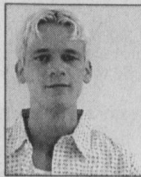


## Town — Help Tenants Help Themselves

Most UNC students don't have to worry too much about rent if they live off campus. Parents foot the bill, or maybe financial aid covers your pad. Faculty members make enough to afford an apartment at worst, but a house is more likely.



JONATHAN CHANEY  
CITY COLUMNIST

But imagine making minimum wage working in Chapel Hill. Paychecks barely allow you to buy groceries. That's a reality facing many Americans — and it can be a harsh reality in Chapel Hill, where the cost of living is exorbitant.

In today's dollars, the average incomes of the poorest working Americans have not changed much since 1970. It hovers just below the \$12,000 per year mark. The value of the minimum wage has been on a steady decline during the last 30 years, dipping to about \$5.15 an hour based on the Bureau of Labor statistics.

Those numbers make it nearly impossible to live in Chapel Hill earning much less than a well-paid professional's salary. The average house sold in Chapel Hill went for a little more than \$311,000 last year. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$763. That's where public housing comes in. While public housing has a bad rap for breeding crime and drug use, and although it was vilified during the Republican's welfare reforms in 1996, it is a lifesaver for millions of Americans. It is useful as a policy tool — even here.

There are 336 households in public housing in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, residing in 13 complexes. And there are still 148 people on the waiting list.

Increasing affordable housing and helping middle- and low-income people call Chapel Hill "home" has always been a goal of the Chapel Hill Town Council. Last week, it made a step in the right direction — albeit a small one. The Town Council unanimously passed a resolution that establishes flat rents for families living in public housing units. In accordance with regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, public housing agencies must establish flat rents based on the reasonable market value of similar private housing units in the area instead of basing rent on how much the tenant makes, and Chapel Hill complied.

The idea is that flat rents allow people to save more of their income since pay increases do not translate into higher rent. The more people are able to save, the faster they are able to leave public housing and get their own place. Under the HUD rules, however, public housing families can still opt to pay rental rates based on income.

While the new federal guidelines look good on paper, they don't translate well around here. Sure, basing public housing rent on market value would work wonders in Durham, or even Raleigh. People would pay reasonable rates and be able to save up more of their paychecks.

But market values are so overpriced in Chapel Hill and Carrboro because of the University that this program will not go far in moving people out of public housing. In most cases, the market value of the apartment would be higher than the tenants' income-based rent.

In fact, the change will only immediately affect five families in a positive way! Don't get me wrong, the change by the Town Council was a necessity. However, if the town wants to move more people out of public housing, different means are necessary.

Housing advocates say the best policy is to promote programs already out there. Also, there are a myriad of local, state and federal programs, ranging from job education to childcare subsidies, which could help move people off public assistance. Most times, it's not a matter of laziness among those on the dole. They do not know all of their options. Helping people help themselves is the best form of public assistance we can offer.

Columnist Jonathan Chaney can be reached at [jchaney@email.unc.edu](mailto:jchaney@email.unc.edu).

# UNC Professor to Lead Mammography Study

By RACHEL CLARKE  
Staff Writer

A UNC professor announced Tuesday that she will lead a groundbreaking two-year study to compare methods of detecting breast cancer.

Radiology Professor Etta Pisano will oversee the study, which will be conducted at 19 research facilities. The study will compare the digital and film mammograms of almost 50,000 women in hopes of helping doctors detect cancer earlier.

Digital mammography has not yet been used widely to detect breast cancer. "Mammography is one of the most important tools we have," Pisano said. "Without mammography, many more women would die of breast cancer than do."

Beginning Oct. 15, researchers will use four digital mammography systems to take both a digital and a film mammogram under nearly identical conditions. Patients then will be monitored for a year, so there will be no results from the study for at least three years, Pisano said.

Only two of the four digital systems will be used at UNC — one made by Fischer Imaging and the other by Fuji, said Gene Johnston, a physicist in the Department of Radiology.

The two machines will be used only on women without any symptoms.

Pisano said this research was funded by the National Cancer Institute, which awarded \$26.5 million to research institutions in the United States and Canada, including the universities of California, Massachusetts and Washington.

Joseph Lee, chairman of UNC's Department of Radiology, said this grant is important because digital mammography is a developing field. "In the last 10 years, significant advances have been made in digital photography," he said.

Pisano cautioned that while the study is investigating new technology, it should not undermine the value of traditional mammograms. She warned that there is a tendency to get caught up in the hype surrounding new technology, even though the new digital images could

prove to be inferior to film technology.

"We don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water — just because it's new doesn't make it better," she said.

For example, Pisano said smaller images are easier to see on film mammograms than on digital ones.

But there is potential for improvement. Pisano said early data indicates that the digital images will have better contrast and fewer false positives, and

See BREAST CANCER, Page 5



DTH/SEFTON IPOCK

Boxes filled with gifts to the Hill Hall Music Library fill Philip Vandermeer's office on his first day as head librarian. Vandermeer must go through every item individually and decide if it is something that should be added to the library's collection.

