

Social agencies fear funding cut

By LYNN JOHNSON

The Chapel Hill Board of Aldermen and the Orange County Commissioners are currently embroiled in a budget dispute over the funding of social services.

For several years Chapel Hill has funded the following service agencies: The Council on Aging, Alternative Community Counseling and Educational Service System, Oasis, the Rape Crisis Center, Volunteers for People, Meals on Wheels, Women's Health Counseling, the Coalition for Battered Women and Joint Orange-Chatham Community Action, Inc.

The board is now considering eliminating the funding of these nine agencies or cutting it drastically, based on the belief that these human service agencies can get all their funding from the county as most N.C. agencies do.

The county maintains it has more pressing needs to contend with than the further funding of social services and it is not shirking its responsibility in the matter.

Last year the county and town worked together through a multi-funding subcommittee to determine the amount each would dole out to the agencies. That cooperation was not evident in this year's operations.

In an interview with *The Chapel Hill Newspaper* May 24, county finance director Neal Evans said the town sent a representative to the

county's budget hearing who observed but did not participate.

"The town had told us they were not going to participate in the hearings," Evans said. "I asked them at least to send someone so we could know what their funding was going to look like.

"The critical point, in my opinion, about the hearings is the participation of the managers in determining what their respective boards' participation should be," Evans said. "But the person they sent was not at the policy-making level and was not in any position to do managerial types of discussion."

Since then, the board has set up a task force on human services funding which made a recommendation to the board last week. While the task force did not recommend doing away with the funding, it did propose a drastic cut in the amounts requested by the agencies. Less than half the money sought by the agencies will be provided if the Board of Aldermen accepts the proposal.

Proponents of funding and representatives of the social service agencies again pleaded their case to the board at a work session Monday night. The final decision must be made around the end of June, with the new fiscal year beginning July 1.

Ellen Thompson, a volunteer on the counseling staff of the Rape Crisis Center, commented on the proposed budget cut by the board.

"Our counseling services will go on, but rape victims can't call if we have no phone and we can't have professionally trained counselors if we don't have a professionally trained coordinator. Taking a total budget figure and cutting it by an arbitrary percentage without considering what programs and services are involved does not seem to me a responsible way of proceeding."

She added, "The people who need our services are being used as pawns in a political game between the city and the county."

Elderhostel offers participants opportunities in academics, fun

By ROBERT THOMASON

James Thabet is taking a fairly heavy course load this summer, three courses as a matter of fact. He's not getting a bit of credit for them either, at least not the kind that's tucked away in a computer and then forgotten.

He's attending an Elderhostel, a nationwide program that makes university resources available to senior citizens during the summer.

Some of the 32 persons who are attending this week's hostel went to college; some did not finish high school, while other have Ph.D.s.

The participants registered for the Elderhostel Sunday at Spencer Residence Hall, where they are housed. The resident assistant for the hostel, Beth Barlowe, said the participants are behaving themselves.

Thabet, 80, is repeating an astronomy course this summer, not because he failed it, but because he enjoyed it.

"I'm retired and a widower," Thabet said. "I

always said that one day I would go back to school," he added.

UNC is only one of the eight campuses in North Carolina offering an Elderhostel program this summer. Many of the people attending the hostel have attended other hostels before. Sarah Blank from Goldspring, Texas, has been to hostels in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Iowa. After she finishes here, she will go to another hostel in West Virginia.

The UNC hostel is being coordinated by Joan True of the Office of Continuing Education, Extension Division. The program offers three courses: *Astronomical Perspectives*; *Health, Care and the Image of the Person*; and *Politics and Ethics*. All are taught by UNC faculty members.

Extra curricular activities such as wine and cheese tasting parties, tours of Ackland Art Museum and historic Hillsborough are also scheduled. "The fellowship is great. It's great to be with people who think the way you do," Blank said.

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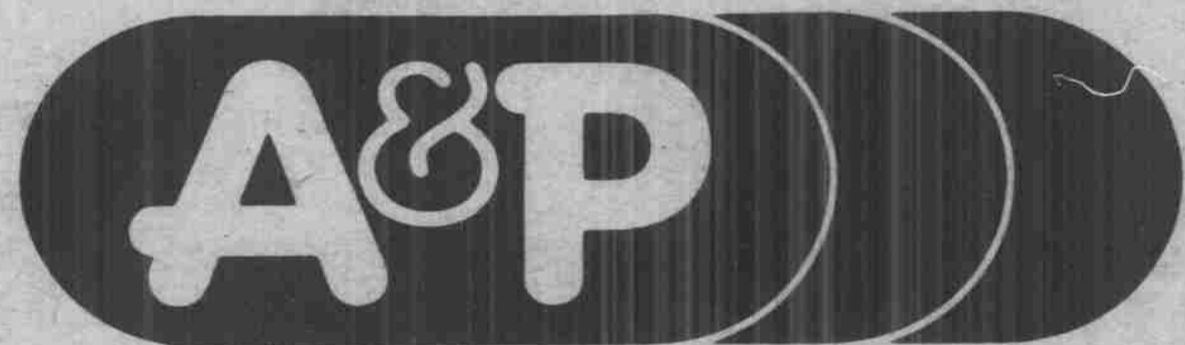
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