

Food stamp cut could threaten tobacco farmers

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sen. Jesse Helms' drive against the federal food stamp program could prompt a congressional backlash against tobacco, industry supporters said.

Some urban congressmen are branding as irresponsible the North Carolina Republican's promise to cut the food stamp program by up to 40 percent. Helms will become chairman of the senate Agriculture Committee in January.

Other rural congressmen said the food stamp program was an important political bargaining tool. Big-city congressmen trade their support for farm programs for support of food stamp programs, they said.

Helms' assault on the food stamp program may cause Northern congressmen to attack the tobacco price support program "tooth, tongue and toenail," said an aide to one North Carolina congressman.

The federal price support program guarantees farmers a minimum price for their tobacco. It also sets quotas against an excess of tobacco flooding the markets.

Rep. Frederick W. Richmond, D-N.Y., said, "I give you my personal guarantee" there will be a fight if Helms tries to pare down the food stamp program.

Richmond, chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, which oversees the food stamp program, said, "If Sen. Helms tries to cut the food stamp program, he would be taking serious risks not only with the tobacco program, but the entire farm program."

Richmond cited studies which showed the national fraud rate in the food stamp program was about 8 percent, not 40 percent. He said most retail stores had a 5 percent fraud rate.

"Sen. Helms would do well to reconsider some of his irresponsible comments," Richmond said. "The average member of Congress does not represent farmers. The average member represents either urban dwellers or suburbanites."

One farm lobbyist said if Richmond retaliated against the tobacco program, "he'll take 100 votes with him."

Protecting the tobacco price support program in Congress "has taken some masterful politics in the last 30 years," said John Merritt, an aide to Rep. Charles Rose III, D-N.C.

One strategy of tobacco state congressmen is to keep the food stamp and school lunch programs under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate agriculture committees. Control of such programs has given outnumbered farm state congressmen political leverage with big-city and suburban congressmen.

Tobacco congressmen also have supported federal aid for financially troubled New York City and the Chrysler Corp. in return for New York and Michigan congressmen's support for tobacco programs.

"I hope that Sen. Helms and others would carefully calculate the political consequences, because this is a mean town," said Joseph A. Kinney, staff agriculture director for the National Governors Association and a former aide to Sen. Robert Morgan, D-N.C.

Kinney said it would "only be a question of time before tobacco would pay a terrible price" if Helms succeeded in cutting food stamps by 40 percent.

The head of the Tobacco Institute, Horace R. Kornegay, said Richmond's remarks were a warning to food stamp

See TOBACCO on page 2

Vote to disband fails

Old East unhappy with STOW

By MELODEE ALVES
Staff Writer

Despite arguments from some Old East residents, a motion to dissolve STOW Residence College was defeated by a secret ballot of 3-10-2 last week.

Many of the STOW representatives felt that STOW had not been given sufficient time to function as an organization and should remain to prove itself. Composed of Spencer, Triad and Old Well dorms, STOW is in its first year of operation.