## Librarian Brings Experience to Post

Philip Vandermeer, the new librarian at the Hill Hall music library, will use the bond money to expand the library's outreach.

By DANIEL THIGPEN  
Assistant University Editor

Hill Hall's library has had a vacancy in its head librarian seat for almost a year, but Philip Vandermeer is eager to restart the music.

Tuesday was Vandermeer's first day in Hill Hall as the head librarian of the music library,

and familiarizing himself with one of the nation's largest music collections has proved to be a daunting task.

"This is really one of the best collections in the U.S.," Vandermeer said. "I was looking for some new challenges. It just seemed to be the right job at the right time."

Vandermeer brings 17 years of experience as a music librarian to the post but said he is letting the feedback of his coworkers dictate his agenda. "I suppose in terms of my personal priorities, it's getting to know the faculty ... what their needs are," he said. "Now that we're fully staffed, we can move full steam. What I need to do now is hear the opinions of people who use the facilities."

In a library where priceless musical documents are housed in a basement that frequently floods, Vandermeer recognizes the importance of making sure the valuables are in good hands. Since he took office a year ago, Chancellor James Moeser has strongly supported upgrading the music department's resources and facilities. "I know the chancellor is very concerned about keeping this collection safe," Vandermeer said.

But Vandermeer said he has more long-term goals for the facility. Brainstorming ideas for the planned \$19 million music library project — fund-

See LIBRARIAN, Page 5

## Commissioners Agree To Bond Referendum

By AMANDA WILSON  
Staff Writer

The Orange County Board of Commissioners officially decided with little discussion Tuesday night to place a \$75 million bond proposal on the ballot.

Most of the meeting's debate centered on an amendment that would require more specific wording of a \$2 million resolution designed to assist Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools with financing the planning of a new high school.

The amendment, which was eventually shot down, would have required that commissioners explicitly promise to fund a new high school.

The resolution's wording now allocates the \$2 million to ease high school overcrowding but does not specifically state that a new high school will be built for Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools.

"I'd just like it to be more specific," said Commissioner Alice Gordon, who proposed the amendment.

Gordon said when she voted to approve the resolution last week, the wording suggested construction of a new high school.

"But then I read it later and it didn't really say that," Gordon said.

Gordon's proposal was not seconded,

and other commissioners said the present wording was clear enough. "Adoption of another resolution in my opinion would be redundant," said Commissioner Moses Carey.

"I understand the resolution to be supportive of high school growth." The fact that funding for a new high school in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro system was excluded from the bond proposal was a major point of contention at a workshop Thursday and led to the \$2 million resolution promising to aid overcrowding in the district.

"One precipitated the other, but they're not under the same umbrella," said Commissioner Barry Jacobs.

Jacobs, coauthor of the original resolution, said he assumed that the wording conveyed intent to plan for a new high school.

See COMMISSIONERS, Page 5



Commissioner Moses Carey said he felt Alice Gordon's addition to the referendum was redundant.

## Student Congress Faces Financial Limitations

Mark Townsend expected Congress to dole out about \$40,000 but learned it only had \$11,500 to give.

By KAREY WUTKOWSKI  
Assistant University Editor

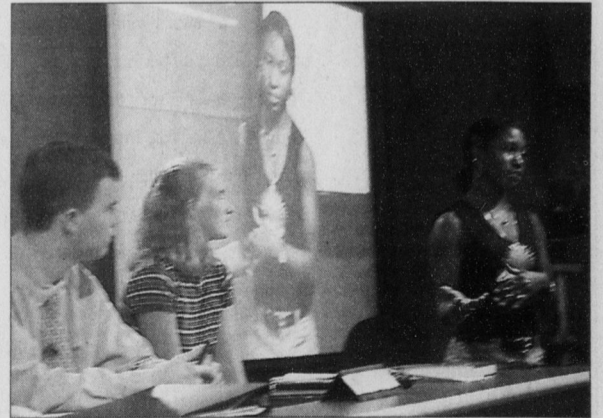
Student Congress is finding itself in even more dire financial straits than last year, likely leaving many student groups empty-handed.

At this semester's first full Congress meeting Tuesday evening, Speaker Mark Townsend announced that Congress has about \$11,500 to distribute to student groups this semester — about half the amount of last semester and about a quarter of the usual amount.

"We are in a serious financial crunch," Townsend said. "We had \$22,000 last year, and we thought that was bad."

Congress entered last year's session with a \$5,100 debt because of overspending in previous sessions and because of a small amount of reversions — unused money student groups must return to Congress at the year's end.

Townsend said last year's Congress



DTH/BESS LOEWENBAUM

Student Body Treasurer Kativa Parker explains the budget woes Student Congress faces this semester.

absorbed that debt by being frugal with appropriations and that he expected Congress would have about \$40,000 to distribute this semester. But when Student Body Treasurer Kativa Parker went to the Student Activity Fund Office to check

Congress' balance Tuesday, she was told that Congress never paid \$40,000 in operating costs to SAFO last year.

"I'm not sure how communication

See CONGRESS, Page 5

# Michael. Mia. Marion. LUMP.

Come see one of Carolina's legends transform Kenan's student section.

Be there  
September 15