

IN THE LEGISLATURE

The General Assembly of the 21st Century

by Paul T. O'Connor

What will the legislature look like in 10 years? For one, computers and other high-tech equipment will play a larger role. The legislature of the future also is likely to have a much different demographic make-up. It may have more women and fewer men. It probably will have more minorities and retirees, but fewer lawyers and business people. There also is likely to be a larger legislative staff and expanded cable television coverage of the General Assembly, but perhaps fewer newspaper correspondents following the legislature.

Imagine it's a spring weekend in the year 2001. Rep. Ann Smith is writing a proposal to present to a House appropriations subcommittee the following week. Smith plans to recommend doubling the funding for the state's adult day-care program. But the subcommittee's chairs support only a 10-percent increase.

Somehow, Smith must find nine votes for her proposal—about twice the number she has now. So, using the state-loaned personal computer that she's installed in the upstairs bedroom of her house, Smith calls up the names of every subcommittee member. She then begins research aimed at identifying those members most sympathetic to her proposal and perhaps most vulnerable to senior citizen voters.

Welcome to the General Assembly of the 21st Century!

Between January and May 1992, several dozen legislators, lobbyists, and other legislative observers were asked in interviews the same question: What will the General Assembly look like in 10 years? They predicted sweeping changes in the

legislature's racial, gender, and political make-up. But their least speculative forecast, perhaps, may be the assembly's increasing reliance on new technology—particularly computers.

Increased Use of Computers and Databases

The hypothetical legislator, Rep. Smith, is linked by telephone from her home computer to the main legislative network in Raleigh. Her administrative assistant communicates directly with her using a computer in Smith's office in the Legislative Building. Helping the aide is a budget analyst from the legislative staff, now divided into separate House and Senate contingents.

Using the computer, Smith scans the voting records of each subcommittee member going back to the 1993 legislative session, when the General Assembly first computerized floor votes. She asks for the members' votes on a list of key issues related to aging and child day care.

Next, she calls up a state database first used for the 1991 redistricting but kept current with fresh data over the past 10 years. The file catalogues every road, stream, and neighborhood in the state. It's also blended with state files on voting records and U.S. Census files on demographics. With a few keystrokes, Smith pulls up other state databases showing Medicare/Medicaid usage and tax records showing senior-citizen income and the number of families claiming senior

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citizens as dependents. To her computer, she also adds the state's files on local unemployment rates and jobless workers who are seeking human service positions.

Finally, she tells the computer to mix all the databases and compile profiles of the 16 subcommittee members' districts. Smith is now ready to start politicking. Using the computer data, she has compiled a profile of the need for adult day care and the impact her proposal would have in each district—for both the coming biennium and decade. That's because the Assembly now requires legislators to project long-range goals and costs when they propose new spending. Smith then selects a few key facts for each district and fax's them to the desk-top computers in the homes of the other subcommittee members.

When Smith buttonholes the subcommittee members on Monday, she won't appeal to their sense of compassion for the aged or the families of senior citizens who need someone to care for their parents and grandparents while they work. Instead, flashing her research findings for each district, she'll talk about votes back home and the

potential for state jobs in those day-care centers.¹ She'll also threaten to talk about the needs of individual districts at the subcommittee meeting—in front of cameras of the statewide cable television network that airs live, gavel-to-gavel coverage of the legislature.²

Don't get caught up in the futuristic-sounding technology, however. Much of what Rep. Smith does in 2001 already can be done in 1992. "I don't see any problem with your scenario," says M. Glenn Newkirk, chief of the legislature's Automated Services Division.

The technology to do such research exists now, and legislation recently adopted or under consideration almost guarantees that lawmakers will be able to use that technology during the coming decade. For example, the Legislative Services Commission voted on March 26, 1992 to replace the voting systems in both houses of the Assembly. The Legislative Services Commission's plan will allow floor votes to be captured by the Assembly's computer network and stored in databases that will be open to the public. Other proposals before the commission would supply legis-

Future legislative sessions may be aired live, gavel-to-gavel, on cable television systems statewide. Here, N.C. Public Television covers a Senate Committee as Sen. Roy Cooper, D-Nash, votes.



