

Ad. Crafts  
Club of Detroit

~~APRIL 3, 1970~~

001812

Apr. 10 - 1970

The incredible genius of the American system has been its  
capacity to solve problems.

↳ Big problems -- small problems.

Local problems -- national problems.

From Valley Forge to Honolulu, we have built railroads, dams,  
highways and harbors. We have put man on the moon with an  
almost casual bravura.

We have tamed nature, if not ourselves.

↳ If money can buy it, or technology solve it, we will have the  
answer immediately, if not sooner.

Richard  
McCarthy  
sit me on  
Tame

- ↳ President - Wacker gone
- ↳ ~~V.P. - (all) Bob Fisher~~
- ↳ V.P. - Ernie Jones - disappeared
- ↳ Sen. Dick McCarthy

Pat  
Bail Smith  
(check up)

Mayor - gone!

Bob Finken  
Fischer

Our awesome abundance is a tribute to the productivity of American capitalism and the ingenuity of American businessmen and workers. We have no chronic shortages, no dreary sameness, no technological lags.

Compared to other countries, we live in plenty.

The vast majority of our businessmen recognize that it is to their advantage to sell a decent product at a reasonable price.

Our credit transactions are usually fair. Most services are as represented and most consumers are in a position to exercise choice and discretion in their purchases.

But our system is by no means perfect -- not politically, not socially, not economically.

We have come a long way in our nation, but we are yet far from reaching our goals.

The 1960's

not willingly

↳ This year -- removed from active politics the first time in twenty-five years -- I have had the opportunity to develop some historical perspective. I have taken a hard look both at our achievements, and at the challenges facing the American system of self-government.

↳ I have listened, I have reflected, and I have concluded that there is indeed a crises in America, a crises that poses the gravest threat to all of our existing institutions -- to the family and the church, to the school and to the court, and -- perhaps most basically, to our representative system of government. It is a crises of values. ~~conflict~~

↳ This is by no means the first "critical era" in our history, but it is surely one of the most serious, rivalled perhaps only twice in our history: by the Civil War and by the Great Depression of the 30s.

As in these earlier crises, our challenge today is to find new ways for the free individual to adapt in a social order of increasing complexity, to find constructive and appropriate outlets and channels for the rage and frustration that, *when* uncontrolled, reaps violent harvest in our lands.

*Pluralistic Society Heterogeneous*

By some standards, and compared to many other nations, we are a united people, sharing a common destiny and enjoying the collective rewards of our productive diligence!

Most of the conventional economic indicators suggest that we are a prosperous and healthy nation.

But these indicators can be misleading. *now-* They do not deceive us, but they do mislead us.

Despite our remarkable increases in spendable income and the Gross National Product, despite our very substantial achievements in reducing the number of people living below the poverty level and in increasing the number of people who benefit from secondary and higher education in our nation -- despite all

this very real progress -- there is abundant evidence of a  
 continuing social turbulence that is as potentially destructive  
 to our democracy as the forces unleashed by the Civil War  
and the Great Depression.

∟ In ways few of us would have predicted as recently as a  
 decade ago, the most basic assumptions of our society are being  
challenged. ∟ Today, young Americans and old attack the idea  
of affluence itself.

∟ Our national propensity for materialism is being questioned  
 by serious adults as well as concerned young people. ∟ In the  
 wake of this questioning, we must ask if we can once again  
 invest our democratic enterprise with the moral purpose and  
the sense of values which have been our pride and our heritage.

∟ Can our nation live with affluence without losing our  
concern, our democratic ideals, our national goals?

Here is  
 the issue



001817

I believe that we can! I believe that we are up to this  
challenge in America. As a starter, I think each of us needs  
 to undertake a tough re-examination of our personal and our  
professional role.

These responsibilities fall with particular weight on *Advertisers*  
*and the Media!* We have come to believe that "Truth"  
is what we see and hear. *Press - Radio - TV.*

How often one hears the statements of the ultimate proof  
 of fact --

"I saw it with my own eyes!" or

"But, I heard it myself!"

The sense of panorama, perspective and context that are part  
 of the living adventure are not so easily incorporated in the media.

