

UNC Spirit Gear Abounds in Downtown

By ALICIA PETERS
Staff Writer

UNC T-shirts, blue-and-white pompoms, Tar Heel keychains and Carolina mugs are just some items that students, parents or alumni can use to show their school spirit.

Student Stores on UNC's campus and Johnny T-Shirt and the Shrunken Head on Franklin Street all sell UNC merchandise to any and all fans that walk through their doors.

Although common items are found

in each of the stores, many store associates have items they said were unique to the store. "Everything I sell is classic," said Shelton Henderson, owner of the Shrunken Head.

Some stores have had a variety of popular items since they opened. Other store associates named specific items which had been around for a while that customers continue to buy, such as pewter license tags and little kids' cheer-leading outfits, according to Chuck Helpingstine, a sales associate at Johnny T-Shirt.

During certain times of the year, the paraphernalia stores sell a lot of merchandise. The times range from sporting events to Christmas, with specific items selling best at certain times.

"The bestselling items before a game are T-shirts and sweatshirts," said Donald Hamm, the sales manager at Student Stores.

The other stores sold many seat cushions and pompoms before athletic events.

Helpingstine said his store used the events to boost spirit of the fans and

store sales.

"We prepare for every football game as a major festivity - we put out tons of balloons," Helpingstine said.

The stores make various special preparations for the football games that fall on Homecoming and Carolina Family weekends, inviting customers to come inside and look around their store.

"We stock up and put more merchandise on the floor, and during homecoming we put out more alumni shirts," Hamm said.

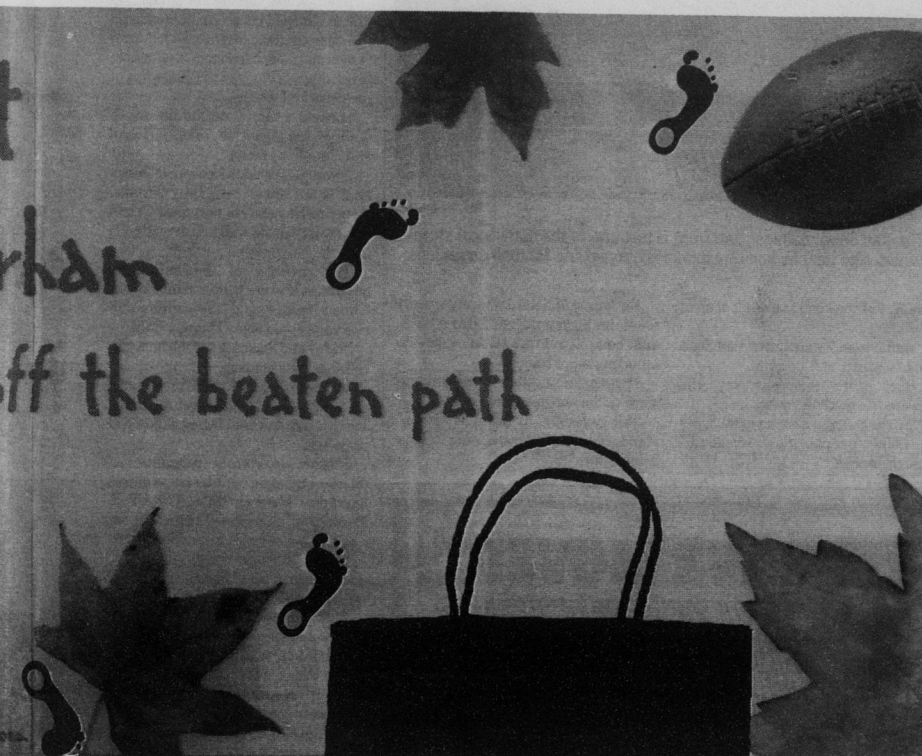
Henderson said the Shrunken Head

also spent extra time preparing for special weekends. "We make special signs that welcome parents and congratulate alumni," he said.

The managers agreed that although games brought out many customers, their busiest time of year was during the Christmas season, which did not necessarily begin in December.

"Christmas starts here in September," Henderson said.

"We have fans that come to every game and spend \$200 to \$300 each time."



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