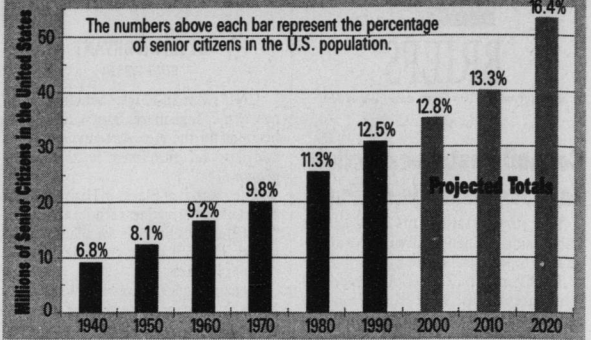
Senior citizens have the highest voting rate in the country, and Ritz said he believed they would respond at the ballot boxes if they felt their concerns were left out of health care reform.

Ritz said the growing senior population had been satisfied so far with the health care discussion being led by the White House. "We are pleased with the inclusion of prescription drugs," said Ritz. This is one of the first steps toward long-term care, he said.

Susan Palla, vice president of Individual Commercial Administrators, a New Jersey-based firm specializing in long-term health care, said recent trends in providing care for the growing elderly population were stressing the importance of providing quality care at a reasonable cost in the home environment. This type of care, called

## Growing Number of Senior Citizens in the U.S.

As baby boomers reach retirement age, some fear the medical system might be overwhelmed.



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

care management, enables seniors to receive care in their own homes.

"Care management assists the elderly, to give them choices and flexibility in a convenient setting," said Palla.

Palla said the movement toward seniors receiving care in the home stemmed from pressure put on insurance companies by

groups of concerned seniors who believed this type of care was more beneficial. Palla said the chances of care management being included in a health care reform plan were high because this type of care could actually save money. "The whole key is making the client more comfortable, more healthy, which in turn saves money."

## ROYSTER

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the board before this is resolved," she said. Royster added that she thought the controversy had had no negative effects on the board's ability to function.

Royster said she decided to move to Connecticut because she was born and raised there and had family members who lived in the northeast. She also said that despite having lived in North Carolina for 15 years, she couldn't get used to the weather.

"I cannot stand the heat," she said. "I much prefer the 15 snowstorms that Connecticut had last winter to the weather we have here."

Royster said she had tried to help im-

prove early childhood and minority education during her tenure on the board. "These are the areas that I have been most concerned with," she said.

The school system has made tremendous improvements in recent years toward providing better education for minority and underprivileged children, Roystersaid.

"I'm extremely pleased that the school system has worked so hard in opening up more Head Start programs," Royster said. "I think the long-term results will be very positive. Many things are in place right now, particularly as a result of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, that can and should make a difference."

"I think that we've made more progress in early childhood education than we have in minority education, and if there was any

one thing that would keep me here, it would be that."

Touw said Royster had added a lot to the board's ability to communicate with parents, especially low-income parents, in a community where most parents are highly educated.

"We are going to sorely miss her," he said. "She has been a very valuable member. She has great insight and brings a perspective that will be missed. She often noticed things that other board members didn't."

Touw added that Royster cared about parents and children. "She was sensitive to the needs of parents that did not have the educational level of other parents in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school system."

Billy Bevill, who finished sixth among

the eight candidates in the school board election last November, said he was not interested in taking the replacement position. "I have taken on some other responsibilities at this time," Bevill said. "And I probably would not have time to serve on the school board."

Bevill added that he was surprised to see Royster leave. "I'm sure the board has nothing to do with her decision," he said. "It probably adds a lot of stress to Ken Touw's position right now."

Bea Hughes-Werner, who finished fourth in the November election and missed getting elected by only 113 votes, said Tuesday that she still was interested in serving on the board. "I don't know what the selection process will be like, but I'm definitely interested," she said.

occasional on-campus concert thrown in.

Jackson also has dipped into some commercial work, playing with Robert Goulet, the Four Tops, the Temptations and Natalie Cole.

"Natalie Cole was a blast, a real fun thing. I played with her back before the *Unforgettable* album, when she was doing the pop stuff," Jackson said.

Jackson also finds that juggling teaching and playing is an ongoing struggle.

"At this point, I pretty much try to

## SOKOLOWSKI

FROM PAGE 1

pinning up his body and attempting to burn it.

"He believed he was doing exactly what his friend would have wanted," Sheffield said.

"Little Man was returning to the place from which he came. That is why he did it. He built a funeral pyre as best he could."

Although what was done to Hill's body after death was not supposed to enter into the jury's deliberations, Fox said Sokolowski's actions after Hill's murder didn't support the self-defense claim.

"You wouldn't chop up your friend and burn your friend in self-defense," Fox said. Leann Hill, Rubel Hill's widow, said she was relieved that the trial had ended

with a first-degree conviction. "I'm glad this is over," she said. "They ought to remove (Sokolowski's) hands so he can't do this to anyone else."

Imogene Owens, the mother of Pamela Owens Elwood, said she was happy with the verdict and the life sentence.

"I think he'll suffer better with a life sentence than with the death penalty," Owens said.

Elwood was Sokolowski's live-in girlfriend until her 1992 death.

Owens, who was present for the duration of Sokolowski's trial, said she was glad she had attended the trial for the murder of Hill.

"It filled me in on what he did to my daughter," she said. "It's been two years, and we've really been through something."

## EATING

FROM PAGE 3

participate in the ones that can't. Second, develop coping strategies to have fun and not binge. "Get a real understanding of these situations that may make you forget your resolve," Craighead said.

For those who are looking for ways to shed pounds, Craighead and Allen say the best method to lose weight is the adaptive way — make small changes in food intake

and increase the level of exercise.

Craighead is conducting a binge-eating disorder therapy group free of charge that will be available both semesters next year.

There are other services provided in the area for counseling people with eating disorders. UNC Hospitals has an outpatient eating-disorder clinic and also provides assessment counseling. Student Health Services also offers assessment at their center for eating disorders, which refers patients to the correct treatment clinic.

## MUSIC

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Orchestra and the Crown Chamber Brass, although he does not get to play with these bands as often as he would like.

"I used to play more than I do now. I would like to play more, but the demands and the tenure-connected things of this job prevent me from doing so," Jackson said.

As for local venues, Jackson usually plays private parties and dances, with the

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