

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

Improving the 'Discussion' of Public Affairs

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Dr. Nobushia partment of participating in a y of the causes rt attacks. The d by the Nation-Heart and Lung of rain fell between 7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., along with pea-sized hall and strong winds.

The severe weather reports began coming in afternoon, with larg ported near Pillager, in Wing County, about 4:20 p

A fumel cloud was by the public near Gary, in northwestern Minzesota, and a bornado warning was issued for is Count

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er governos countered

DETROIT (AP) - Despite a court order and threats they would lose their jobs unless they returned to work, striking employees of the nation's sixthlargest city stuck to their picket lines today.

Tuesday's wildcat walkout by 3,500 sanitation workers, gamechanics and clerks halted bus transportation, garbage collection and local preparations for next week's state primary election.

Emergency operators for the police department also walked

WASHINGTON (AP) - Mar-"Midge" Costanza, the

who had witnessed a steady erosion of her power, hand-delivered a letter of resignation on Monday, just days after she "had words" with President with President

Her resignation followed by 12 days that of Dr. Peter G. Bourne, the president's advicer on drugs who had written a fictitious patient name when he prescribed a powerful sedative for one of his employees.

Carter, after showing initial reluctance, accepted Ms. Cospresidential aide whose tanza's resignation "with regret." according to sources who be named.

administration's liaison with minorities, women interest groups. Costanza's domain had ited in Maj to handling ome: be same tame she removed from large şmaller west at f

Her Aher to Appe Wexler, r deputy undersecretary nmerce, who joined the staff on April 19. House

There was specula the reduced responsibility was a signal for her to resign. Friends, who asked not to be named, contend she threatened to leave in May, but decided to remain after Carter assured her she would not be moved out of the White House altogether.

This time, at their meeting Monday, Carter urged Ms. Costanza to take a two-week vacation and think about whether

no plans to do so until it was leaked Tuesday evening.

"She's just beaten down and hat's fronic because she's esilient," a friend said.

Co-Workers Testity in Mkulanec Trial

Mikulanec told co-workers she HAR STEEL BEN Resenthal and had taken a tr California ith him

Bank of Minneapolis, testified before Judge Douglas Amdahl In Hennepin County District

said Miss Mikulanec showed them a diamond ring in May 1977 and said that she and Rosenthal were engaged.

Earlier in the trial, Rosenthal south.

testified that he dated kulanec off and on fo several years. But he said h old her that he "definitely for marriage

earlier that he went the sammer alifornia in on businesa withou Mikulanec told her coworke part

Forecast

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Minnesota: Scattered showers and thinderstorms northern portion Seturday and southern sections Sunday. Highs lower 70s Friday and lower 70s north to upper 70s south Saturday and Sunday. Lows middle 40s north and upper 40s to middle 50s

Perpich, Ashbach o Pick Surplus Report Panel

Perpich and Senate r Robert Ashtreasury surplus.

Perpich and Ashbach oach will name one member by Friday and those two will name a third. The panel members will issue a report Sept. 30, giving their best estimate of what the surplus will be next June 30.

Ashbach, an Arden Hills banker, has contended for years that the DFL administrations have under-estimated the amounts of surplus in the state treasury. Ashbach says that higher estimates are made when it is politically convenient for DFL leaders.

DFLers, including Perpich, deny it. They say the process of estimating state revenues far in advance is difficult at best. When surpluses occur, they cannot be predicted, say DFL

Arrest Sought For

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

Improving the 'Discussion' of Public Affairs

Prepared by Committee on Public Affairs Information John A. Cairns, Chairman

Approved by Citizens League Board of Directors June 14, 1978

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INTRODUCTION

The Citizens League has had a major and continuing interest in the process of governance in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Its mission is to "help this community understand its problems and what ought to be done about them". This has led us every year to look at particular substantive problems: transportation, housing, finance, education, health, etc. But of fundamental importance to the League--because it is of fundamental importance in the solution of these substantive problems themselves--is the way in which the community organizes this process of governance.

The process is organized partly in the public sector. So one expression of the League's interest, from the beginning, was our work on government struc-Throughout its history the League has studied--and from time to time made suggestions for changes and improvements in--the organization of the community's policy-making bodies: at the city level, at the county level, at the state level, and, perhaps most significantly, at the metropolitan level. Over the years, too, the League has worked to improve the system by which individuals move into these policy positions in government: through its voter's guides, for example, and through its work with campaign finance and the open appointments process.

But the governance process is also organized partly in the private sector. Particularly here in the Twin Cities area the fact is—and certainly

the desire is—that a wide range of non-governmental interests and individuals take part in the discussions of the problems of the community and what ought to be done about them. And, in the private sector, this process is "organized" not in the form of some organization or institution . . . but simply by having interested persons—literally—"join in" the discussion that is under way. Participation, as much as anything, means being a part of the information flow.

In recent years, the Citizens League has been interested on several occasions in the system of communications. It first approached some changes in technology—with its report on cable television in 1972. We returned to the subject, with our report on public television in 1975, and in 1976 the Board of Directors of the League decided to program a study of "public affairs information" . . . largely in order to try to understand better what this discussion consists of, where it goes on, and how it might be broadened—and deepened.

Two developments during the past year have suddenly given this study of the communications system of our region an additional importance.

One is the whole ground swell of interest in what is sometimes called "media performance". This is reflected in articles in national magazines and books and in remarks by critics of the media in and out of public life. It

is reflected, too, in the self-examination of media performance, by editors and executives in the press and by well-known figures in broadcasting.

