

FRIENDS

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restore the history collection. And they have acknowledged the non-fiction complaint, at least to the point of earmarking all the proceeds from the annual book sale to non-fiction.

But they also have bristled, repeatedly saying the criticism isn't justified. Commissioners Chairman Vernon Malone snubbed the Friends' president when she tried to air the public's complaints during a meeting.

And most recently, a majority of the commissioners backed Stevens' recommendation to remove the Friends from involvement in the annual sale, which generates about \$30,000.

That moved caused a cancellation of the Fall 1993 sale. A sale held last month was run by library staff and

some new friends - an ad hoc volunteer group organized by Moore and his staff.

Friends President Carol Moyer, Moore, and Stevens are left wondering about the future. Stevens says there are three options: The county can turn its back on the Friends' complaints; can patch up the relationship and work with them; or it can find some new friends.

"To support what is good, and to work to improve what isn't, that's our role," says Moyer. "I think the library probably always perceived the group as running the book sale, and that's all they wanted from a Friends group. But as feedback from the public came to us, we passed it along and never got any response, and then there was a breaking point."

"I think the Friends just brought to the fore what's been a longstanding frustration in the community. We didn't create it. We're not saying the whole library is bad, just that things

could be better."

Moore, the library director, says one role of the Friends "is to advocate for the programs being offered." The question is, what do you do when you don't agree and can't be supportive?

"You need to get out of the Friends group," he says, "You need to start a new organization and call yourselves something else. I do believe there is a place and a way to deal with" constructive criticism, but without being specific, he says the Friends "took themselves out of an appropriate role."

Says Stevens, the county manager: "I've been in Friends groups. I've been president of Friends groups. A good friend is going to point out when you have something that needs criticism, but in a constructive fashion."

THE COLLECTION

Is there really a problem with the non-fiction collection, or is that criti-

cism, as Stevens says, simply a perception that is "stronger than reality?"

Raw circulation is easy to measure, and Moore's success has been tallied in terms of dramatically increased numbers of books checked out. The quality of a particular collection, however, is much more subjective.

Moore says he is working specifically on the non-fiction collection, based at least in part on what he called the constructive element of the criticism.

"The staff has spent a lot of time on it, we've formed plans, and we've been involved in spending more money on the non-fiction collection," he says. "We're developing specialties among the branches, and developing a breadth to our collections we didn't have before. We've also improved automation, local history, and our work with the schools."

But the relationship between the

government entity and apparently well-meaning volunteers - normally welcome at the table - is in tatters.

Stevens says there have been several attempts to mediate - by himself; by Malone, the commissioners' chairman; and by an assistant county manager. Is it nothing more than the classic failure to communicate?

At one point John Caldwell, chancellor emeritus of N.C. State University, was brought in. In a letter to Malone, Caldwell praised Moore for his willingness to take some suggestions from the Friends, but said his initial resistance created an unnecessary controversy.

"Tom Moore is properly proud of what has been accomplished under his leadership," Caldwell concluded. "But he has found it hard to take positions and actions that might imply that 'outsiders' forced him to expand his objectives for the Library

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BOOSTER

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school athletic booster clubs is to raise money. Newton-Conover's uniforms are provided by the boosters each year, just as they are at most schools. One football uniform, not including pads, can cost \$150 or more. A football helmet costs \$100.

Other clubs devote much of their efforts to big purchases, like a \$40,000 bus or a \$15,000 van.

The booster clubs have membership fees that generally include tickets to home athletic contests. Most of the money comes from fundraisers.

Smithfield-Selma was among the first schools in the state to have a billboard erected with the names of area businesses that had contributed to the program. The

school, which hopes to get \$50,000 of its \$70,000 athletic budget from the boosters, aims to have 100 businesses pay \$300 each for the display next year.

Some schools, such as South Johnston and East Carteret, have big banquets as part of their membership drives. The Mariners Feast at East Carteret costs \$125 a couple and includes athletic passes to home games. The meal includes seafood and prime rib. The evening, prepared by the East Carteret coaching staff, grosses more than \$18,000.