Karen Tan

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(D-EDGECOMBE)



lators with individual personal computers and let them use the state computer network from outside the government complex.

Thad Beyle, a professor of political science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, predicts that in the age of computers, those who control the new technology will have a new source of power. That is particularly true for House and Senate leaders, because they can utilize staff members who know *how* to use the technology. But some observers note that legislatures, in general, have been slow to take advantage of computer technology. That has shifted the balance of power in some states where the executive and judicial branches have more readily made use of computers.

“Legislators are losing out because they are not paying enough attention to the possibilities in information technology,” Rick Krueger, speaker pro tem of the Minnesota House of Representatives, writes in the journal, *State Legislatures*. “But despite the pervasive manner in which [computers] are changing the world, information technologies don’t seem to interest legislators beyond certain narrow applications. High-tech information systems have caught the attention of the other branches of government and of decision makers in

the business world who use them to great advantage.”³³

Changes in the Demographics of the Legislature

If the technology is a sure thing, the least certain aspect of the scenario is Rep. Smith—a dedicated, tenacious, technologically literate legislator who has a vision and is ready to pursue it. As Rep. Joe Mavretic (D-Edgecombe) puts it: “The assumption is that they will use the information and technology. They may have more information available, but whether or not legislators, on average, are going to make use of it is another issue. You could make the case that the more information legislators have, the less they use—that they turn instead to staff and special interest groups and say, ‘Tell me what you think I should think.’”

Those interviewed for this article expressed considerable skepticism about the General Assembly’s ability to attract high-quality, dedicated people for service. Probably no one was more pessimistic than a veteran industry lobbyist who asks that his name not be used. “There’s a dearth of leadership down here,” he says. “The idea of government service has deteriorated” among

the state's leading citizens. That view is echoed by Gordon Allen, who owns a Roxboro insurance company and lobbies for the N.C. Alliance of Community Financial Institutions. "We're getting a bunch of retirees now who are out of touch," says Allen, a three-term legislator who was Senate president pro tem from 1971 to 1974. In the past, he says, "all of the guys were family men who had an immediate need to have an impact."

Many observers believe that retirees will play increasingly larger roles in future legislative sessions, as they have in recent years. From 1971 to 1991, the number of retirees serving in the General Assembly more than tripled, from 11 to 34.⁴ During that same period, the average ages of House members rose from 49 to 57 and Senate members from 51 to 58. Many observers say they expect those retirees to come mainly from government service, teaching, and other fields that allow early retirements and pensions that would supplement legislative pay.

"We'll have more retired people," says House Speaker Dan Blue (D-Wake). Rep. George Miller (D-Durham) agrees: "Young people can't afford to serve. The young professional, the worker at the factory, can't serve."

Although the 1991 session was shorter than

previous ones, the shifting of federal responsibilities to the states will force ever-longer sessions in the coming decade.⁵ That time commitment will force many young and middle-aged legislators to abandon public service and could keep others from even running. Retirees, in contrast, generally have more time available to serve.

Sen. Betsy Cochrane (R-Davie) says that the combination of an aging electorate and a legislature increasingly made up of retired people has serious implications for programs for the young, especially education. Jim Johnson, a budget analyst with the legislature's Fiscal Research Division, notes that the state's population of school children, as well as its senior citizens, will grow through the 1990s. That means that the legislature and local governments will be asked to increase spending on education at the same time that retirees—the voting group traditionally least favorable to such spending—will be increasing their clout.

