

## THINK

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much coverage is available."

Authors are chosen to write op-eds because they have extensive knowledge of and experience with a particular issue. Many of them gain this expertise through leadership positions in nonprofit organizations. Authors have included Sue Russell, executive director of the Daycare Services Association, and John Niblock, executive director of the N.C. Child Advocacy Institute.

Once an article is approved and edited by the board, a media packet that includes the article, a press release and a public service announcement is produced and sent to newspapers and radio and TV stations throughout the state. The goal is to get as much coverage of the issue as possible through these media outlets.

A typical article reaches half a million people through the print media and 1.2 million listeners/viewers through TV and radio. N.C. Forum articles frequently appear in the three largest statewide newspapers — *The Charlotte Observer*, the *Greensboro News & Record* and *The News & Observer* in Raleigh.

While coverage in the larger state papers is important, an article is most effective when it reaches the smaller papers in the state's rural areas, says King. Editors of these papers have few resources, small staffs and often rely on wire services for information. The wire services focus on daily developments related to issues and devote less attention to in-depth analysis.

The N.C. Forum's primary goal is to educate the public, yet it also hopes to prompt people to contact lawmakers about legislation and vote for candidates who support the viewpoints of its writers.

"The root cause of public cynicism is that people don't know enough about the issues to do anything about the problems or to choose candidates who can find solutions," says King.

"If voters are well-informed they will find the right candidates to uncover solutions. Without an informed electorate, we cannot have an effective democracy."

Initially, the N.C. Forum received funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, which supported the Forum from 1984 until 1991. The Forum currently is funded by the American Forum, a nonprofit founded in 1981 as a Virginia editorial forum that grew into an umbrella organization supporting editorial forums throughout the Southeast.

The American Forum also has received financial support from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem, which gave the American Forum its first grant and funded its expansion into 10 southern states — Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and North Carolina.

"The idea behind assisting the Forum was to help the variety of nonprofits we were supporting by giving them a voice they didn't already have," says Bill Bondurant, former executive director of the Babcock Foundation and a member of the American Forum board. "We weren't putting our people in the newspaper; we were just giving them an opportunity to be heard."

Today, the American Forum raises money; edits articles after they are edited by the state forum boards; prepares media packets; and follows up with media contacts for each of the state forums. It is looking to expand into the western region of the U.S. in the next few years and plans to eventually establish editorial forums in all 50 states.

For information, call King at (919) 929-6927.

## BOUND

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inner-city teenagers and leadership trips for corporate groups.

Anyone of either gender — from 14 years old to more than 100 — may participate, as long as they are physically fit.

Students not only climb and paddle through North Carolina's wilderness now but can trek through Costa Rican rain forests, over ancient Mexican volcanic paths and through Florida's swampy Everglades.

And today, the school offers not only outdoor adventure but — in step with the times — an inner journey.

"Outward Bound is a challenge, an adventure, a journey," reads the 1994 course catalog. "Some of the challenges are physical — such as rock climbing, canoeing or backpacking expeditions; while others are more subtle — like sharing thoughts and feelings with a group, working on a service project or just waiting for the rain to stop."

Outward Bound courses are not cheap: An eight-day trip is \$895 and a month-long one is \$2,395. Many people know that. Fewer know that the North Carolina school has roots in the 1960s "War on Poverty."

In the mid-1960s, the late George Watts Hill Jr., then president of Home Security Life Insurance Co. and chairman of the state board of higher education, read about Outward Bound in a *Princeton Alumni News* article. The author of the article raved about the benefits of outdoor education and adventure: Boys became men by challenging themselves outdoors.

Hill was intrigued. He sent the article to several well-placed friends at the North Carolina Fund, which had been set up in the mid-1960s to support programs that tackled poverty in the state.

At the time, Outward Bound existed in Colorado and Minnesota, as well as in several countries in Europe. The first program had been developed in Wales to prepare young seamen for war.

Would Outward Bound fit the North Carolina Fund's mission, Hill asked.

"Yes," replied Marjorie Calloway, a young graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the fund's special projects assistant. She visited Minnesota's Outward Bound school to investigate first-hand trekking, climbing and navigating outdoors. She returned an Outward Bound enthusiast.

Calloway — now Marjorie Buckley and a member of North Carolina Outward Bound's board of directors — urged her boss, Jack Mansfield, then director of special projects for the North Carolina Fund, to make Outward Bound a project of the fund.

She reasoned that the school could transform, "the dropout, the delinquent, the under-achiever and the myriad other youth we designate as 'problem,' and with new and effective solutions to their needs." Her words are documented in the history book, "Beyond Time and Place."

Mansfield and other directors at

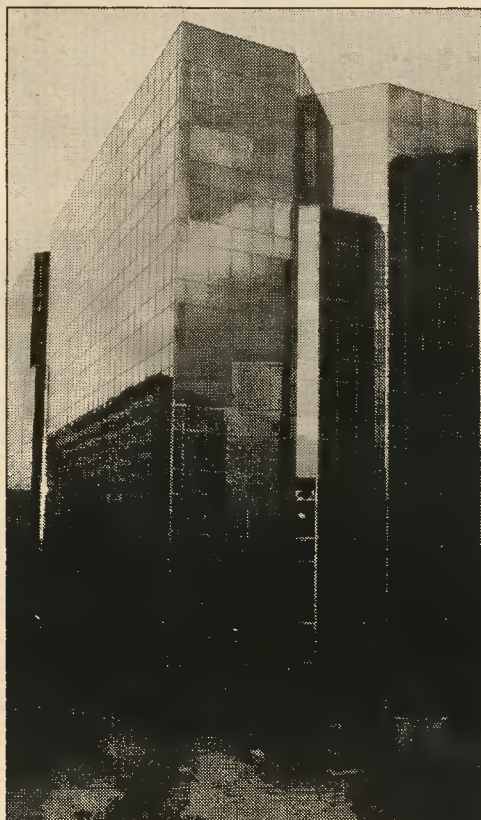
the fund ultimately disagreed with Calloway. But Hill didn't. He directed Calloway to other financial supporters, including his own insurance company's coffers, and the North Carolina Outward Bound School opened in Morganton in 1967.

In 1993, more than 4,600 people passed through North Carolina Outward Bound courses. The school is now one of 40 international and seven national Outward Bound schools — and the only one whose name is represented by a state.

Holley says the relocation to a three-acre plot in the Swannanoa Valley near Asheville's Warren Wilson College, will allow for future growth. He foresees collaboration, especially in the area of environmental education, with students and faculty at the college.

The school's annual budget has reached about \$5 million, and it is now in the midst of an \$8.5 million endowment campaign. The move to Asheville will be completed by the end of 1995, Holley estimates, and will cost about \$750,000.

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