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THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1992

CHARLES COUNTY'S LARGEST CIRCULATING NEWSPAPER

VOL. 13, NO. 23

A "Friends" in Need at the Library

by Eli Flam

Be a Friend. With that platform, so to speak, Lee Hickling of Cobb Island was elected president of the Friends of the Charles County Library at their first annual meeting last week.

A free-lance writer who wrote and published, *An Illustrated Centennial History of Cobb Island*, in 1989, Hickling wants to enlist the energies and ideas of the growing number of Friends. And to encourage new supporters to join and, *Be a Friend*.

In the state of Maryland, on a per capita basis, Charles County ranks 21st among 24 counties for library services. Last summer, the Glymont branch was closed because of budget cuts. Shortly after, a group of public-spirited citizens, concerned about funding cuts for the three existing libraries—Bryans Road, Waldorf, La Plata—got together to help what they considered an endangered, essential community resource. Acting president David W. Saxton of Quailwood, said they'd do well to get 125 members after a year.

Last week, before stepping aside for Hickling's two-year term, Saxton reported to applause



Big Little Friends—Donating \$13.88 that they saved up for the county library to buy a book under the Gift Tree program, are from left Lucas Cooksey, Justin Bird and Ryan Posey. Daycare escort Shelly Michael holds Rachel Posey.

photo by Linda Gateau

that they'd already exceeded that total, with 130 members. Hickling, attending his first meeting, took out a \$20 bill and became number 131. (He got \$5 back on one-year family dues.)

"How about 1,000 members?" called somebody.

"Within three years!" said Linda Gateau, community liaison

officer for the library.

Hickling said he spent much of his life in libraries and had "gotten into this" by talking to librarians at the counter.

Also elected were deponent as 1st vice-president, two years; Lorraine Hartline, former acting

secretary, 2nd vice-president, one year; Ray Green, continu-

ing as treasurer for two years; Marge Woodley, secretary, one year; and Sam Worsley, officer-at-large, one year.

Hickling asked what an officer-at-large did. Whatever the president wants, said Saxton, citing by-laws that require a

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minimum of six officers and permit a maximum of ten.

"I'll try not to let power go to my head," Hickling said. He later backed Worsley's suggestion to make short-term, intermediate and longer term plans. All members and interested citizens are invited to come with their ideas and comments to the next meeting of the Friends, June 23 at 7 p.m. downstairs in the La Plata library.

This large, white-painted room, which needs booking months ahead, is one of the few free meeting spots available in the county for non-profit groups. It houses, in turn, 4-H, quilters, Sons of the Confederate Veterans and a clutch of children's clubs, on sign language, pets, you name it. Look for health-related and other support groups... senior citizens... agencies for licensing training or testing... and now, at 7 p.m. every fourth Tuesday, the Friends.

How important is a public library

Flaubert counseled, "Read in order to live." And in this headlong century, where man has flown to the moon and high-tech relentlessly entices, Logan Pearsall Smith bears another kind of witness. "People," the best-selling essayist wrote, "say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading."

Even if your taste is for video games, reading is an essential tool to get on in life, especially for youngsters. And thanks to the seemingly simple but currently underfunded institution of the public library, we have handy access to an enormous range of human knowledge.

It has been argued that the major difference between democracies and dictatorship is open access to the broadest possible range of information. In Charles County, the public libraries in La Plata, Bryans Road and Waldorf regularly turn for material not at hand to a Southern Maryland network which in turn reaches out to the

you get immediately on showing that you live in the county.

But in the end, there is no free lunch. Somebody has to pay for the books, magazines and special materials for the librarians who answer your questions and help your children. Now, with the Friends, Hickling noted, you can pitch in. In the words of one brochure, "Your library makes major contribution to the education of all citizens of Charles County. Help keep it up!"

At last week's meeting, Ray Green reported that the week-long book sale in early May, first one sponsored by the Friends (in that same all-purpose room), had made a record \$1,101.51. It was then voted to take some of that money and buy 200 tote bags, imprinted with words like, *Be a Friend*. Some 125 will be given to the library for use with their outreach van, instead of the current plastic ones; the remaining 75 will be sold to the public at \$5 each. It also was agreed to take



cc: V.P. Elaine Ryan (seated left) with Rob.

NEWS WIRE

Shrimp Feast for Builders

The Southern Maryland Chapter of the Suburban Maryland Building Industry Association (SMBIA) will meet for its annual Shrimp Feast on Wednesday, June 10 at Robertson's Crab House in Popes Creek. Registration and reception begin at 6:30 p.m. and the buffet opens at 7 p.m. The menu is an all-you-can-eat assortment of spiced and fried shrimp, fried chicken, cole slaw, corn on the cob, french fries and potato salad. Beer, house wine, sodas, tea and coffee will be available all evening. There is limited walk-in capacity so those interested in attending are advised to reserve in advance. The cost is \$35 for reservations received before June 5 and \$45 after the deadline. For information and reservations, call the SMBIA office at (301) 925-9490.

F.I.B., Inc. Honored

Peter M. Felix of First Insurance Group of Maryland, Inc. in Waldorf, Maryland earned the Top Twenty Club designation for 1991 from Mound Agency, Inc.; Federal Kemper Insurance Company in Decatur, IL. This recognition is awarded to only the top 20 independent insurance agents out of more than 3,500, over a 12-state territory. It acknowledges superior performance in life production, agency management and client service.

The Red Coats are Coming!

Britannia's fully qualified soccer coaches will be invading the Waldorf area at the White Plains Regional Complex during August 17 through 21 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. to instruct the nation's leading soccer camp. Boys and girls from 5 to 19 years of age are invited to experience this prestigious event. Coaching programs will be customized for all players. For further details and a color brochure, please call Pam Worchel at (301) 870-8856.