

Notes on Preparations for 2012 Fundraiser

1. The Address List

Dayle Collins asked Bill Duncanson, County Administrator, if the County could furnish the Library Board of Trustees with a mailing list of property owners. Duncanson referred Collins' request to Chris Jett.

Collins requested Jett to furnish a list which included both real and personal property owners. (In the 2009 fund drive, the list included only real property owners. Collins thought such a combination would reach residents who rent, rather than own their homes.)

Jett was able to email the address list to Collins as an Excel spreadsheet. This list included over 7,200 addresses. This list was then winnowed to eliminate entries for businesses, churches, any multiple entries for each address, and addresses containing: T/A, DBA, C/O, %, LTD, LLS, PC, INC, et als., Trustee, femme sole, for life EST, Estate. Out-of-State addresses, except for Maryland and DC were eliminated, as well as addresses in the areas of other libraries on the Neck. Heathsville, Killmarnock, and Irvington.

The list as furnished by Jett was in last name sequence. The first phase of the winnowing was made with the list in this sequence.

The list was then sorted by street address, to catch duplicates that weren't noticeable in the first sequence.

The list was then sorted by Zipcode so that the addresses could be printed in manner to qualify for efficient mailing rates.

The Zipcode sort was also used to eliminate out-of-state addresses, and addresses in the areas of other libraries on the Neck.

The County sometimes uses ADDRESS2 for street addresses when there is a P.O. Box in ADDRESS1. These street addresses in Address2 were deleted to prevent confusion. Address2 is also used for apartment numbers. Instances of the use of "APARTMENT" were changed to "APT" to enable printing on the same line as ADDRESS1.

This cleanup process was a joint effort of Jane Kemper and Dayle Collins.

Since it more efficient to have the letters with it colored letterhead professionally printed, the addressing was accomplished by printing addresses on the envelopes.

Dayle ordered 4,500 #10 envelopes from the Walmart website. These were delivered to the Tappahannock store from which Dayle retrieved them. The total cost for the envelopes was \$132.30.

Dayle's printer required a little more than one full Epson T0431 black ink which cost \$35.00, and a partial quantity of the three colored inks. A set of the colored inks cost a little over \$18. Even though all the printing was done in black, the printer uses a small amount of colored ink to keep the print head functioning properly. This was something He learned the hard way during this project.

Printing addresses directly on the envelop, seems to be competitive with the use of address labels. Dayle priced 4,500 labels at about \$120. To this would have to added the cost of printing the addresses on the labels and the cost of pre-printing the return address and the postal permit on the envelops.

Dayle's printer produced about 120 an hour It took an estimated 40 hours just to print the approximately 4,276 envelops. I probably took Jane and Dayle a total of about 40 hours just to prepare the address list from the data furnished by the County.

The envelops came in boxes of 500. The printed envelops were returned to the boxes, care being taken to preserve the ZIP Code sequence to qualify for bulk postage rates. The boxes were each numbered and labeled with the location of the first and last address in each box.

Since the print rate is about one hundred twenty envelops per hour, printing should be started and completed well ahead of the expected mailing deadline.

2. Addressing the Envelops Containing the Solicitation Letter

An Open Office document was created to format the printing of envelops from the edited address list.

A spreadsheet named "Staging file for fund letter addresses" was created to use as input to the mail merge for printing the envelops.

Addresses from the final address file were copied in batches of 250 – 500 addresses to the staging file for printing. In order to keep track of which addresses had been transferred entries were made on a paper notepad showing the starting and ending line numbers in the master file as each batch was transferred.

These notes were started and the printing of the envelops was completed in March, 2012, but delays in the reconstruction of the library delayed the actual fund drive until Nov 27, 2012. The letter was written initially by Ed Ramsey and was "tweaked" just a little for publication, Dayle Collins slightly reformatted the layout of the letter in order to incorporate the Library's letterhead.

This document was sent electronically to Design Printers in Warsaw for final printing and folding. This firm also printed the return envelops.

A small team of Trustees and volunteers met in the College Board Room and managed to complete the stuffing process within about 6 hours.

Thank You Letters

A spreadsheet was used by the person receiving the contributions to record the amounts of the contributions along with the names and addresses of the contributors. This spreadsheet was periodically emailed to Dayle

A personally addressed (the donors name and address was printed on the letter) Thank You letter was sent to each contributor. Dayle used a mail-merge program to transfer addresses from the spreadsheet to the form letter. The form letter was inserted into a window envelop for mailing. The window envelops were prepared in small batches by printing the Library's return address.

The individual Thank You letters were sent out promptly after the receipt of each donation.

In an effort to personalize the response, each letter was manually signed and a short note of appreciation was penned in.

In summary:

The Board of Trustees initiated the fund raising effort and selected the starting date. Board members “volunteered” for specific tasks: generating a mailing list, arranging for printing of the solicitation letter and return envelopes and for addressing envelopes for the solicitation letters.

The address list for the project was derived from a list of the real and personal property owners in Richmond County. The source of this data was the County. It was furnished to the Board in the form of a spreadsheet. This list required considerable manual editing to purge redundant and inappropriate addresses.

The master of the solicitation letter was prepared and printed by board members. This copy was then manually signed by the Board Chairman and then taken to a printer for reproduction in the needed quantity. The printer also folded the letters so they

The address for each recipient was printed by a board member on standard #10 envelopes using a personal computer.

The board met as a team to insert the letters along with a pre-addressed return envelop into the pre-addressed envelopes and take them to the Post Office.

The treasurer then periodically checked the mailbox to collect any donations. These were recorder on a spreadsheet and forwarded to Dayle so that he could send the donor an acknowledgment thanking them for their gift.

Special Note

The letters requesting donations were sent at the end of November. This may not be the best time of year to initiate a fund raising effort as it may conflict with other seasonal spending priorities. The amount raised by the 2012 effort was considerably less then that of the 2009 effort which was