In contrast, practicing attorneys will continue to decline in numbers. Whether or not one likes attorneys, there's no disputing that their legal training, bill-drafting ability, and analytical skills suit them well for legislative service. Yet the number of lawyer-legislators has dropped for the past 20



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(R-WAKE)

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years and that decline is likely to continue. In 1991, the number of lawyers, 35, was nearly half the number, 68, that served in the General Assembly in 1971.⁶

Business leaders, perhaps, will miss their own kind the most. The perception that business people are a dying breed in the legislature may or may not be accurate. But it's clear that no longer will the state's traditional leading industries—furniture, textiles and cigarette manufacturing—provide some of their most important officers for legislative service.⁷ “There will never be another Dwight Quinn,” says Johnson, the legislative budget analyst, referring to the late Cabarrus County Democrat who served a total of 36 years in the Assembly while also rising to become a vice president of Cannon Mills. Fewer lawyers and business executives will seek office because many law firms and major corporations are unwilling to accommodate or encourage employees who also want political careers.

Allen, the Roxboro lobbyist and insurance company owner, says that in his day, and those of his father and grandfather, serving in the General Assembly was considered an obligation that fell upon a community's leading citizens. “Charlie Cannon owned Cannon Mills and the whole town of Kannapolis, but he saw it as an obligation [to have his executives serve in the legislature]. Many law firms saw it as an obligation. But not any longer. They want that quick money coming in. It used to be a great honor to serve and also an obligation. Who better to do the work of man than the leaders of the community?” Another lobbyist

and former state senator, Zeb Alley of Raleigh, says the cost of serving in the General Assembly has had a big impact. “There's a trend away from actively employed people to independently wealthy and retired people,” he says. “If you're a doctor, or lawyer, or pharmacist, you're going to lose 10 times [the legislative compensation] by being down here.” Adds Paula Gupton, a lobbyist for the N.C. Farm Bureau Federation, “It takes so much time away from business. They can't afford to take seven months off [during the long session in odd-numbered years] to come down here.”

Legislature Also Will Be More Diverse

On the flip side, the General Assembly of 2001 probably will be much more diverse than previous sessions with regard to race, gender, and political affiliations. In 1989, for the first time this century, white male Democrats no longer held a majority of seats in the two chambers.⁸ The 48 percent of seats held by white, male Democrats in 1991 is likely to decrease during the decade for several reasons.

A key factor is the increasing numbers of female legislators. In 1991, the General Assembly had 25 women—up from two in 1971. Surprising, however, is the near absence of baby-boomer-aged women. (According to birth dates listed in The Center's publication, *Article II: A Guide to the 1991-1992 N.C. Legislature*, only one female senator and two female representatives were born after World War II, and none were born after 1949.) Sharon Thompson, a Durham lawyer who served in the House from 1987 to 1990, attributes that trend to “sexual politics” at home. “I think the biggest problem you're going to have with younger women—those in their 30s and 40s—is that they're still primarily the ones responsible for raising the children,” she says. “I don't see this same issue with men at this point.”

But more women are seeking public office, bolstered by polls indicating increased interest in female candidates by female voters. The State Board of Elections does not keep records on the percentage of registered voters by sex, but the 1990 census found that women outnumbered men by a 52-to-48 percent margin in the state's voting age population.⁹ That trend could further intensify if the U.S. Supreme Court decides to turn the question of legal abortions back to the states.

Sen. Cochrane says that more women will serve in the legislature of the future because of changing social attitudes: It's now an acceptable thing to do, and women are winning. “We may

actually see women work their way into the leadership," she says. Already, Rep. Marie Colton (D-Buncombe) serves as the House speaker pro tem, while a number of other female legislators chair key committees in the 1991-92 session. With more women in the Assembly, Cochrane says that more attention will be focused on women's issues, which she defines as aging, the environment, children, child support, and small business. "Women's issues will pass more quickly, and closer to the form that they were originally introduced," she predicts.

The Continuing Effects of Redistricting

Other demographic changes are related to redistricting. For one, the number of black legislators should grow because the General Assembly's 1991 reapportionment increased the number of districts in which minorities are a majority of the population. In the 120-member House, the number of minority-dominated districts rose from 13 to 19. In the 50-member Senate, the tally rose from three to six. If the trend continues, the legislature of the future is likely to focus more attention on issues such as civil rights, housing, and social services.