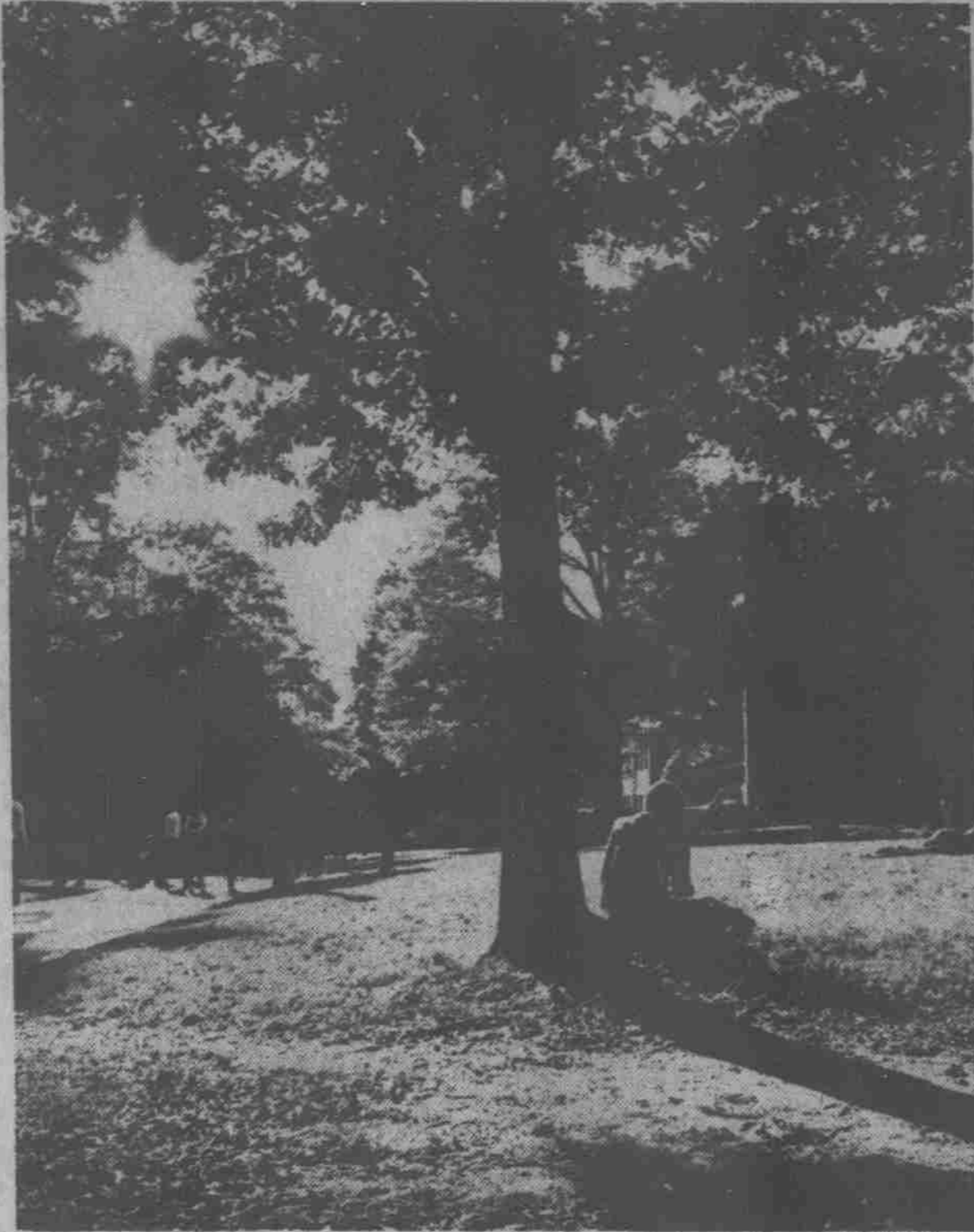
Some of the residents of Old East argued that they did not see any substantial benefits in being a part of STOW.

"We had no say-so about getting in STOW; now we have no voice in getting out," said Davis Cooke, an Old East resident.

Clifton Metcalf, vice president of Old East, said some residents felt that the amount of money taken from the dorm for the STOW fund decreased dorm mixers and made small mixers impossible to have. Some residents questioned the election process in the formation of STOW and felt that the women's dorms had an overriding vote over the men's dorms.

Metcalf said the dissatisfied residents also felt Old East was losing its individuality.

"We're the oldest state university building in the nation. Being in STOW takes away our tradition, our sense of



DTH/Will Owens

Long day

It's that time of day when classes are winding down and only the stragglers or the dedicated few remain. Anyone who's ever crossed the campus around 4 in the afternoon knows the feeling. The campus is subdued compared to the frenzy of the morning and those still left just want to go home.

Council hears more debate on Oaks' conversion

By ANN SMALLWOOD
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council ended more than four hours of sometimes heated public hearings Monday night with a cheerful vote to prohibit parking on Franklin Street during the annual Christmas Parade, scheduled for Saturday. The remainder of the two-page council agenda was deferred until Wednesday, Thanksgiving eve.

At the Wednesday afternoon meeting, the council again deferred a motion to create a task force to study relocating the University's Horace Williams Airport, pending a council consensus on the size and composition of its membership. An ordinance changing the taxicabs rate system was adopted in a 5-2 vote.

More than 60 people filled the council

meeting room Monday night to witness the second public hearing about the permit modification request that would allow Greensboro's Brant Homes, Inc. to convert The Oaks Apartments to condominiums. Four Oaks residents and UNC Student Government Representative Susan Strayhorn spoke out against the proposed conversion.

"In light of the current rental situation and the large number of students who must compete for the small percentage of unoccupied rental units each year," Strayhorn said, "Student Government opposes the conversion of The Oaks Apartments...and urges the Council to take the transient students' needs into consideration in its ultimate decision on this issue."

Speakers for the developer, who requested the conversion in August, argued that the

sale of the 124 Oaks units, at Burning Tree Drive and N.C. 54 East, would not appreciably damage the Chapel Hill rental market. Citing a study made by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Brant spokesman Mike Hyman said that as much as 37 percent of the units could be expected to remain as apartments after conversion, if they were purchased and leased by local investors.

