

Market opens in full bloom

BY LAURA OLENIACZ
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

It took Wilma Hanton most of Friday to water the bright yellow daffodils and bread-and-butter-colored narcissus to be ready for Saturday, the 28th opening of the annual Chapel Hill-Carrboro Farmers' Markets Inc.

She said she went back and forth between the greenhouse rows all day to keep the flowers fresh.

And at 7 a.m., Hanton was ready for the markets's opening at Carrboro Town Commons.

Hanton, a Hillsborough farmer, was among about 40 vendors selling everything from baskets and scarves to tarts and cheeses until noon.

The market, first opened in 1979, now runs every Saturday until Dec. 23.

"On Saturday we're open all the way until Christmas," said Sheila Neal, market manager.

With the motto "locally grown, nationally known," the market only sells products from vendors who operate in and close to Orange County.

Carrie Burke, a Chapel Hill resident, said that she loves the market and that she was lured back for the second time to buy special oat bars sold by a particular vendor.

"A lot of things aren't in season yet, so there's not as broad a selection," she said, but she added that she came to see what was available.

All farmers at the market must live within 50 miles of Carrboro and must go through an application process to be eligible to sell.

"For many farmers the market is the main way they sell their produce," Neal said.

She added that farmers also sell to nearby restaurants, leaving a small portion for larger grocery stores.

The 50-mile approach personalizes the experience of the market, so that buyers can get what Neal called "a face with your food."

On Saturday, back-and-forth banter between sellers and customers brought the market to life.

Frances Pendergrass — known as "The Bread Lady" — sells her cakes, breads and pies 35 weeks a year. She said she spent the winter creating a new bread.

"You know what redbud blossoms smell like? It tastes just like that," she said, answering an inquiry from a man trying to sniff the fruit in her baked goods.

"I try to use as many local fruits as I can," she said.

Emil Usinger, a kindergartner at Frank Porter Graham Elementary School, said he enjoys



Shari Harris (left) and Sarah Frank purchase a jade plant at the 28th annual opening of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Farmers' Markets Inc. on Saturday.

the market, especially the food and the playground.

His mother, Deborah Usinger, said the family has come to the market for two years.

The market will start from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. April 12.

The Southern Village Farmers' Market, held on Thursdays, will start running from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. May 4.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

School still seeking system status

BY ERIN FRANCE
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

Educators and legislators alike still are analyzing the benefits of making the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics the 17th school in the UNC system.

The school's board of trustees voted unanimously March 10 to seek an official position within the state university.

Craig Rowe, director of communications for the school, said the benefits for the UNC system in adopting NCSSM include its valuable experience in creating interest in the subjects of science and math.

Since system President Erskine Bowles took office in January, officials statewide have refocused attention on science and math education in North Carolina.

Rowe said the school's distance learning initiatives also fit well with the system's overall goal of reaching more people through education.

"It really reaches out across the state — we may be located in Durham but the school of math and science is truly an asset of the

state." He said that he is not sure what the change would mean for the school's funding but that NCSSM students would profit from the move in finding mentors and partners for their research in other system schools.

Rowe said he expects the addition of NCSSM to be approved by the system Board of Governors and the N.C. General Assembly, which must happen before the school is considered a part of the system.

He added that Bowles backs the change, clearing the way for final approval.

Rep. W.A. Wilkins, D-Durham, said that Bowles' support is a positive point he will consider, but he added that he isn't sure if the topic will be addressed during the legislature's short session beginning May 9.

"I certainly don't oppose the concept but I don't know the details," he said.

Sen. Bob Atwater, D-Durham, said he doesn't know of anyone who opposes the idea. But he added

that he also doesn't know when the Senate will take up the measure.

"I'm on the committee for the appropriations for higher education, and I haven't heard anything yet."

BOG member Hannah Gage said she will support adding NCSSM to the system, which could aid the state in improving its production of math and science teachers.

"One thing that has focused a lot of attention on this school has been our growing discussion on the need for more math and science teachers," she said.

"There is a natural connection between what they are doing and what we want to do a better job of."

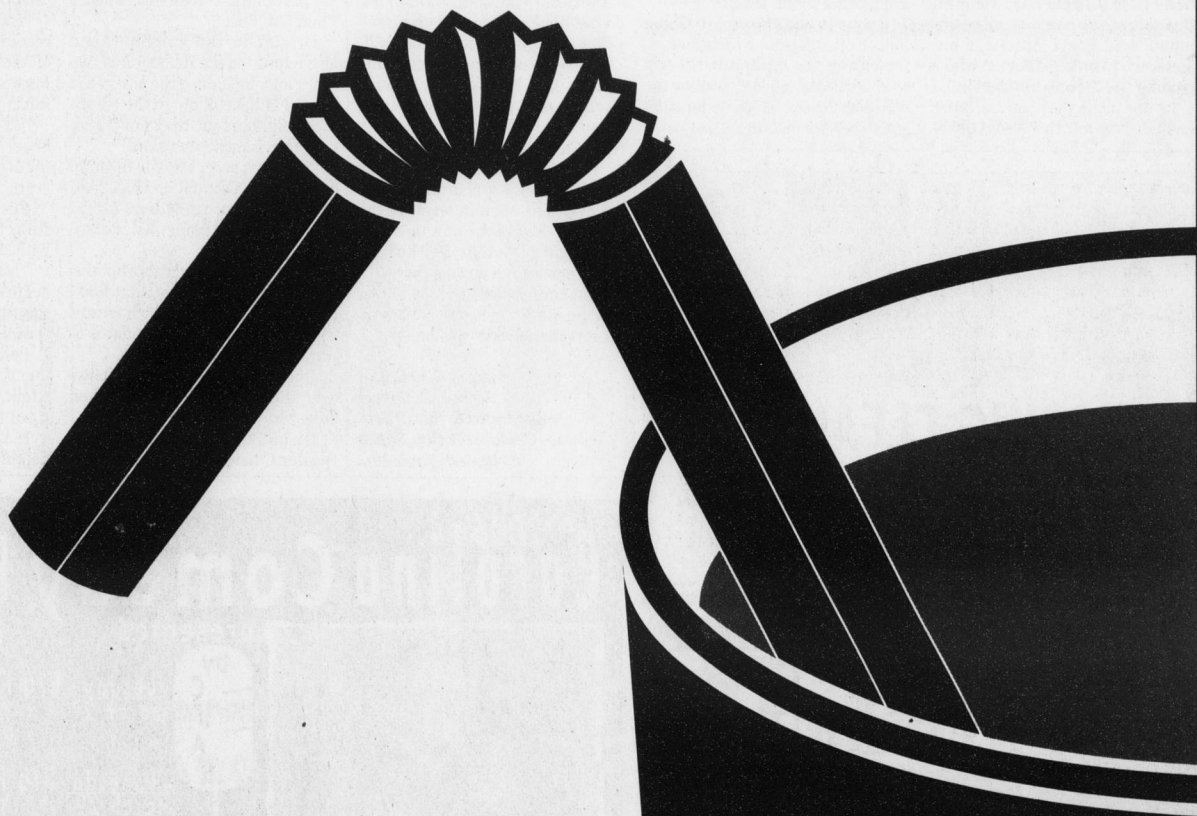
She said the school also will benefit from increased lobbying for the school's funding by UNC-system officials.

"If the state has perhaps not met those needs, having the size and force of the university system behind it could help."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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