A second factor that is likely to change the make-up of the legislature is the continued growth and viability of the state's Republican Party.¹⁰ Although redistricting in 1991 probably strengthened Democratic Party hands in the short term, hardly anyone disputes that North Carolina is now a two-party state. Republicans should gain more

legislators because of two factors: The state's urban areas picked up seats in the reapportionment, and the two houses are now dominated by members elected from single-member districts. Republicans tend to fare much better in affluent suburbs, and they are more likely to hold majorities in smaller single-seat districts than in multi-seat districts that cover larger regions.

At a press conference held to announce the GOP's failed court challenge to the 1991 redistricting, party chairman Jack Hawke said the lawsuit was a favor of sorts to the Democrats. "Because the next time we have redistricting (in 2001), the Republicans will be in control and I don't want us doing this to the Democrats," he said.

Redistricting is likely to foster other changes as well. That's because the legislature has transformed both houses from chambers dominated by members from multi-seat districts to those from single-seat districts. In 1991, 80 House members came from multi-member districts and 40 from single-member districts. By 1993, 39 will come from multi-member districts and 81 from single-member districts. On the Senate side, in 1991, 28 members came from multi-seat districts and 22 from single-seat districts. By 1993, 16 Senators will come from multi-seat districts and 34 from single-seat districts. As a result of those changes, legislators will have more allegiance to their specific areas and will be less likely to think in terms of larger regions or the state as a whole. In urban areas, the growth of single-member districts could lead to delegations torn by geographic and parti-



Karen Tam

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san politics that have trouble representing the interests of the cities where their constituents reside. Also, we are likely to see higher rates of turnover in the more competitive urban districts, except in those that are predominantly black.

New Coalitions in the Legislature

Such changes will bring new coalitions to the legislature. Sen. Joe Johnson (D-Wake) expects urban votes to increase beginning in 1993, although he questions whether they will form a strong coalition due to members' partisan differences. It may be that many Republicans from suburban districts will band with conservative Democrats from rural areas, Johnson says. It is also likely that urban Democrats will find kindred spirits among new members from minority-dominated rural districts.

Rep. Art Pope (R-Wake), a candidate for lieutenant governor, has a differing view. Pope predicts that rural areas will elect more Republicans as well as more black Democrats. Urban delegations will be split along partisan lines, he says.

The working coalitions of 2001 may change considerably for other reasons as well. Sen. Cochrane expects to see the growth of regional

coalitions that will include members of both parties. "All of which will be an effort to counter the Eastern coalition," she says. "[But] the philosophical differences between Republicans and Democrats will make urban coalitions difficult." Others expect to see more coalitions of activists, businesses, and other groups that lobby or threaten to litigate the Assembly. "What we're seeing is a lot of coalitions forming outside the legislature, and not just among the legislators themselves," says Jim Johnson, the legislative budget analyst. A good example of that trend is illustrated by recent legislative debates over the distribution of money for public schools. In that case, poorer school districts have banded together in seeking a more equitable formula for distributing state funds, while wealthier districts have united to preserve the status quo.

This might be a good time to consider our hypothetical legislator, Rep. Smith. You'll recall that she was leading the charge for adult day care even though she was only a first-termer lacking the support of House leaders.

In the past, Smith's defiance of the leadership would have earned her a stern reprimand—probably in the form of tabling her motion in subcommittee, if her effort even got that far. Smith prob-



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ably also would have had trouble getting information for her research. Clearly, the power of committee chairs often has stemmed from their control of information.

But in 2001, the new technology will enable Smith to access this information from her home. Sen. Marc Basnight (D-Dare), a likely candidate for Senate president pro tem in 1993, says that the hypothetical legislator could get this information for one other key reason: changes that have let more legislators participate in the budget-writing process while opening it up more to the press and the general public. In fact, the General Assembly of 2001 may see a vast diffusion of power to a number of individual fiefdoms due to the new technology, the more flexible coalitions, and the breakdown of leadership’s powerful grip on the process.

Take Rep. Smith. She could become the “queen of adult day care” through her interest in issues related to the aged, her ability to gather information, and her willingness to work harder than anyone else on the issue. Subcommittee chairs would have to take Smith and her proposals seriously because of her access to information and her ability to reach the public independently through the electronic media.