The tragedies of Dallas and Montgomery, of MyLai and Hue,  
 the drama of the Civil Rights March of 1963 or the 1969 Peace  
Moratorium in Washington are easily conveyed with a few feet  
 of film footage.

Important and significant events deserve full reportorial coverage. But what of the story that is more difficult to tell?

The story that balances problems with accomplishments?

There were tragedies and failures in the decade of the sixties.

There was also monumental progress.

Has that story been told?

A few feet of film footage cannot tell it.

In candor we must be grateful to the media for helping us to perceive what we had to do. The media are to be congratulated for rousing the conscience of America to the problems of justice, race, and poverty.

What happened in Selma, what happens in LaMar, is of invaluable aid in focusing the nation's attention on its unfinished agenda.

But as we act in good faith to provide justice --

as we strive to right wrongs --

as we feed and educate our children --

as we build hospitals and provide for the elderly --

let us know what those efforts and sacrifices have *amount* brought.

L I have heard much recently about the abuses under Medicare.

I would also like to hear about the millions who are now receiving the medical treatment that was unavailable only five years ago before this legislation was enacted.

L Abuses must certainly be corrected -- but if we are to build, we need to know what we have accomplished, as well as where we have failed.

L In the sixties we reduced the number of persons living in poverty from forty to twenty-five million -- a percentage reduction from 20 to 12.5 percent of our population.

L In the sixties the income of non-white families rose from 52 percent to 65 percent of the income of white families.

L In the sixties the number of young Americans completing high school rose from 61 percent to 75 percent.

College

L In the sixties our college population doubles -- double the rate of increase of any other nation in the world and far exceeding the rate of our population growth.

The American people ought to know those facts, for they tell an important part of the story. They show how the system works. They offer convincing evidence that effort and enterprise do pay off.

They are a basis for faith -- a foundation for action.

Now Each of us has his own sphere of action. Each of us must work within our given arena.

1960's - 1st Catholic President  
- 1st Black man on Court  
- 1st .. .. in Cabinet  
1960's - man on Moon  
Transplants

Urban  
Coalition  
NAB-  
Jobs  
David  
Wagener  
in South

You , my friends, have a unique and special role to play in our society. As the broadcast advertisers, you are the middle-men between the consumers and the producers of this nation.

↳ You are the vital link in our commercial and economic equation and I think you must invest this role with a special missionary zeal if you are to serve your society today.

There are two functional areas in which I think it of primary importance for the broadcast advertisers to make a contribution.

First is your role as advocate for your constituents and I consider the consumer your constituent for, without the consumer, without the confidence of the American consumer, you have very little value to your client, the producer.

↳ Such a role would require -- among other things -- that you recognize and identify the environmental hazards posed by the manufacture of certain items, the pollutant effects of specific products, the waste disposal systems of many industries,

and the non-destructible containers in which your advertised products are dispensed. Recognition is the first step.

Second you must agree, together, on the legitimacy of your concern, and then lobby zealously, as a group, among your clients.

In this fashion, you can improve environmental quality in our nation.

Still in your role as advocate, you must concern yourselves with the quality of the television and radio programming offered by the industries whose products you advertise. If you are effective in such an endeavor -- and you can be -- you will be able to take pride in improving the "cultural quality" of this marvelous electronic age.

#2 The second role I should like to see you play is that of catalyst.

I think we need a Communications Coalition in the nation, a constructive media consortium that would include everyone

involved - even tangentially - in the communications business.

It would include newscasters - radio and television - and print journalists; advertisers and advertising agencies; network executives, publishers, script-writers, the people who buy time, the people who sell time and the people who occupy time; it would include the producers and the directors, the programmers and the packagers of the programs -- everyone in the business.

↳ And when we have this Coalition, I should like it to address the very basic question of the function of communication in a free society.

↳ What kind of a nation do we want -- and what responsibility does the media have in its evolution?

<sup>+radio</sup>  
 Can television -- with its marvelous ability to inform  
 us -- raise the educational level in our nation, not only  
 with early morning TV classrooms, but with thoughtful  
 and sophisticated prime time programming? - Sesame Street

↳ Will the big time-buyers support such programming,  
 in much the same fashion as they today buy public  
service advertising space in such publications as the  
Saturday Review, Business Week and Aviation Weekly.