The second is a whole set of changes—in process, and impending—affecting newspapers, radio and television, in the Twin Cities area as elsewhere. In response to strong forces—coming both through technology and through changes in the market—the communications industry will be considering some major changes in its service and perhaps even in the basic nature of its business.

This report is, therefore, more timely than could have been anticipated a year ago. Its findings, conclusions and recommendations relate to some real changes, occurring now in the Twin Cities area, which could have a significant impact on the governance process in this community. We hope the report will be read, and discussed, both by persons in the media and by persons interested and active in local public affairs.

There are several topics this report does not cover.

The committee that developed this report was charged to explore a field--public affairs information-not previously mapped . . . and really not even previously identified as an area for study. In its preliminary survey it found this to be a large territory, with many diverse regions. Inevitably, while it could see these, it could not study them in detail. It had to give its attention to what it believed to be the most central, on which community efforts could be most usefully directed, earliest, and with the greatest leverage effect. The other regions had to be left, for some other exploration at some other date.

The reader should understand at the beginning of this report, however, that the committee in many respects feels as strongly about the importance of the areas it did not cover as it does about the areas it did cover. So it is worth being specific about what these are.

The committee is conscious that it has dealt disproportionately with the mass media, and in particular with the newspapers. Yet the smaller publications, and the informal network of conversations and discussion groups is—in the aggregate—extremely important in the larger system of public affairs information. We hope someone can return, simply to catalogue these better, as well as to suggest improvements in the way they work.

The committee is aware that its discussion of "public affairs information" is skewed toward political affairs. That is, information coming through the system about governmental and quasi-governmental organizations. Yet the organized community efforts dealing with social programs and with arts and cultural affairs are equally important and might well deserve attention.

The committee did not explore in detail the issue of accessibility of the media, and access to it. It was interested in the phenomenon known as the "media event"--an activity that exists only for purposes of having it pictured by the media (television particularly). The committee would like to have explored what sense of lack of access impels groups to these events, and where they fit in the larger system of public affairs information.

The committee was unable in the time available to explore the way in which information about public affairs may be manipulated by individuals and organizations who want to influence the final picture that's presented to

the public. To study, in effect, the distortion introduced, inadvertently or intentionally, as the information moves from the source through the channels of communication to the receivers.

The committee was aware of, though it could not consider thoroughly, the failures in the schools and other organizations in preparing people for their roles as citizens. And this is important, since it affects the care with which people read, listen to and watch the public affairs coverage, or take part in the meetings at which public affairs is discussed.

Finally, we did not explore even the activity of the Citizens League itself as both a producer and consumer of information about public affairs, through its reports and the discussion meetings it conducts and its newsletter and other publications.

We hope these "unexplored" areas can be and will be examined more carefully in the future, by the Citizens League itself or by other organizations concerned with the flow of public affairs information as it affects the success of the Twin Cities area's public policy process.

MAJOR IDEAS..

The process of policy-making is made up very largely of the flow of information about public affairs.

Actions are taken. Things happen. These events, and their impacts, become known, and are recorded. Some raise policy issues. These issues, problems and opportunities, need to be understood. Proposals for action are developed. Gradually, people come to understand the problems. They debate what ought to be done. Consensus emerges. Action is taken.

All this is a process of handling information: learning, reporting, educating, debating, deciding.

The institutions that handle this flow of public affairs information are therefore inescapably a part of the community's system of governance.

The state legislature, or the city council, is a part of the system, of course. But so are the non-governmental, private, institutions that provide information, or conduct discussion, about the affairs we call 'public'.

These include trade associations and professional societies. Also, breakfast, lunch and dinner clubs. Neighborhood associations, civic organizations. Especially in the Twin Cities area, it is a large and diverse collection of organizations and activities. It includes, as well, the mail service.

But the so-called 'mass media' play an especially important role. They reach the largest audience. They have an independent, professional and disinterested relationship to public issues. As a result of this, they have a unique credibility.

Among the media, the newspapers have an especially important role. They put out the largest volume of news and information. They have the most reporters. To a remarkable degree, radio, television and the magazines and newsletters rely on the daily newspapers for their information about what is happening, and as a guide to the issues that need to be covered.

To a considerable degree, the community's agenda is shaped by what the newspapers carry. They validate ideas, as television validates events.

. . . . IN OUR REPORT

Changes now occurring in newspapers, radio and television may have important, and perhaps adverse, impacts on the flow of public affairs information.

Television has had a major impact. Public affairs, once reported only with words, is now reported also with pictures. Television became the largest medium of general circulation. Radio stations, like magazines, changed, to serve specialized audiences.

Currently, a major adjustment is occurring in newspapers--nationally, and locally. Stimulated partly by economic pressures, there is a strong effort to build readership. Feature stories, stories about people and coverage of private affairs are in vogue because they are well read. Hard news, stories about institutions and coverage of government are not, because they are not well read.

And—just over the horizon—are other changes, which may have further impacts: cable television . . . satellite communication . . . pay television . . . public broadcasting . . . facsimile transmission . . . and the possibility of a major deterioration in the postal service.

These changes may be unavoidable. The costs of operating these media, and the realities about what people do in fact read, may make it impossible for these private and commercial organizations any longer to try to be educational institutions for the community.

Especially if this is true, a discussion will need to begin about how the functions the media have been performing can be replaced, elsewhere in the community.

