

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division  
*The Affiliate*

## A Tale of Two Newsletters from North Carolina and Tennessee

By Phillip Long

One question that plagues many editors of newsletters, including those of *The Affiliate*, is how to create a newsletter that its audience will actually want to read. North Carolina's and Tennessee's YLDs have the answer, creating informative and useful quarterly newsletters. Through recurring article topics and careful communication within the YLD, both newsletters inform their constituencies through dynamic, well-organized, and up-to-date publications.

### Key to Success

"The goal of *The Advocate* is to inform, educate, and hopefully entertain its readership," reports Harrison Lord, current Co-Chair of North Carolina's YLD Newsletter Committee. *The Advocate* has achieved this goal for over twenty-seven years, currently publishing five editions distributed to over 5,600 young lawyer members in North Carolina. Similarly, the *Tennessee Young Lawyer* for the past five years has sought "to educate and encourage Tennessee's 2,200 young lawyers to participate in state bar and local affiliate projects across our state," reports Hanson Tipton, Chair of the Tennessee YLD Publications Committee.

The lynchpin to these successful publications is careful article selection. Lord states that "we try to include articles that will appeal to a wide audience and that focus on what's important to young lawyers." Currently, the hot topics are articles focusing on quality of life and work-life balance, practical advice regarding building and maintaining a competent, ethical, and rewarding law practice as a young lawyer, financial planning, motivational articles, and upcoming or recent events organized by YLD committees and the general membership. These topics are not static. "As the profession evolves, so does our article selection, tailoring the publication to the needs of young lawyers," states Tipton.

### Content Organization

Both newsletters are arranged around recurring columns. *The Advocate* includes a "Section Spotlight," highlighting the bar's specialty sections, "Ask Atticus," offering ethical and practical advice, "Overheard in Committee," highlighting the current goings on among committees, "Better Know a District," highlighting a particular judicial district in North Carolina, "Pro Bono Spotlight," and "Conversations from the Corner Office," presenting an interview with a well respected lawyer from North Carolina. In addition, North Carolina produces an extra summer edition that is an orientation guide to newly admitted lawyers and a recruitment tool for committees.

Tennessee similarly presents a range of recurring columns, including "Profile of a Working Mother," "Spotlight on Tennessee Law Schools," "Barely Legal," a humor column, "Face of the Young Lawyer," profiling a young lawyer with an interesting story to tell, "YLD in the Community," recapping a service project or other positive work, "Practice Tips," and a substantive legal article.

Although both YLDs have newsletter committees, efforts from throughout the YLDs create the successful publications. Tipton reports, "It is truly a team effort to produce substantive content for all of the editions. We rely on bar association staff to compose many of the news-oriented articles, which keeps everyone in the 'loop.'"

Similarly, Lord states that "the YLD Chair, New Lawyers in Practice Committee, committee chairs, various members of the YLD, and our dedicated bar staff contribute articles, announcements, and other pertinent information for publication." The chains of communication ensure the newsletter is up-to-date with current news about the division.

## American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division *The Affiliate*

### **Print vs. Electronic**

These two newsletters have starkly different budgets. While *The Advocate's* budget, which is primarily a print publication, is around \$15,000, *Tennessee Young Lawyer's* is zero because it is completely electronic. Tipton states that the decision to start an electronic publication was "motivated by not only environmental concerns but also costs—the electronic-only version saves over \$8,000 a year in distribution costs." But, "the electronic version still has the look and feel of a professional publication, and we have the option to use more color, graphics, and photographs without the additional expense of color printing and without any page limitations," states Tipton.

Both YLDs have also taken electronic communication to the next level—distributing a monthly e-newsletter. Tennessee's *E-dict* grew from a need "to distribute a more informal, but equally important, e-mail newsletter on a monthly basis and to an ever-expanding list of YLD members and potential members," Tipton states. The content of *E-dict* is culled from all board and committee members so that local affiliates within Tennessee can also promote projects or activities more frequently than once a quarter. Similarly, North Carolina distributes a *YLD Blast*, which is a similar, informal newsletter describing current projects and activities.

Both North Carolina and Tennessee's YLDs present successful and informative newsletters. By organizing around recurring article topics, the newsletters are certain to cover a spectrum of information—practical tips, spotlights on individuals or projects, and news from the committees. By receiving input from all committee members, YLD leaders, and bar association staff, the publications are certain to have the most current, up-to-date information.

---

*Phillip Long is an Assistant Editor of The Affiliate and an Associate in the Greensboro, North Carolina, office of Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, LLP.*

---