↳ <sup>Radio</sup> Can television programming be refocused in order to  
 help resolve differences between our urban and our  
rural citizens, between citizens of different races and  
different economic status -- rather than highlighting  
our areas of mistrust and disagreement?

↳ Can radio and television, indeed, improve the quality of  
life for its constituents? I believe it can. |

L And I believe the people in this audience have the  
 imagination, the energy and the initiative to establish  
 such a Coalition, to harness the great creative energies  
 of your profession on behalf of your nation and your  
 society.

L I want to raise one more area of our mutual concern,  
 one in which there is some conflicting self-interest. Clearly  
 it is in your interest to see radio and television time sell  
 regularly at the highest commercial rates.

L But I'd like to ask you to consider for a moment your  
 greater concern for the national interest.

L I am convinced that we need to remove certain segments  
 of air time from the regular commercial rate structure.

... Our political campaign programming. If we are to  
 have any hope of controlling the skyrocketing costs  
 of political campaigns,

*Campaign*

*Financing*

and of allowing candidates adequate exposure to the electorate without tying them to self-interested campaign contributors, we must make this burdensome and costly modern campaign necessity more available to those who run for major public office on a major party ticket.

2. Second, we must develop an adequate response mechanism for the party of opposition -- the party out-of-power -- to report to the American public on major national issues -- especially those on which the President has taken to the air waves to present the Administration position. If we don't find a way to offer such an alternative political voice, we will surely see the demise of the two-party system in our nation. Television has become -- and will increasingly be -- too potent a weapon in the hands of an incumbent President and Vice President.

We have come a far electronic distance from the Fireside Chat.

... ~~And third, I think we can profitably examine the question of commercial sponsorship for network news programming. Should this business of informing people be considered a public service?~~

~~Such a change might modify the element of rating competition that so often leads to unnecessarily spectacular coverage of certain public events.~~

~~These are some of my concerns,~~ and I hope they are yours as well. I think we all recognize the increasing public demand for fair and representative presentation by television programmers and by broadcast journalists.

While I deplore the atmosphere of repression in which these questions have been raised, I must acknowledge the ethical problems that remain unresolved.

If our electronic communications are to serve democracy - rather than enslaving it - members of the industry will have to develop professional and ethical guidelines for themselves.

The electronic and the writing press are indeed the fourth branch of government, but they cannot act as the public relations arm of government.

For both broadcasters and politicians, leadership must go beyond merely giving the people what you have found they want from public opinion and rating surveys.

Surely our knowledge of psychology and the behavioral sciences can carry us further than improved techniques for selling patent medicines, automobiles and cosmetics.

If, minute for minute, greater talent, resources and energy go into the design and production of television commercials than into program content, the viewers' perception of the realities of our society will necessarily be distorted.

↳ The responsible, creative advertiser will seek opportunities to inform his viewing audience through the commercial message. He might focus on:

*Drug Abuse*

- ... the problem of drug abuse. Parents who become aware of this severe threat to their children will be in better positions to take appropriate action;
- ... ways to improve personal and family health and nutrition;
- ... the dangers of environmental pollution, and proposals for individual action to improve these conditions in our communities, and

... our rich and rewarding national mix of nationality,  
race and religion. I am especially pleased by the  
increasing use of black youngsters, mothers and  
fathers in commercial messages. Keep up the  
good work. I'd like to see more black professionals  
-- doctors, lawyers and teachers as well as black  
tradesmen and skilled craftsmen playing their  
role in those messages.

∟ We all share the responsibility for improving the  
quality of American Life.

The question for all communicators -- for you and me  
alike -- is what shall we tell people

-- about the challenges facing us;

-- about the resources that are available, both

human and material, to meet these challenges;

-- about our achievements;

--about how we can move ahead and get the  
job done.

↳ ~~Without doubt, television is the most socially decisive  
invention since the wheel, but time and man will  
ultimately determine whether this is a beneficent or a  
destructive force in our society.~~

↳ If we are to resolve the crises of values in our favor,  
the media professionals -- all you gentlemen and women  
-- will be essential allies in the struggle.



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)