These steps should be taken:

- Groups interested in public affairs should organize a process through which the agenda of community and public actions can be forecast.
- Newspapers, radio and television should consider the impact of their coverage of public affairs—and of changes in it—on the process by which the community raises and resolves issues.
- Libraries should strengthen their capacity to become a reference service for persons and organizations involved in public affairs.
- The changes in the major media should become more a subject of reporting and discussion; partly, by 'cross-media' coverage and perhaps also from efforts by the School of Journalism of the University of Minnesota.
- The Metropolitan Council should increase its efforts to advise the Twin Cities community on the prospects for, and the implications of, changes in the technology of communications.

FINDINGS

The policy process consists very largely of a flow of public affairs information. Institutions handling this information are, inescapably, a part of the community's system of governance.

The Twin Cities area, like any other community, has had to develop a process for raising and resolving issues. It must come to know, first of all, that a problem or an opportunity exists. Then it must have a way to discuss and debate the various possible solutions. Then, it must take action, through governmental or private organizations. Action normally requires some process of securing the consent of those affected by what is proposed to be done. And, in turn, this consent is usually based on an understanding of the need for what is proposed.

So, the raising and resolving of issues becomes very largely the process of people knowing, and understanding: in other words, a flow of information about public affairs that both alerts citizens to what is happening, and explains its significance.

This would not be true under all conditions. The flow of information would not become particularly important for the making of decisions, for example, if the practice were to begin action only when problems became visible in an immediate, tangible and personal way. Visible, that is, the way Dutch elm disease is now visible. Or the way recurrent flooding is visible.

Nor would the flow of information be particularly important in a community where decision-making was highly centralized in a very small group of persons who could easily communicate privately with each other.

In the Twin Cities area, however, the nature of the decision-making does set up the need for a full flow of information:

* Here, most of the urban systems are generally in sound shape. Few of them break down, in real crisis. Nor is the Twin Cities area inclined to wait until a crisis does appear as a visible stimulus to action. Rather, the disposition is to try to anticipate problems, and this in turn makes it necessary to have a system through which it is possible to spot signs of trouble when they first begin to appear. Then, it is also necessary to develop an understanding in the community--through research, analysis and discussion-of the unfavorable consequences that will occur if action is not begun.

Perhaps even more important: This area is trying to succeed not only by avoiding problems but also by seizing opportunities. And points of major opportunity are not, by their nature, visible to the eye. They must be sensed, and understood. The opportunity to break into the major leagues in professional sports, for example. Or the opportunity to gain a major advantage as a new system of transportation or communication emerges. The opportunity to

take advantage of basic shifts in the pattern of economic activity. The opportunity to develop as a major arts or cultural center.

* Here, too, the system of public decision-making is open, decentralized and diverse. There is a large voluntary sector extremely active in public affairs--through business firms, foundations and non-profit groups. There is also heavy involvement of non-governmental individuals and organizations in decisions made by government. The whole process of securing attention to problems . . . of creating an understanding of alternative solutions . . . and of generating consensus on action is exceedingly complex. It works largely as the information about problems and possible solutions moves around the community, among the persons who elect to interest themselves in these decisions. And it moves over the system that exists for handling and distributing public affairs information.

The system of public affairs in the Twin Cities area not only requires and consumes a large volume of such information: The considerable number of actors, public and private, also generates a huge flow of information. The citizens and the organizations involved are both senders of information and seekers of information.

As the Minneapolis City Coordinator observed recently, influence in public affairs consists very largely in the possession of relevant and timely information. This is true at the community scale, as well as within a single governmental organization.

Not surprisingly, therefore, a community like this one, where participation is open, has developed a large and complex system for the exchange of information. The effort to offer meaningful participation to a wide

range of citizens and organizations largely depends upon its ability to maintain this large and high-performing system of public affairs information. Public information probably does lead to better decisions.

Before describing that system, however, and as the basic foundation for our report, we must say what we mean by the term "public affairs information", and describe the parties involved in it.

Our definition of 'public affairs information'

Public affairs is the process by which this Twin Cities community raises and resolves the issues which affect it. So what we are looking at in this report is the stream of information—written and oral—that makes up this process: the complaints, facts, data, proposals and opinions, and the proposals and the debate and the record of actions taken.

'Public affairs', first of all, includes more than government. We mean to cover those concerns which affect the citizens of the region generally. Thus the concept of 'public affairs' implies, for us, a problem or opportunity that is to be handled through some kind of collective action that may be through government. Or, it may be through some other institution at the community level. We would exclude affairs that are to be acted on by an individual or a family. Information about restaurants, for example, may interest a large number of persons. But for this purpose these persons would not -- in our definition--represent a public.

Our definition of 'information' of importance and of interest to the public is a broad one. It includes information about actions. It includes news. But it is more than

this. It includes facts about background, situations and trends, even where no action has been taken. And it is more than news. It includes things said as well as things done. And its importance is not determined by how many people know about it, or how many are at the moment interested in reading about it.

There is an important geographic dimension to our definition. talking about information that deals with public affairs primarily within the Twin Cities metropolitan area (though not exclusively of a metropolitan scale). Secondarily, within the State of Minnesota, especially as they affect our region. This is the 'community' within which citizens can and do play an active role in the process of governance. We do not minimize the importance of the national and international levels: Some citizens participate in public affairs at this level, too, and information is needed to support that activity. These are just not the levels with which we will be concerned in this report.

Two other characteristics are important. One is continuity: Our definition spans the full range, from the earliest identification of an issue to the final policy action. The other is timing: There is a special importance to the information early, when the problem is just beginning to be defined and when the alternative solutions are just beginning to be debated. Importantly, this information is frequently the most difficult to find, and to report.

Finally, we should note the growth in public affairs information. In recent years, more and more problems have come to be defined as 'affected with a public' interest. Issues become more complex. The range of government expands. More meetings are open, and more information moves. Duplicating

machines make it possible for more people to be included, with copies. Despite improvements in communications technology, the information may still be growing faster than the capacity for moving it.