Much of the money comes more grudgingly. Some groups hold golf tournaments and sell school-oriented merchandise such as mugs, seat cushions and pennants.

One of the most innovative fundraisers is the cow-chip contest. The football field is divided

into grids that are sold to contributors. A cow is turned loose on the field and whoever has bought the grid where the cow first does her business is the winner.

Rosewood, near Goldsboro, holds a reverse drawing and pig-picking where all of the tickets are placed in a hopper and the last name drawn wins \$5,000 in gold coins. The school sells a minimum of 250 of the \$50 tickets and usually clears more than \$8,000.

"No one can make it just on gate receipts anymore," says Don Patrick, the Newton-Conover athletics director and football coach. "Without the boosters, we're all in trouble. We've been very lucky to have people like Wayne and Peggy. Everytime I look around the stadium, I think of them and the other folks who have kept us going."



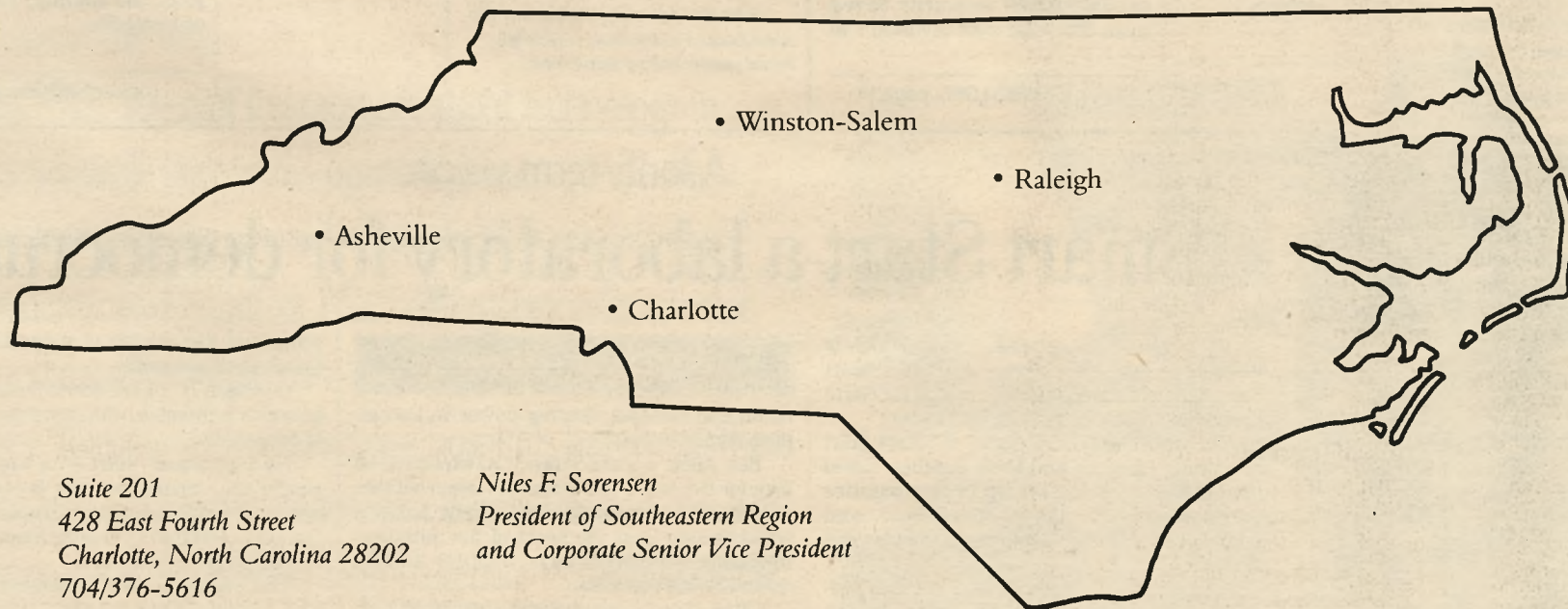
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