



Letters to the Editor

Vol. 9, No. 2 IRBs, Consumer Protection, and the Press

I enjoyed reading the latest edition of *North Carolina Insight*. The entire issue was of interest. Bill Finger and Donald Horton did an admirable job analyzing the merits of tax-exempt bonds. The consumer protection articles were illuminating. And the pieces about the Capital Press Corps and lobbyists were quite informative.

I am particularly struck by the skill with which you communicate on complex public policy issues. It is difficult enough to find people who can analyze such concerns. But finding people who can talk about such matters *in English* is much more challenging.

It is inspiring to see the Center demonstrate such skill in rationalizing the flow of good information on public policymaking.

Edmund Rennolds, Editor
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First, let me say I was delighted to see the initial "On The Press" column in the September issue of *Insight*. It is not only healthy, but commendable, when members of the media begin to look toward themselves with constructive criticism in mind.

Another word of praise: You really hit a bulls-eye when you gave the nod to the UNC Center for Public Television for its coverage of the General Assembly. As you say, "What makes the UNC-TV coverage stand out is the experience of its top reporters." Not only are they good at what they do, but they make a great sounding-board for less-experienced reporters.

Now for a note of criticism on your criticism.

I found it curious that you made only a single reference to radio journalism in the entire column. And that reference was to an event of 20-plus years ago. Granted, there are certainly more print and television journalists wandering the halls of the General Assembly than radio reporters. But I think it should have been mentioned that there are at least two radio organizations that also regularly cover the General Assembly. To wit: WPTF-AM and WQDR-FM have a single reporter assigned full-time when lawmakers are in session; and WRAL-FM/North Carolina News Network does likewise. I know, because for the 1986 short session, I was the reporter for WPTF/WQDR. And in the room right next to mine in the Legislative Building was John Bason with WRAL/NCNN. In addition, other radio stations around the state do, on occasion, send reporters to the Legislative Building to cover selected major events.

My experience, or lack of it, certainly bears out the thesis of your article, as it applies to the General Assembly. But with 10 years in radio journalism—some of it covering the legislatures in Washington, Montana, and Utah—I certainly don't feel I'm a neophyte. And John Bason brought a unique background with him to his legislative-coverage assignment: He was, for a number of years, a sergeant-at-arms in the General Assembly, thereby giving him an insightful angle that many reporters *never* get.

I happen to think that the legislative coverage offered by my two radio stations (one, a 50-thousand watt clear-channel operation), and that offered by the 80-station North Carolina News Network, probably served the North Carolina radio listener quite well, thank you. And also I happen to think that was an omission that ought not to have been made in your initial column.

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