Real estate appraiser Tom Hefner said the potential return on condominium projects was so great that incentive to build apartments was reduced. No new apartments have been built in Chapel Hill since 1973. "No one is going to go out and build an apartment project for \$3 million or \$4 million that he will go broke on," Hefner said.

Although Hefner admitted under questioning that it also was more lucrative to

convert existing apartments to condominiums than to build new ones, he said he did not expect an Oaks conversion to start an irreversible trend.

"Eventually, the laws supply and demand would have to come into play," Hefner said. "If every apartment in town were converted tonight, I don't believe they could be sold."

John Grizzard, an Oaks resident who recently completed medical studies at UNC joined other residents in citing numerous structural defects which they contended could not be remedied through the "cosmetic" improvements the developer has promised to make before sale. Pool plumbing, insufficient insulation and unstable drainage were cited by residents as reasons why they would prefer to rent temporarily instead of buy for \$55,000 to \$75,000.

RA selection process is changed

By BETSI SIMMONS
Staff Writer

This year's Resident Assistant applicants will have to go through a different process from the hectic one Hinton James RA Gretchen Yost went through two years ago.

"When I got to be an RA, first I had to fill out an application, then I went to an individual interview with an RA from my dorm. Then I went to group interviews. It was supposed to show how you would act in a group situation," she said. "I really didn't like that part too much because you really didn't know any of the people, and a lot of it was really fake."

Like Yost several other RAs complained about parts of the process in a survey University Housing compiled. As a result, students applying for one of the about 80 RA positions this year will go through a slightly different selection process.

University Housing will begin

accepting applications today.

"Last year's candidates recommended we take another look at the process and change a few things," Jody Harpster, associate director of University Housing, said.

Harpster said people interested in RA positions will meet Jan. 14, before applications are due on Jan. 16.

The next step in the three-month selection process will be individual interviews with current RAs. "These are more like information sessions. They give a candidate a chance to ask questions on a one-to-one basis," Harpster said.

In past years, after the information sessions, several people were given a hypothetical problem to solve during a group interview. This year each candidate will be randomly assigned to an interview where a panel will ask the candidate questions. "Last year's candidates felt that the group interviews

weren't a fair assessment of their abilities and they weren't a fair assessment of their abilities and they weren't giving (housing) what we needed to know," Harpster said.

"During the last phase (the mini interviews), only those candidates that we still feel we'd like to know more are interviewed again," she said.

People chosen for RA positions will be notified in writing Feb. 17.

"I don't think it's easier (this year)," Yost said. "But I think it's more fair. I'm not sure what all the new program is, but I know it's going to be not as fake, and not as much of a put-on. I think you're really going to see what the people are like."

Applications for RA positions are available at the Residence Life Office in Carr Building, at the area directors' offices in residence halls and at the main desks in Granville Towers.



DTH/Charley Vernon

Dorothy Farrington sells a bouquet to student J.H. Miller inside the NCNB Plaza...selling flowers for 45 years in a business passed down from her mother

Tradition

By LINDA ROBERTSON
Staff Writer

It is strange, but proper, to see the words "Flower Ladies" posted on the downtown NCNB Plaza sign along with "Papagayo's" and "Aaron Literary Services." But, just like the Old Well and UNC athletics, Chapel Hill's flower ladies, as they are called, are an integral part of the University community. They belong.

The ladies sit faithfully, day in and day out, just inside the plaza in small chairs backed against a mirror-lined wall, surrounded by containers of colorful home-grown flowers.

"On cold and rainy days like this, time goes by slower," said Dorothy Farrington, who is the dean of Chapel

Chapel Hill flower ladies add a touch of brightness

Hill's famed flower ladies.

She has been selling flowers for 45 years. She and the other flower ladies grow them at their homes and farms six miles outside Chapel Hill.

"My mother started it all and I just sort of latched on and kept it up," she said. "My sister does the arranging. She was never trained; it's just a God-given gift she was born with, a natural ability."

"We used to sell the flowers all along Franklin Street. There were about 12 of us set up along here and it used to be real pretty to see so many flowers," Farrington said.

Lily Pratt is a talkative, friendly woman of 53, who, like Farrington, has been selling the flowers for most of her life.

"I started back when I was 10-11 years old. Me and my sister would go around to the women's dormitories and go from house to house selling," she said. "I didn't like selling door-to-door like that so I'd ring the bell once and leave, and my sister would tell me I'd never make any money. I like doing it this way better—the people can come up to you and you don't have to be ashamed of asking folks for money."

Pratt is quick to point out the time and effort that goes into each of their bouquets.

"People don't realize how much work we put in to these," she said. "First we got to take care of the garden and we got to pick them and bring

See FLOWER on page 2