Who is involved in the system?

Much of what we will discuss in our report will involve the media of communication: the 'transmission system' for public affairs information, and especially the mass media.

But, before that, it is important to try to make clear at least our general sense of—as we sometimes said in our discussions—the information—senders, and the information—seekers. Or, perhaps more usefully (since some people are obviously both senders and seek ers): the activities that generate information about public affairs, and the audiences that exist for it.

We found a wide variety of individuals and institutions organizing information about public affairs. Greatly oversimplified, we could distinguish the following:

- * Some people are assessing needs.
 There is, according to the Metropolitan Council staff, an 'explosion' of this activity in the Twin Cities area currently—both in public and in private planning bodies. How many day-care slots are needed? How many beds, or spaces, for the chemically dependent? What kind of services for battered women? The Junior League is attempting a comprehensive needs assessment, for the area as a whole.
- * Some people make research programs.
 All kinds of groups—the Citizens
 League among them—regularly try to
 determine what are the most important
 emerging issues that ought to be put
 into their programs of research and
 analysis.

- * Some people make up discussion programs. The organizations that 'put on speakers' about public affairs topics try, one way or another, to determine what will be interesting and important—for their audience, and for the community. A conference center like Spring Hill Center tries to relate its schedule of meetings to the problems emerging and needing discussion.
- * Some people put together action programs. Governors do, in their messages to the legislature. Legislators do, as they sit down to think ahead--individually and in caucus-about "what needs to be done next session".
- * Some people plan 'coverage' programs. Editors, for example, gather information (as we will describe in more detail, later) from reporters, for purposes of arranging 'beats' and scheduling coverage.

This information-gathering activity exists at different levels, in the Twin Cities area. Some of it is at the scale of the region as a whole. Some of it is at the scale of the suburban municipality--or, within a central city--at neighborhood scale. Different groups and different citizens participate, at the different levels. We have talked most, and thought most, about the activity at the area-wide scale, since it is the largest and is in some ways fundamental to the rest. But we are intensely aware of, and concerned for the success of, the activity at the local level, and in the most specialized communities involving special groups: within the minority community, for example.

We came to understand, also, that not everybody is equally interested in public affairs. Some—those we came at times to call the 'active attentive public', are interested in most issues, most of the time. But they are a minority of the total population, though an important group. Other persons are interested in issues some of the time. Or in some issues, and not in others. The emphasis in this report will be on what we refer to as the 'general public': that is, persons interested as citizens in the whole range of public issues—in whatever numbers, at whatever level of sophistication, and even if not continuously.

Not everybody gets equal access to the system of public affairs information, either to (as we say) send messages out, or to learn what is going on. In some cases they simply cannot afford it. In some cases they do not know how to manage it. We would like to see access expanded, and some of our recommendations will work in this direction. For the moment, we record it as a finding.

Finally, we are aware, too, that the system of public affairs, and of public affairs information, depends not only on how much is said and written, and on how widely this is distributed, but on the motivation of citizens to read and to listen, and on their capacity to understand. Here the problem is one of education in citizenship. We were able to recognize it, though not to explore it. It is a matter partly for the schools. And partly for the community's civic organiza-And--though they seem now less inclined than in the past to think of themselves as educational institutions-perhaps partly also for the mass media: newspapers, radio and television.

Now we can try to describe the system for public affairs information.

It is certainly not simple. Nor stable. It contains many different elements, and they are constantly changing—as discussion groups form and disband, as publications are launched and fail, as

program schedules change, and as newspaper sections are organized and reorganized. We are not sure that anyone has ever really tried to describe it, systematically.

But we can at least sketch out the main elements.

- * The mail is a part of it. There is a whole stream of clippings and copies of documents flowing around the community, with little slips attached saying "FYI" or "I thought you'd be interested in this." Notices of meetings move through the mail. More and more political campaign literature is apparently moving by direct-mail. So the mail service is a part of the system. And its cost, and its reliability, are issues in the future of the system.
- * Discussion meetings are a part of it. The Twin Cities area is a dense growth of voluntary organizations, and one whole species consists of groups whose purpose is to discuss, or to hear a speaker about, some topic of current public interest. So there are breakfast clubs and luncheon clubs and dinner clubs. Some have general interests. Some have specialized interests. Some are public; some are private. The Citizens League puts on a regular schedule of such breakfasts, both in Minneapolis and in St. Paul. Such dinner clubs as the 5:55 Club and the 6 O'Clock Club were both formed originally for this purpose; or, in St. Paul, the Informal Club. business agents of the labor unions in St. Paul have a regular lunch, to which they invite public figures. And business firms have government officials in for conversation.
- * Newsletters are a part of it. It is a rare organization that does not publish something, monthly or oftener. Here and there, among the items of interest mainly to members, there is

- occasionally an item of general interest. Increasingly, governments publish newsletters.
- * Magazines are a part of it. Public affairs, or sometimes 'legislative affairs', is a subject treated in most of the trade magazines published here. And it is typically one of the departments carried regularly in the magazines of general circulation, as, for example, in the two regional magazines: Twin Cities, and Mpls/St.Paul.
- * The newspapers are a part of it. There are the metropolitan dailies: the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press, and the Minneapolis Star and Tribune. there are also the Catholic Bulletin and the Labor Review and the St. Paul Advocate and the Twin Cities Courier and the Spokesman; and the newspapers specialized to geographic areas: the suburban weeklies, and--within the central cities -- in recent years the whole phenomenon of the neighborhood press. It is largely done by amateurs and volunteers, but has been remarkable both for its quality and in its staying power. Their growth, and that of newsletters, is partly a result of the growing competition for the limited space in the mass media of general circulation.
- * The telephone is a part of it. Much information about public affairs moves orally, without being written down. the extent and nature of the telephone system has an impact on public affairs. It was significant in drawing the Twin Cities together, when the toll charge for calling between Minneapolis and St. Paul was abolished in the 1950s. The cost, or pricing, of telephone calls could have an impact on the public affairs information system in the future, which may be as good as it is partly because the Twin Cities area has one of the largest toll-free dialing areas in the world.

