



Bibliophiles check out the offerings at the Wake County Library's book sale.

File photo

Critical Friends

Wake libraries shelve volunteers

Wake County's Friends of the Library criticized the library director for the library's holdings. As a result, the volunteer group has been asked not to handle the library system's annual book sale.

BY DAVID E. BROWN

Raleigh

To the concerned volunteers it's simple: Friends don't let friends drive away from the library unfulfilled.

The county administrators who run the libraries simply don't agree there'd be any reason for that to happen. But what happens when the people in charge of a taxpayer-funded public service and the people who give their time to raise money and funnel the public's support and criticism can't see eye to eye?

In Wake County, the volunteer group that supports the public library system found itself in hot water after it criticized the way the library director was handling the system's book collection. How the dispute has played out offers a lesson for all organizations that depend on volunteers, who inevitably are beholden to some higher entity, whether public or private.

Local governments like to stretch dollars to the limit. Nearly every service they staff, they supplement in some way with small-scale philanthropists - people who find the time to lend a free hand. Wake County Manager Richard Stevens rattles off the names of half a dozen without taking a breath: PTA, extension homemakers, parks advisory boards, Keep America Beautiful, folks who help troubled children.

And the Friends of the Library. In the increasingly cosmopolitan,

education-minded state capital, Stevens, Library Director Tom Moore and some county commissioners are at odds with the leadership of the roughly 200 Friends over the volunteers' repeated criticism of the library system's collection.

The primary complaint, which the Friends say they are passing along from thousands of library users, is that the book collection buildup that started under Moore in the early 1980s has left the 18 library branches long on pulpy popular novels and short on non-fiction beef.

The Friends also are upset that the system let its local history collection decline.

County officials have made some positive responses. They attempted to obtain specifics from every signer of a petition critical of the system. They have started an effort to

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Booster shots

Volunteers help fund high school athletics

They operate on a much smaller scale than their university counterparts, but high school booster clubs perform a task that's just as important - raising dollars to support their school teams.

BY TIM STEVENS

Newton

Never underestimate what can be done by a small group of people with love in their hearts, ears to the telephone and feet in action.

Wayne and Peggy Smith have helped pump more than a quarter of a million dollars into the athletic program at Newton-Conover High School during the past 20 years or so.

The Newton-Conover Athletic Boosters Club raised more than \$10,000 in less than a week to buy a car for football coach Don Patrick. By comparison, it took the school two years to raise \$86,000 for a new press box for the football field and about five years to raise \$225,000 for a new field house. Few athletic booster clubs in North Carolina can handle projects that big, but



FIELDING DREAMS

SPORTS AND GIVING
SPECIAL REPORT

boosters clubs gradually have become a necessity for many high schools.

Twenty years ago, most school athletic programs could survive on the revenues generated by gate receipts at football and basketball games. But in those days, schools usually offered five or six sports for boys and one or two for girls.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association now has state championships in 21 sports, and it is not unusual for a school to field more than 30 varsity and junior varsity teams.

High school athletics don't receive any state funds. Most local systems provide support funds for coaching supplements, insurance, transportation and the like.

"I'd guess that booster clubs at many schools provide a minimum of 50 percent of the operating expenses," says Gary Powers, athletics director at Millbrook High in Raleigh. "At some schools, the boosters probably give closer to 70 percent."

High school athletic booster clubs, unlike college athletic clubs, generally have tremendous turnover. Parents usually are involved as long as their children are participating. There are few



Selling refreshments at soccer games is one way members of the Millbrook High School Booster Club raise money for athletics. Here club members Sue and Jimmy Helfert serve middle school students Stuart Small (left) and Betsy Draper.

File photo

people like the Smiths, who have been members of the Newton-Conover group for more than 20 years.

The Smiths have missed fewer than half-a-dozen Newton-Conover football games since they graduated in 1947. Wayne was a charter member of the school's athletic boosters and Peggy has been the treasurer for

more than 15 years.

"We just enjoy it," says Peggy Smith. "This is what we do. Some people get involved in other kinds of clubs, but this is what we do."

The Smiths are totally involved. Wayne brings the cheerleaders into the stadium in his pickup at every home game, and Peggy staffs the souvenir booth that is open before

and after — but not during — home football games.

They also unofficially adopt a player or two each year to become sort of honorary grandchildren.

The work the Smiths do helps the Newton-Conover program, but the focus of their group and most high

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BRIEFLY

New resource on volunteer issues

The Nonprofit Risk Management Center in Washington, DC has produced a new booklet on legal issues that arise in volunteer programs, "Managing Volunteers Within the Law." For information, call (202)785-3891.

Student organizes program to feed homeless

Glenn Hutchinson, a senior at UNC-Charlotte, started picking up leftovers from the university cafeteria to take to area homeless shelters a few years ago. Now Hutchinson and several other students collect food three times a week, and Hutchinson is working to turn the program into a nonprofit organization before he graduates.

Volunteers needed at arts program

Heritage Arts in Raleigh is seeking volunteers to help with "Reunion in the Grove," a festival honoring the ancestors of people of African ancestry. The festival is Saturday, June 4, 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Moore Square Park. Call Maxine Alexander at (919) 831-0681.



Heritage Arts

Volunteers needed for statewide conference

The *Philanthropy Journal of North Carolina* is looking for a few volunteers to help with registration and to facilitate its statewide conference on stewardship this fall. Call (919) 829-8991.

Volunteers make fundraising effort

Hundreds of volunteers contacted each family with a child at Ravenscroft School in Raleigh as part of the school's \$5.15 million fundraising campaign. More than 770 parents, faculty, alumni, grandparents, foundations and corporations contributed to the campaign.