To reach such a position, however, Smith probably would have to make a considerable time commitment. That leads to the most commonly asked question about the future of the legislature: Will it be a full-time body or remain a part-time citizen legislature?¹¹

A Professional Legislature Or Still A Citizen One?

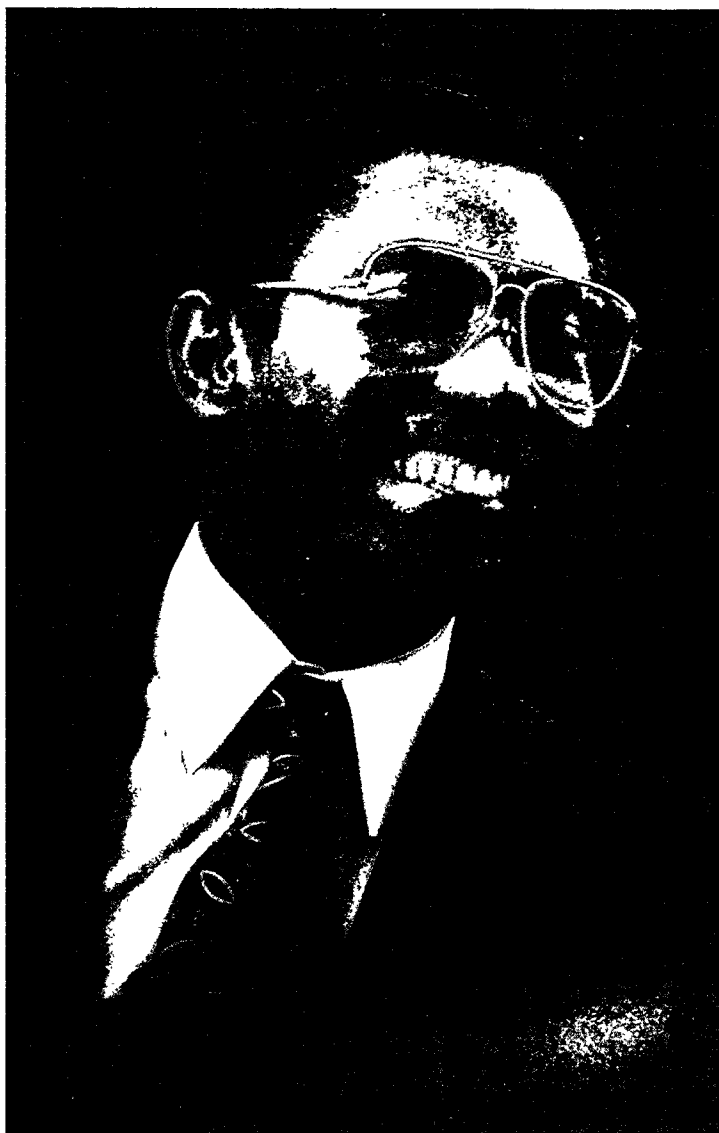
Full-time, say some who argue that legislating already is like a regular job. Blue and Basnight point to members who are in the Legislative Building nearly every week for study commissions and operational committees. Over the next decade, they say, the number of legislators who make such commitments probably will grow. Many legislators, even those who don’t serve on many study commissions, say the job is full-time now because of the large load of constituent demands. And such duties will become even more time-consuming. That’s because citizens increasingly are finding they must contact their legislators in Raleigh rather than their congressmen in Washington as the federal government transfers services such as housing, highways, and water and sewer facilities to state jurisdictions.

Defined in other ways, however, the Assembly will not be a full-time body. For one, it won't have full-time pay. Blue says that public sentiment is against a legislature that is formally "full time." So the legislature probably will never hold a single, defining vote to which historians will point as the day the body became full-time. Nor will there be a single vote that will raise legislators' salaries to full-time equivalency, Blue says, although their pay likely will increase as responsibilities grow.