* Radio and television are a part of it. They report news. And they have (as newspapers do not) an obligation in law to serve community needs--in the area of public affairs, among others. Radio stations specialize in content and audience. One station is currently an "all-news" station (WWTC). Television serves general audiences. The non-commercial stations are particularly important for public affairs. Minnesota Public Radio has sought and received very substantial grants for public affairs reporting, and maintains a large staff. KTCA, under its new management, has made public affairs a top priority. There are also beginning to be noncommercial radio stations on a neighborhood basis: as, for example, KMOG, serving the north side of Minneapolis; or, more recently, 'Fresh Air Radio', on the south side.

Fairly early, television spun off a separate medium--educational (later 'public') television--to provide a higher level of programming service to the smaller (though general) audience more deeply and seriously interested in--among other things-public affairs. There was a parallel development in radio. In the beginning, as testimony to our committee made clear, the mass media encouraged the development of this educational and community service, which had an audience that was intensely interested, but at the same time too small to support programming broadcast to the large general audience. There does not seem to be a counterpart, in print, of Public Radio or Public Television.

In addition to the media of communication, the system has to be defined broadly enough to include also the places in which public affairs information is stored.

* Libraries are a part of it. There are important collections of government

- documents, for example, in the general libraries in both cities. And—much less known to the public—there is a range of special libraries: large collections, on finance, transportation, planning, etc.
- * Reference services are a part of it. People who may not have all the information in their own files, but who know where it can be found. Some of these people are also in libraries. Some are in research institutions. Some of the service is provided simply by individuals who used to work in public affairs, and know the issues and their history, and carry their 'library' around in their heads.
- * Historical societies are a part of it. A reference service for current events, and current data, is important. But 'depth' in public affairs information often requires a time perspective.

Within this overall system of public affairs information, the so-called 'mass media' — the newspapers, radio and television — are especially important in terms of their impact on the policy process.

There are four characteristics of their operation which make them, inescapably, a part of the governance process in the region.

* They move to the largest and most general audience.

Obviously, not all citizens subscribe to every newspaper, or read every story; or listen to every radio or television program broadcast. But the audience even for a low-rated public affairs program, or for a story on an inside page of the newspaper, is likely to be far larger than the audience assembled for a discussion, or for the reading of a newsletter.

Perhaps more important: The audience is literally un-known. A government official or other actor in the policy process can never be certain that a report about what he did, or said, has not been seen or heard by someone in the community interested enough to do something in response. So, inevitably and rationally, politicians and others give special weight to what goes out through the general media.

* It is these organizations that have by far the largest resources for gathering information.

Much information is poured into a newspaper office or broadcast station by organizations and individuals who have a message they want to send, to the public. But the system requires more than this. It also requires knowledgeable and experienced editors, to sort out the important from the unimportant. And it requires reporters, to learn about and to understand the situations, actions, statements and events that the public needs to know about--and which others might not have thought (or might not have wanted) to send to the media on their own. The region's supply of trained and experienced reporters-at least for the general-circulation media, which we have identified as of central importance--is heavily concentrated in the daily newspapers, and in certain radio and television stations.

These organizations have the greatest strength and independence.

At times, the act of publishing certain information is controversial. Some considerable courage is required, of editors and reporters. But it takes more than this: To perform this function over the long term, it is essential also to survive in the face of opposition. Partly, this independence comes from

the protection afforded by the Falls Amendment. Partly, too, it comes from economic strength. The mass media have this ability to be independent.

* The credibility of the professional journalist is an important asset.

Especially in the Twin Cities area, the journalists take care to be disinterested, and detached from the objectives of the organizations and activities they are covering. success or failure of a campaign, or promotion, is not to be a consideration in the professional decision to report or not to report it. the editors of the newspapers here pointed out to our committee: practice in this community is to pay their own way; to buy their own tickets, for example, for reporters traveling with the baseball team, or reviewing a concert.

So when a report does appear, or when a review is either laudatory or critical, there is a reasonable presumption that this represents the judgment of an objective observer as to the importance or as to the merits of an event. This is in contrast with the credence given to what an organization—government, business or non-profit—says about itself, in its own private magazine or news—letter.

Within the mass media, and despite the rise of television, the newspapers remain critically and centrally important.

Television has grown significantly, since its arrival in the early 1950s, as the medium from which the public says it gets its information. It is no longer literally possible to say-as it was possible for a newspaper publisher in 1949 to say-that most people end their education with high school, and for the rest of their

lives get most of their knowledge of the larger community through newspapers.

But there is, we have learned, an important question here about what we mean by a 'source' of news or information. There is a key distinction to be made between a 'source' and an 'outlet'.

