

From the President

Dave Fergusson, President

Can't you just imagine Louis Farrakhan, Henry Kissinger and Reba McEntire sittin' together on the front steps of the Jamestown Public library, or of D. H. Hill Library, just talkin' libraries and saying how libraries put 'em where they are today? Well, I can't either — but *maybe* it's not too far off. You will read about what Richard Wells and others have been asked to do below.

I know that you are probably excited about the next millennium but the next biennium is *already* here and is looking good. The Executive Board of the North Carolina Library Association met the other day, February 15-16, in Winston-Salem, and indications are that the Association will both grow stronger as "we approach that ol' millennium," and will be helping libraries as they fight to do the same.

I'm an N.C.L.A. optimist because being optimistic is very *easy* with all of our strengths. If you had to read the interview Frances conducted with me in your Winter 1995 *North Carolina Libraries*, perhaps because you were stuck in the dentist's chair with nothing else to read, I hope you noted my enthusiasm for the work the Marketing Committee has begun. I am pleased to report that the Executive Board reached similar conclusions after several long sessions devoted to some solid consensus-building.

Trying not to "re-invent the wheel," the Board spent the first afternoon of the orientation/planning workshop with former President Patsy Hansel reviewing the priorities of the 1991-93 biennium and the 1993-95 Vision Statements reported upon so eloquently by Past President Gwen Jackson in the conference program. Much of what was envisioned has been accomplished, but the feeling remained that there is work to be done toward getting libraries recognized as "... the prime information source empowering the people ..." (1993-95 Vision Statement) and toward, as someone said, making libraries a universal household word — the very first thing that comes to mind.

The following focus statement was agreed upon:

The focus of the North Carolina Library Association during the 1995-97 biennium is to enhance the image that libraries are an essential service, in order to increase the support, funding, importance and effectiveness of libraries. A major strategy to achieve this goal will be a comprehensive marketing campaign.

Please note the reference to "image." While we all know the true meaning of life is sure to be found in the library, we are contending with too many other influences in our culture to not be more proactive. (A real *buzz word* there! Sorry.) We all speak up for libraries every day, and we do a great job. But no one group is really extolling our libraries to those who do not know us. N.C.L.A. has that responsibility which this resolution addresses.

The Publication & Marketing Committee, chaired by Richard Wells, is developing the comprehensive campaign, which will expressly focus on complimenting activities of our sections and round tables. Every kind of library should receive more support from more people who know more about libraries.

On a separate note, our strength is always our membership. The more of us there are, the stronger we become. The amount of productive work accomplished by members within the sections, round tables or committees of their choice is what makes N.C.L.A. a remarkable organization.

Barbara Akinwale and Jackie Beach chair the Membership Committee this biennium, and they are already working hard to increase our ranks. *I don't see why they should* because if we can each recruit a new member, or if even half of us do, our organization will be enormous. Why not do this: make a bet with an N.C.L.A. member who is a good friend. First one to recruit a new member gets dinner at Wilbur's Barbecue or at J. Basul Noble's, or Hornets tickets, or a flowering cactus, a Shih Tzu ... you name it! Give it a try, and good luck!