An Increased Role For A Larger Staff

One relief valve for legislators' growing responsibilities could be larger staffs. Legislative staff has grown steadily since the 1970s and that trend is likely to continue.¹² Notes Rep. Harold Brubaker (R-Randolph): "I've already heard discussions of providing for home offices and/or having a clerk in the office here in Raleigh two or three days a week." House Speaker Blue predicts that legislators will hire more staff to help them respond to constituents. But the public will resist significant increases, he says, so leaders may need to find improved technologies to get their work done without adding a lot of new employees. Some states already are scaling back their legislative staffs in the face of budget shortfalls. "What you're seeing in other parts of the country, and in Washington too, is a reaction to the larger staffs," says Jim Johnson, the legislative budget analyst. "They've cut the legislature's legs off out in California."

Those employees can expect to see major changes in the coming years. Blue and Basnight predict that there will be separate House and Senate staffs. Even now, some legislators are taking matters into their own hands. In 1991, House Republicans pooled some of their per diem expense money to pay for a staff member who helped the party caucus with communications, research, and constituent services.



House Speaker Dan Blue (D-Wake)

Fewer Capital Correspondents, But More Coverage?

While the staff grows, the number of news reporters covering the Assembly probably will shrink. Already, the state's television and radio stations have virtually abandoned the Assembly.¹³ The state's major newspapers also are trimming the number of reporters they assign to Raleigh as well as the number of government stories they print.¹⁴ For instance, *The Charlotte Observer*, the *News & Record* of Greensboro, and *The Virginian Pilot* all have scaled back their capital bureaus in recent years.¹⁵

But the same computer technology used by

future legislators will be available to reporters—and that could dramatically improve the quality and depth of state-government coverage. Pat Stith, investigative reporter for *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, says reporters will find new kinds of stories in the state's huge computer databases. The newspaper may have provided a glimpse of the future in February 1992 when it cross-tabulated records from the state medical examiner's office and the N.C. Department of Labor.¹⁶ Its finding: The department was unaware of about one-fourth of the state's on-the-job fatal accidents.

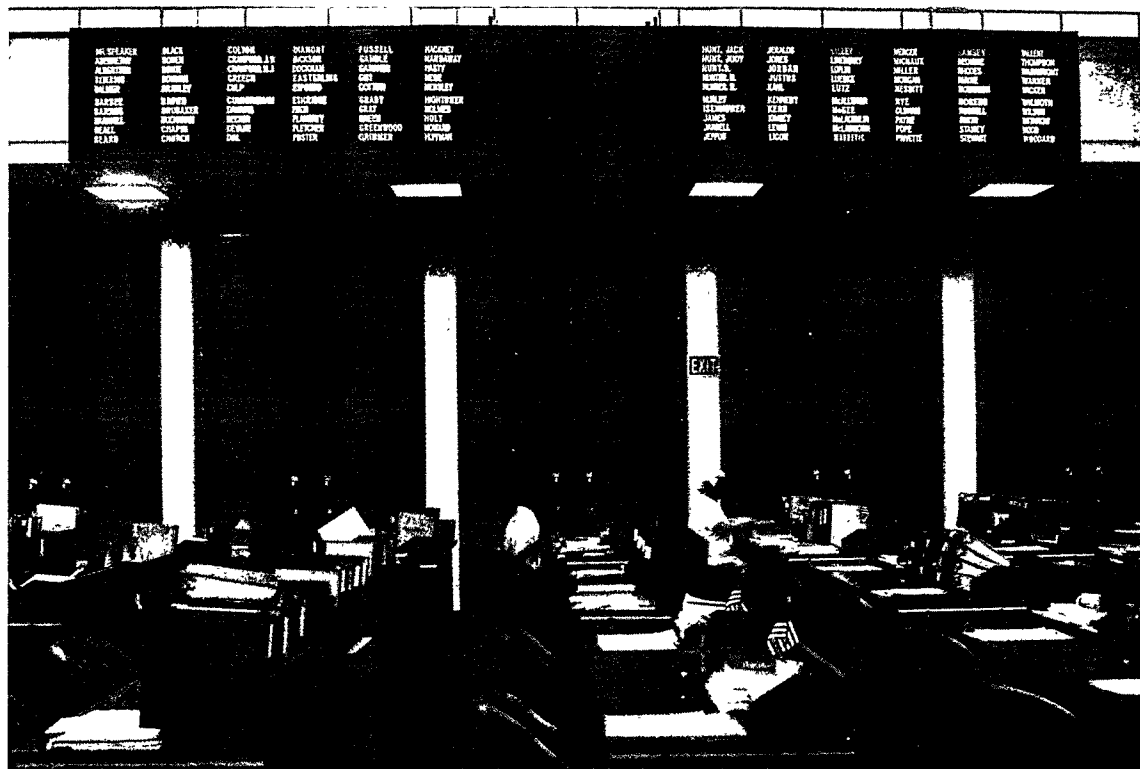
Likewise, although commercial television stations might send fewer reporters to Raleigh to gather political news, that could be offset by expanded cable television coverage. The Agency for Public Telecommunications, a division of the state Department of Administration, likely will provide the television cameras and equipment needed for