The citizen may hear some public affairs information on a radio news program. But it needs to be asked how that information came to the radio station. In most cases (and there are some exceptions) it came 'over the wire': that is, from one of the news services, on which most stations rely as an alternative to having their own staff of reporters. And the news services appear to rely heavily, in turn, on what has appeared in the newspaper--either for the information itself, or as a guide to what they ought to be covering and reporting, today. Newspaper editors who appeared before our committee asserted that the morning radio and television news broadcasts consist, figuratively if not quite literally, of a reading-of-the-newspaper. Our conversations with editors from radio and television did not basically challenge this assertion.

In truth, a large part of the public affairs information system relies, directly or indirectly, and whether it knows it or not, on what is done by the newspapers. Their reporting staffs represent, within the mass media, the largest single element of the information-gathering capability available to the community, and almost the only staffs with an ability to specialize in the coverage either of a place (city hall, or the Legislature, or the Metropolitan Council, for example) or an issuesbeat (education, energy, health, etc.)

Elsewhere in the mass media, the next largest staffs appear to be in radio:

especially, Minnesota Public Radio and among the commercial stations, in WCCO, AM and FM. But even where full-time, professional reporting staffs exist, the newspaper coverage remains for these other media the basic foundation for the understanding of what's going on in the community. It is, as well, for the libraries and reference services. in their work with public affairs. And in organization after organization there can be found some person whose job it is routinely to 'clip the papers', as the basic record of the way in which an issue of interest is moving through the community.

A critical function of newspaper coverage of an issue, in the community, is to 'validate' individuals and ideas, in something like the way television — which can be seen — validates events.

In a sense, we have found, a thing has not fully occurred until it has been recorded in print.

This is a subtle and mysterious thing; still, it seems to be real. But the reasons are fairly clear. To be important, a thing must be fairly widely known. A report about it, in a publication of general circulation, helps accomplish this. Second, it must be believed to be important. This is accomplished when an editor, who has no personal interest involved, decides it is worthy of publication--especially on Page One. Third, it is important for there to be the assumption created that the report is likely to have been seen by a wide range of persons, whose reactions may be important.

Finally—and this especially establishing a key advantage of print over broadcasting—it is important to have the report in a form that will exist tomorrow, and next week, and next month and next year. A public affairs program on television or radio may have been important, in conveying information or understanding to those who saw

it. But it is not re-circulated in the way that articles in print are re-circulated by persons who found them important: and sent on to others, frequently underlined. Despite the appearance of radio and video cassettes, it is overwhelmingly print that provides the record of public affairs in the community.

A central issue therefore is the process by which the media learn about community problems.

We explored this question, in a series of highly informative discussions with editors—actually, from various media. The system they have seems to be characterized by diversity, and informality; by a considerable amount of watching—what-others—are—doing, all combined with an element of random accident.

This process—by which the editors who plan the coverage of the community, day by day and year by year, come to know what are the community's needs, and what efforts are being made in the community to solve them—is sometimes known as 'ascertainment'.

It is a term borrowed from broadcasting, where the process is required by law, as a condition of holding and renewing a station license. As it now operates there, the process consists of two parts. There is a public opinion survey, testing for the questions of greatest general public concern. And there is a set of interviews with 'community leaders'. Formerly these were done by the stations individually, on a three-year cycle. Now they can be (and are) done jointly, and continuously round the year. (The new director of public affairs at KTCA has said that station will conduct its own, separate ascertainment.)

The concept is not a comfortable one for newspaper editors. In part, this is because of its association with broadcasting, and therefore because of its overtones of regulatory requirement. In part, too, it is probably because of the low regard in which the broadcasters' ascertainment is held, even by the broadcasters themselves.

Newspapers tend almost uniformly to believe they have a better way.

The principal system through which a newspaper identifies issues--emerging, and already on the agenda for action--is, clearly, its own reporting staff.

The most common response to the committee's questions, from editors, was that a good reporter knows what's happening, and likely to be happening, on the 'beat' for which he is responsible. In this sense, the reporter is the front-line editor--deciding what should be covered, and what is important enough to report, out of what is learned.

The managing editor of the Minneapolis Tribune has set up a procedure that will have the beat reporters, every three months, identifying the developments that will be occurring in the areas for which they are responsible. This advance understanding of the schedule on which issues will be moving will permit the editors to assign and prepare the 'backgrounders', so that the more in-depth understanding these series and analyses provide can be made available to the public at the time the issue is being debated and decided, rather than three months or more afterward. At the St. Paul Dispatch, an arrangement has been set up in which the beat reporters will generate ideas for intensive coverage which will then be passed on to a two-man 'issues team'.

There was another, similar process organized in 1976 by the new publisher

of the Star and Tribune. Persons from that organization were assigned a set of some 140 interviews with persons in the community, testing for perceptions of emerging needs and problems. We were told this will be done again, in 1978. In St. Paul, the Dispatch/ Pioneer Press will shortly begin what is intended to be a monthly series of discussions between key people in their newsroom and major groups in the community. The surveys done for those newspapers of attitudes in the community have led that organization to want to have these conversations; partly as an effort to get a community perception of the job the newspapers are doing, and partly to get others' impressions of issues moving in the community.

But, day by day, the flow of public affairs information takes its shape largely from the diverse set of urgings coming in from all sides, that "this is news", or "this is important" or "here's something the public needs to know". A huge amount of this comes in. And—as they stress—the editors are willing to listen.

The work of the Minnesota Press Council provides a kind of feedback to the newspapers--and, more recently, to broadcasters as well. But it has the essential character of being afterthe-fact. It deals with complaints about errors or unfairness, with respect to something that has already been done. It is a kind of quasijudicial effort to secure redress of a wrong, if in fact some party has been wronged. We did not find the Council working, in anyone's opinion, as an adequate mechanism for conveying to the media what it is, exactly, that the community would like to see done. The Council is--from the testimony of its Executive Director to our committee--aware of this.

