

Jeff Fobes

Side 1:

[1] Jeff was raised in India, France, the mid-west and Washington, D.C. He came here from St. Louis in 1983 from a job on community radio to avoid the weather and crime and be near his parents. His father had an international career in the United Nations. He helped him compile a newsletter for the "United States Association for the Club in Rome" and when he complained about the format his father said, "You fix it."

[44] He went to a few conferences for that organization and picked up the idea that "you have to think globally and act locally." He learned that we must take life seriously, do our best but be comfortable with uncertainty (see enclosure). [Albert Camus]

[134] In 1989 a group formed in W.N.C. calling themselves the Greens - from the West German Green Movement. The Green groups spread through Europe and excitement about environmental awareness, grass-roots democracy and the feminist movement was embraced by the younger group. It turned out to be more of a counter culture than a party. From 50-75 people met here. It was decided that the group needed a newsletter and he got the job. [Richard Harrison]

[200] He knew he wanted a real tabloid and in 1988 a 4-page paper was distributed free to 3,000 people. He put up most of the front money, signed all papers with his social security number, and did most of the work. Eventually it was incorporated.

[241] From the beginning The Green Line made a lot of waves - stories about Champion Fiber, water quality, Biltmore Forest being undisturbed when Hendersonville Highway widened - country club racially segregated - gay and lesbian rights. The mayor was mad and this was good for publicity!

[263] The League of Women Voters attend local civic meetings. Reports of these appear under "Board Watch." [Betsy Murray]

[327] There is a mixture of mountain culture and attitudes of retirees coming from a cosmopolitan background. There is a "turbulence," a "hybrid fever" here. The city officials hide behind the attitudes formed during the Depression.

[357] The Green Line comes from a belief system that we need to strengthen our community. Stories are given in depth. At the same time space is saved for celebrating and an arts and entertainment section was added.

[410] With the 6th issue ads were introduced. They were mainly of the counter culture.

[422] At first all people working on the monthly paper were volunteers. Gradually it was possible to pay something, even if it was below minimum wages. They are very talented, have a lot of freedom, switch roles as needed and are treated equally as humans.

[471] He outlines the roles needed to operate - free lance writers, office manager, advertising sales people, layout, office manager.

[526] The paper is facing a financial crisis right now. About 15 people work full time - they found the paper and like the open, experimental style and format.

[579] Papers are planned two months in advance but if something hot comes up they can jump on a story.

Side 2:

[2/2] He discusses other alternative papers. They belong to the "Association of News Weeklies" (even though this is a monthly) and keep in touch with some other papers (Knoxville) but the focus here is local issues and the effort is to try to find the story behind the story.

[2/39] This is a liberal paper, covering racial, sexual preference and abortion issues but an effort is made to balance the news and enhance dialogue. It is hard getting ads but gradually the main stream businesses see that this is a safe place.

[2/74] A reader's survey was made through the NPR. Readership was in the 25-45 age group. 12% were over 65, a big chunk were between 55-65 but interest falls off below 25. There is of course, competition for the advertising dollars.

[2/125] A free paper (there are also subscriptions for home delivery) is not free to run. Right now the paper is facing a financial crisis and supporters have been approached for funds - 300 have responded with money - the goal is to reach 1,000. Those who donate are given an additional (bi-monthly) paper called "on the line."

[2/192] There is a need to look into the new technologies for, even though the emphasis is local, broader background material enriches stories.

[2/213] Between the automobile and TV our fabric has become unraveled, we need more public meetings and shared local ideas.

[2/253] The paper has taken up a number of issues and affected change - sustained dialogue regarding an alternative school resulted in its removal from Claxton, where it had been run in a reduced form, to South French Broad. Water source has constantly been in the news. Prejudice in schools is being addressed. Homophobia is an issue, zoning and restrictions to preserve the environment is a constant item. On the subject of abortion, the paper has received flack from both sides. Forty percent of the population believe abortion should be illegal. They can't be left out of the dialogue.

[2/513] He is a bit burned out but it has been a lot of fun despite financial difficulties. He feels the job of bringing this sort of news to the public vital and healthy.

[2/572] He know that this is a viable business and is proud it has worked out as well as it has.

[2/599] It is exciting watching downtown come alive. "A city without a center is like a strip mall."