

# Philanthropy Journal

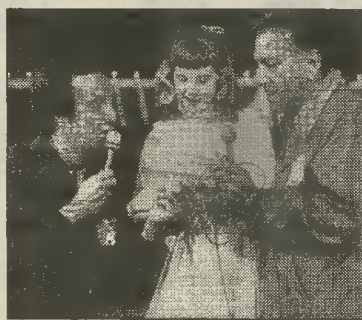
A nonprofit newspaper for the nonprofit community  
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OF NORTH CAROLINA

## Popular strategies Nonprofits turn to special events

Special events are one of the hottest fundraising trends in the nonprofit world. But experts say organizations should think carefully before sponsoring special events fundraisers.

BY STEPHANIE GREER

As nonprofits get jostled in the increasingly crowded world of fundraising, they are looking for ways to attract financial support - and many are finding them in special events such as golf tournaments, auc-



The annual Easter Seals telethon is one of the best-known nonprofit special events.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

tions and galas.

Special events, in fact, are growing in popularity, even though their disadvantages can outweigh their advantages for some organizations, nonprofit development officers say.

"I think one of the biggest changes we've seen is that more and more agencies and organizations are doing special events, to where there's almost too many of them," says Mary Ellen Shuntich, a Charlotte consul-

tant and owner of MES Development Associates. "I don't think I'd call it a fad, but it's a visible effort. And so agencies see that others are doing it, so they decide to do it also."

While holding special events can be an excellent way to raise money, simply undertaking a special event because of their growing popularity is never a good idea, Shuntich says.

Special events won't work for every nonprofit - particularly those that have not defined a specific audi-

Look for **EVENTS**, page 22

## Reading tea leaves Elections bear mixed messages

While the Nov. 5 elections may have changed a few of the faces in Raleigh and Washington, the balloting did little to alter the fundamental challenges facing nonprofits, sector leaders say.

BY BARBARA SOLOW

When asked to analyze the results of the November elections, North Carolina nonprofit leaders are more likely to talk about the status quo than they are about bridges to the 21st century.

Unlike the balloting in 1994, which was hailed as a mandate for a new brand of Republican fiscal conservatism, sector leaders say recent elections resulted in much less of a shakeup.

While the reelection of President Clinton and Gov. Jim Hunt - and the narrowing of conservative Republican majorities in both Congress and the state House - may shift the political balance on some issues, the trend toward smaller government and more reliance on the private sector continues.

"I think this is more a time of maintenance and fine-tuning than anything else," says Tom Lambeth, executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem.

"What's happened in the last couple of years is that a lot of folks have discovered the nonprofit sector and that's positive. But the rest of this century is probably not going to be a time of great change and experimentation."



Tom Lambeth

## Success in numbers Volunteers drive cancer fundraising

This is the final story in a series about planning for the Red Sword Ball, an annual fundraising event that was held in October to benefit the Triangle Metro American Cancer Society.

BY ASHLEY PEAY

### Raleigh

For Frances Penick, the inaugural Triangle Red Sword Ball has meant a seemingly endless round of phone calls, meetings and driving around town in her car.

"I was on the phone yesterday from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.," she quips one morning in October - less than two weeks before the ball.

Her work began in January with the formation of a permanent Red Sword Guild to plan and stage the ball. It has intensified in the weeks leading up to the event and included the coordination of more than 100 volunteers.

But the effort will pay off. The ball, held Oct. 11 at the Capital City Club in downtown Raleigh, will help raise \$101,000 for the American Cancer Society - almost double the \$55,000 raised at last year's event.



Frances Penick, Red Sword Ball chair, handles last-minute planning the week before the Raleigh event.

Photo by Ashley Peay

### SPECIAL EVENTS

The totals include corporate sponsorships of \$83,000, up from \$35,000 last year.

The difference, says Brant

Woodward, executive director of the Triangle Metro American Cancer Society, was the formation of the guild - along with a new format for the event.

So successful has been the change, says Woodward, that Cancer

Society staff members already are considering raising next year's goal to \$200,000.

Repeating this year's success, however, will depend on the contin-

Look for **GUILD**, page 15

## Work in progress Museum of Art gears up for new campaign

The state art museum has launched a year-long 50th anniversary celebration to set the stage for a big capital campaign.

BY TODD COHEN

### Raleigh

The North Carolina Museum of

Art has ambitious plans to expand and renovate its facility in West Raleigh and build its programs for the long-term.

To pay for those plans, museum officials hope to raise \$23.5 million in state funding and \$10 million to \$20 million in private dollars.

Larry Wheeler, who became the museum's director two years ago, hopes to cultivate that support in the

coming year through events that will celebrate the museum's 50th anniversary. Those events, which will include a series of anniversary events in April, will cost \$2.5 million - of which \$1.8 million already has been raised.

"The goal of this 50th anniversary," Wheeler says, "was to create a higher sense of awareness in the community for what the museum is and what it can do to enliven life in

the community, but also to make us more responsive to the entire state rather than to the immediate community."

Wheeler, who took over the museum after it had hit major roadblocks in its fundraising, has reorganized the development effort under a new director of external affairs,

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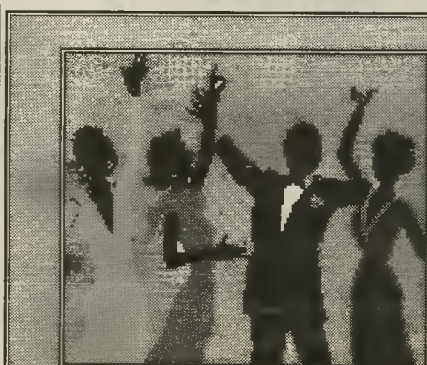
John Hood

"Partisan victories or losses were less significant in this election than the focus of the national political 'conversation,'" says John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation in Raleigh.

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## In the spotlight: Special events

This special issue examines nonprofit fundraising events. Topics include:

- Special events software. What packages are available for planning events? Page 3
- How has corporate downsizing affected support of nonprofit special events? Page 12
- How much of the special events industry is made up of nonprofit events? Page 4
- Should nonprofits use consultants when planning a special event? Page 14