It is looking at the possibility of hearing complaints about "errors of

omission, as well as of commission. And, more generally, is thinking about new roles it might play, given the intensity of public interest in the media and the way they perform.

Efforts to improve the flow of information about community problems moving to the editors will not, however, translate themselves easily into improvements in information flowing out to the public.

In between, there are some major limits and constraints, which affect all the major media—newspapers, radio and television.

It is as important for persons in the public, who are hopeful of improvements, to be realistic about these constraints, as it is for the editors.

One kind of constraint is economic.

These media are expensive. For the newspapers, the rising cost of newsprint is a real concern: today, \$340 a ton, as against \$165 as recently as 1972. Production costs have been eased, by the shift to computer typesetting--a major revolution in the industry. But distribution still involves trucks and carrier salesmen. For television, studio costs are high, and so is the cost involved in film, which makes possible a show that consists of something other than 'talking heads'. Staff is expensive, for all media: This appears to be one reason for the visible trend toward having copy supplied by persons not on the staff of the station, or newspaper.

Given the commitment of resources involved, there is an understandable desire to give priority to those subjects most likely to be of the greatest

appeal to the largest audience. It becomes increasingly difficult to justify large expenditures of time and resources to an issue area where the readership is known to be very low. It is seen, inevitably, as a waste.

This is related to a second constraint, which is the nature of the audience: More specifically, the facts known about what the public will actually read, and listen to.

There are basically two kinds of questions that can be asked by a news organization, as it tries to get information that will help it decide what to put on the air, or into print.

One has to do with what people think is important. Going back many years, people have been asked what they would like to see in the newspaper, and what they personally want to read. other has to do with what people actually watch, and read. These studies, too, have been done for many years. But just recently, the introduction of computerized data processing into the studies of reader behavior has made it possible to carry this analysis much further. Locally--and nationally, we understand--the most extensive work has been done by the Star and Tribune, on the readership of the Star.

The results of such studies have--it was explained to our committee--had a considerable impact on the newspapers, wherever they have been done. What emerges is a dramatic difference between what people say they want (or think is important) and what they actually read. Oversimplified, but with essential accuracy, they say they want information about public affairs-community, national and international. What they actually read most is advice columns and features.

It is important to note that the survey for the Star tested what was read as a proportion of what was printed,

on a given subject. What has struck the editors so forcefully is that local public affairs, business and labor news, editorials and opinion, and sports—to which they devote a very large share of the news space—rank lowest . . . while the best—read material is on subjects to which they have been devoting the least space and emphasis.

The surveys also showed that it is not the subject alone that determines readership. What also influences readership (and can be used consciously to increase readership) is the treatment of the subject. A feature story in this respect is better than the conventional hard-news story ("The Metropolitan Airports Commission Monday voted . . ."). The right headline can attract readership. Stories with high emotional content attract readers. Stories with people in them do, as well.

In a way, too, the professionalism of the journalist also represents a kind of constraint.

For the news pages, the test is of course the test of news judgment: Is it current? Is it known? Is it important to very many people? And, most critically: Is it news-worthy enough that we should give space to it at the expense of something else?

There is little disposition to say, about something that is not very newsworthy, that it ought to be carried because it deals with an effort that somebody in the community wants to see discussed. There is a tradition in the newsroom of giving attention to "things the public needs to know". But even this does not assure coverage for the kind of relatively small items that tend to make up the flow of information about an issue in the early stages, before a problem has become urgent or widely recognized—or even very well understood.

There is a part of a newspaper in which it is appropriate to feel a desire to see a particular problem addressed--and even resolved in a particular way. This is the editorial/opinion page. But it represents a minor share of the space of the paper. And its function is presently felt to be to comment on reports that have appeared in the news; not to convey information not otherwise available that might advance the policy discussion on an issue. addition, of course, much of the space on the opinion pages is devoted to material outside our definition of public affairs information: that is, to national and international issues. Beyond this, there is at present no other outlet for the information gathered by a newspaper. What is not printed--and most of it, the editors told us, is not printed--goes simply into the head of the reporter.

Economics, and the understanding of the changes in their readership, are now leading newspapers into a major re-thinking of what information they carry, and how they present it.

So far, editors in both cities told us, they have not cut back the volume of their coverage of news and other material about government and public affairs.

The effort, instead, is to bring up the level of readership. They hope this can be done by making the articles more interesting. And more timely. Specifically, this appears to involve:

* Reorganizing the 'beats', to focus-as the editors say--on issues rather than places. Rather than being assigned to the court house, or to city hall, where he is assigned to follow whatever comes through that piece of the governmental system, a reporter will be assigned to (say) parks and open space, or to energy, or education—and charged to follow the issues on that beat in whatever building they may appear.

- * Personalizing the news about public affairs. People do tend to read about people, the studies show. So there is an emphasis on individuals rather than institutions.
- * An effort to give perspective to the fragmented and sporadic actions of the policy process. For example, attempts to step back at interviews to summarize what is going on with respect to, say, urban transportation—as an alternative to carrying reports of actions day by day.
- * A stronger desire to show how governmental actions impact on people, and individual people, and particular individuals.

The forces demanding change are felt most strongly, everywhere in the country, by evening newspapers. In the Twin Cities area at the moment they are felt most strongly in Minneapolis, where the Star, under the direction of its new editor, is engaged in a basic reappraisal of every aspect of the newspaper. Again, though it has not been seen as news to be reported, news and editorial executives at the newspaper were quite willing to describe for our committee what is under way. Through task forces in which everyone on the staff will participate, they will be re-examining the basic mission of the paper; the way the staff is used; the way news space is used; the role of the editorial/opinion page; the question of special sections; the format in which all is packaged and presented to the reader, and, finally, the ways in which the conclusions on all these questions should be implemented.