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excerpt portions for their news and public affairs programs, while cable systems would carry the sessions live—much as C-SPAN now covers the U.S. Congress. Thus, voters across the state would have instantaneous access to the General Assembly.

Some predict that live cablecasts could boost newspaper coverage as well, particularly at smaller papers that cannot afford to send reporters to Raleigh. Rich Oppel, editor of *The Charlotte Observer*, says that reporters and editors could sit in their offices back home and monitor the Assembly on their television screens, if the cablecasts are approved.

The legislature soon plans to replace its electronic voting system, which often breaks down. Lawmakers will use that as an opportunity to increase public access to voting records.



Karen Tam

Such coverage would supplement, but not replace, the reporting provided by capital correspondents. Reporters who tried to "cover" the legislature solely by television couldn't ask tough questions, gather background information from staff, observe behind-the-scenes maneuvering, or watch all-important committee meetings that didn't make the telecasts. Such cablecasts also could be manipulated by lawmakers, just as some U.S. congressmen have been known to deliver long-winded speeches to empty chambers so they could appear on C-SPAN.

Imagine now that it is the Tuesday morning in the late Spring of 2001. Rep. Smith has used modern technology and ages-old methods of political arm-twisting, all to push her call for an expansion of the adult day care program.

And it will be at that time that the subcommittee chair, after a one-hour opening delay, will come to the rostrum to announce that the meeting for that day has been postponed. True to tradition, the chair blames the delay on a breakdown in the Assembly's computer system, allegedly preventing the staff from drafting the budget bill.¹⁸

Let's not expect too much change in only a decade. □ □

FOOTNOTES

¹ In 2001, the senior citizen constituency will be considerably stronger according to demographic projections cited in, "The Aging Services Guide For Legislators," published by the N.C. Commission on Aging, 1990. The guide projects that, by the year 2000, the proportion of older adults in North Carolina will actually exceed the national average by 13.7 percent to 13.0 percent. The number of North Carolinians aged 65 or older was approximately 225,000 in 1950 and 603,000 in 1980. By the year 2010, that age group is projected to increase to nearly 1.2 million.

² The "network" would be privately owned, but the state would own and operate the cameras. Cable television systems — not broadcast stations — would provide the "gavel-to-gavel" coverage.

³ See Rick Krueger, "Unused Power: Legislators Ignore Technology," *State Legislatures*, June 1992, pp. 14-15.

⁴ For more on the legislature's changing makeup, see Jack Betts, "In the Legislature, White Male Democrats Become a Minority," *North Carolina Insight*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June 1991), pp. 65-71. Also see Ran Coble, "Three Key Trends Shaping the General Assembly Since 1971," Vol. 9, No. 4 (June 1987), pp. 35-39. Legislative trends are summarized in Kim Kebschull, *Article II: A Guide to the 1991-1992 N.C. Legislature*, N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, May 1991, pp. 236-237.

