

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

McHenry: Thanks for attending town hall meeting

I want to extend a sincere thank you to the nearly 700 people who attended the town hall meetings I held all across the Tenth District in August.

The right of the people to openly and freely question their leaders and discuss solutions to common problems is the reason our democracy works so well. That is why I hold these meetings every August.

Your thoughtful questions, comments, and advice – on issues ranging from immigration reform to lowering taxes to the war in Iraq and even personal concerns about federal agencies like the Veterans Administration – provide invaluable lessons for how I can more effectively serve you and change the way Washington works.

We don't all agree on every single issue, and that's to be expected. But based on the conversations we had at the town hall meetings, these things are crystal clear:

One, you're fed up with business as usual in Washington.

I agree. My disdain for waste-

ful spending, over-taxation, burdensome regulations, and incompetence in the government played a big role in inspiring me to enter public service and work to fix these problems. Washington wasn't broken in one day, and won't be repaired in one day either. I share your frustration, and I appreciate your support as I continue the long, hard fight to change the way Washington does business.

Two, you demand secure borders and an end to illegal immigration.

I have sponsored numerous bills and cast every immigration vote I've taken on the side of border security, law enforcement – and against amnesty. The problem with this debate is that, unlike you and me, too many Washington politicians don't understand that broken borders are the root cause of our illegal immigration crisis. Our first priority must be border security.

Three, you're ready to see real progress in Iraq.

General David Petraeus will

present a report to Congress this month on how well the surge is working. The strategies and tactics we employ going forward will rest on the substance of his report. I promise you that I will always vote to give the courageous men and women of our Armed Services the best training, equipment, and care possible, regardless of the politics involved.

In addition to these lessons from our town hall meetings, I am returning to Congress this month with a renewed sense of urgency on the grave threat facing our nation from international terrorist groups.

While on a fact-finding mission to Israel in early August, I saw first-hand the way frequent terrorist attacks can fundamentally alter a free society's way of life for the worse. Israeli citizens are burdened with constant surveillance and countless security checks in their everyday lives to ensure their protection. Israelis are even frisked and searched before they can enter their local

McDonald's.

That is no way for a democracy to operate.

In order to prevent that from happening here, we must remain vigilant in the war against Islamic extremists, and make absolutely sure our military, intelligence, and homeland security operations have the resources, technologies, and capabilities they need to defeat the terrorists, wherever they are.

Finally, I want to thank all of the education, healthcare, business, and civic leaders who met with me as I traveled to 21 cities and towns through every county in the Tenth District.

These productive meetings covered a wide array of issues; and I can say with great confidence that Western North Carolina is blessed to have such excellent local leadership.

I am excited to see the impressive results of our hard work coming together. In addition to making strong gains in education and healthcare, Western North Carolina is witnessing the early stages of a steady economic

revival. In recent months, our region has attracted several new major employers, creating hundreds of new jobs.

Again, I am grateful to all who attended the town hall meetings. Very few members of Congress still hold open forums like this – much less in every county of their district – but the give-and-take of these meetings provides valuable information about how I can represent you effectively in Congress, and I place tremendous value on your advice.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, I frequently hold town hall events over the phone and on the internet from my Washington office.

Information about them is available on my website (<http://mchenry.house.gov>), and I encourage all who are interested to join in on the discussion about how we can change the way Washington works.

Thanks again and God bless.

Patrick McHenry

GUEST COLUMN

Where in the world is whoever? Probably, Charlotte

I've been awake all night a few times lately, which has given me an opportunity to watch early morning newscasts from over in the world class city.



Jim Heffner
Guest Column

I had no idea how the local TV stations endeavored to personalize everything. Every news segment one of the stations puts on is done with reference to a certain camera.

It's really funny if you listen close.

They'll show morning traffic from several locations and tell you which camera is providing the feed.

"Looking at camera 16," the announcer says, "we can see that morning traffic is extremely heavy on Brookshire Boulevard, but camera 59 indicates everything is moving smoothly on I-77."

Recently, as I watched, the announcer mentioned cameras 16, 30, 36 and 59 for sure. There were probably others. I just don't remember them.

Get up early and watch and you'll find that every story, almost, is "Breaking News."

At 6:45 that morning, the channel I was watching talked about a shooting that occurred at 2 a.m. and continued to call it breaking news for hours.

They even tell you which studio they are broadcasting from. Now that's what I call, breaking news.

"This news is coming to you from Studio 12," said an early morning announcer.

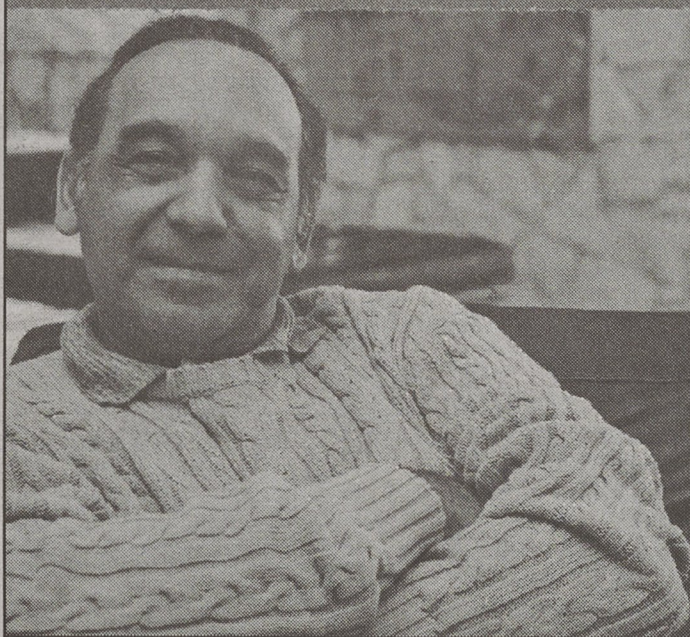
Who cares? Who cares that Matt and Al and Meredith always come to you from Studio 1A? I certainly don't.

There's one local station that likes to say it's news is being broadcast "live from the newsroom." I guess that's as opposed to "dead from downtown."

Every station has its own little quirks.

See Heffner, Page 8

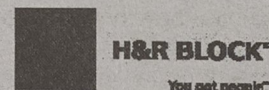
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