⁵ Thomas Covington, director of the state Fiscal Research Division, says the shifting of federal responsibilities to the state will mean major increases in Medicaid costs and less federal money for water and sewers, urban and economic development, and school lunch subsidies. "Basically, it's the shrinking of federal support for federal entitlements," he says.

⁶ Betts, p. 70.

⁷ *Ibid.* Some business-related fields have decreased their presence in the General Assembly, while others have increased.

For instance, from 1971 to 1991, the occupations that declined in numbers included: business and sales, 66 to 49; farming, 21 to 17; manufacturing, 5 to 0; and banking, 4 to 1. Fields that grew included: real estate, 7 to 26; insurance, 9 to 13; construction and contracting, 3 to 5; education, 7 to 19; and health care, 1 to 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69. From 1971 to 1991, the number of black legislators increased from two to 19. During that same period, female legislators increased from two to 25.

⁹ According to the State Data Center, women comprised 51.5 percent (3,414,347) of the state's total population (6,628,637) in the 1990 census. In the voting age population, women comprised 52.3 percent (2,628,510) of the 5,022,488 people 18 years and older.

¹⁰ Betts, p. 69. From 1971 to 1991, Republicans nearly doubled their numbers in the legislature, from 31 to 53. Also see, Jack Betts and Vanessa Goodman, *The Growth of a Two-Party System in North Carolina*, N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, 1987, 63 pp. That report was summarized in the article, "Center's First Joint Production With Public Television Examines Two-Party System in North Carolina," *North Carolina Insight*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (June 1988), pp. 31-39.

¹¹ For more on the increasing demands placed on state legislators, see Chuck Alston, "The Citizen Legislature: Fact or Fable?" *North Carolina Insight*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (November 1985), pp. 50-52.

¹² The Legislative Services Office now has 128 employees in five divisions: fiscal research (created in 1971), general research, (1971), administration (1976), bill drafting (1977), and automated services (1984).

¹³ Currently, no television stations have a full-time correspondent covering the legislature. Radio coverage includes three full-time correspondents, representing WUNC, WPTF, and the North Carolina News Network.

¹⁴ For more on press coverage of the legislature, see the following articles in *North Carolina Insight*: Jack Betts, "The Capital Press Corps: When Being There Isn't Enough," Vol. 9, No. 2 (September 1986), pp. 48-51; Betts, "Radio Journalism in North Carolina: Listening for Less News," Vol. 9, No. 4 (June 1987), pp. 44-46; Paul T. O'Connor, "Is the Afternoon Newspaper a Dinosaur in North Carolina?" Vol. 10, No. 1 (October 1987), pp. 68-71; Betts, "Covering the Legislature: As Hierarchical As A Chess Set," Vol. 12, No. 1 (December 1989), pp. 66-67; and Ferrel Guillory, *et al.*, "Customers or Citizens? The Redefining of Newspaper Readers," Vol. 12, No. 4 (September 1990), pp. 30-38.

¹⁵ Newspapers with full-time capital correspondents include the *Asheville Citizen*, *Charlotte Observer*, *Durham Herald*, *Fayetteville Observer*, *News & Record* of Greensboro, N.C., and *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, N.C. Full-time coverage also is provided by the Associated Press, Freedom Newspapers, New York Times Regional Newspaper Group, and the Capital Press Association.

¹⁶ Steve Riley and C.E. Yandle, "Many On-Job Deaths Not Investigated," *The News & Observer*, Raleigh, N.C., Feb. 16, 1992, p. 1A.

¹⁷ On April 21, 1992, the Open Government Through Public Telecommunications Study Commission recommended that the legislature approve unedited, gavel-to-gavel television coverage of House and Senate proceedings. According to a March 29, 1992, editorial in *The Charlotte Observer*, the commission recommended an 11-fold increase in OPEN/NET's weekly television time — from a mere four hours to as much as 45 hours.

¹⁸ Glenn Newkirk, who oversees the legislature's Automated Services Division, says records show that the computer system has not "broken down" during the budget bill drafting process since January 1987. Nevertheless, many capital correspondents will attest that legislators often have "blamed" delays on computer breakdowns.