There is, by all accounts, a strong commitment to consider, and to make, major changes.

In St. Paul, there was a re-planning of the Dispatch a year ago, which maintained the coverage of public affairs and produced the new special sections on entertainment and modern living. The Saturday afternoon paper was melded into the Saturday morning Pioneer Press, with some special attention to public affairs (as, the Pro and Con feature on issues). Similarly, in Minneapolis, the Saturday Star was combined into the Saturday morning Tribune, as a tabloid insertagain, with some special attention to public issues.

More generally, with respect to their content, daily newspapers have moved to 'sectionalize' their news. In regular places and on regular days, the reader can find information about entertainment, sports, business, food, modern living, housing and real estate, etc. The beginnings of this concept as applied to public affairs may be visible in the Saturday papers, in the St. Paul papers' "area" sections, and in the "state views" page in the Tribune.

For the moment, the product is the newspaper: not an information service, with a family of publications. Longer term, however, there might be important changes in the distribution of printed matter.

One experiment being watched is the one in Louisville, Kentucky, where the newspaper is testing the separate sale of specialized sections, at a small additional charge. The first is on consumer affairs; the second is planned to be on informational affairs.

The distribution, however, is still by carrier. Farther ahead are much more radical changes related to the developing technology of electronic communica-

tions. Facsimile--not a new technology, by any means--is coming more rapidly into use now, with ads for low-cost machines being carried on major television channels. paper executives indicated to our committee, however, that they are unenthusiastic about facsimile systems which deliver 'hard copy' (that is, print a piece of paper) in the home. These would require a system for delivery of the paper, and a whole new system for the maintenance and repair of the mechanical system. indicated they are much more interested in the technology of cable television, which can be used to move words onto the home television screen. No paper is required, and the maintenance system for television sets is already in place. But cable television has been slow to emerge, as a result of technical, economic and political complications.

Almost equally dramatic changes, however, seem to be approaching for all of the elements of the community's system of public affairs information.

Our committee had no way to explore these in depth, but is aware of activity in at least these areas:

- * Broadcast television, which came in 25 years ago and ended the dominance of radio and newspapers, is itself facing competition from the new technology of cable and the new business of pay-TV.
- * Non-commercial television is growing, with greater funding and new access to programs transmitted by satellite. Locally, KTCA has been reorganized and refinanced. A new public affairs 'magazine' is scheduled for fall. Channel 17 remains as a second outlet, perhaps for more specialized programs.

- * Public radio continues to expand here, where Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) is recognized already as perhaps the outstanding statewide system in the nation. Neighborhood radio stations are appearing. And the relationship between the two may not yet be fully clear.
- * The mail service continues to rise in cost. Another rise in rates occurred this May. Electronic mail is now being generally advertised, and is cutting into the volume of first-class mail which provides the bulk of postal service revenues. One resource person said he believes a crisis in the postal service is approaching much faster than almost anyone in the public understands.
- * Libraries and reference services are seeking new roles.
- * There is a growing amount of coverage in the media about the media themselves, and about each other. The newspapers report on television. The University of Minnesota Daily has been particularly active, in reporting on both the television and the newspapers. Local journalists publish the Twin Cities Journalism Review. And the newspapers are reporting more on their own doings (including, in some cases, financial reports) and on issues affecting journalism generally (as, for example, the weekly column on the Tribune editorial page by Charles Seib).
- * Finally, there is some public planning beginning on the communications system. Within the 'social framework' planning in the Metropolitan Council, some attention is being given to cable television, and to the telephone system.

CONCLUSIONS

From our examination of this complex system of public affairs information and from our findings, we draw the following conclusions.

First, it is essential to set out our basic conclusion about the nature of the problem in public affairs information, and about the basic approach the Twin Cities community should take toward a 'solution'.

The Twin Cities area has a highly developed system for handling its public affairs information, which has generally been performing well.

This is true also, and specifically, of its newspapers, radio and television, which are highly professional and which operate with a strong tradition of service to the community.

The Twin Cities area sets a high standard, for its journalism. At times, its media fall short of these standards, in their coverage of public affairs or in other respects. This short-fall generates criticism. A share of it is justified.

The community should appreciate, however, how high its standards are, not only on the part of the public but also on the part of the journalists themselves. And, how

high the performance is, as well. We have not been able to examine in any systematic way the record in other major cities. But as individuals we have some impression of the level of public affairs reporting elsewhere, in the press or over the broadcast media; enough, at any rate, not to feel inclined to dispute the representatives of the media here when they say with professional confidence that the Twin Cities area is, relative to most other metropolitan areas, well served.

The journalists who met with our committee we found to be highly professional, concerned about their role in the community, and anxious only to have the community understand realistically the limits within which they work, and the importance of an independent press.

The newspapers/radio/television that serve this community have become increasingly responsive, in recent years, to the public. For example, through their cooperation with the Minnesota Press Council, in their effort to make space and time available to readers, in their willingness to assist viewers/readers with individual problems, in their efforts to check on the accuracy of what is published or broadcast and in the efforts they make, on their own, at 'ascertainment'.

But there are reasons for concern about the future of the system of public affairs information, as a consequence of the forces now at work on the major media of newspapers, radio and television.

Let us be explicit about the areas of concern.

Most basic, the squeeze on space, and time, concerns us.

The volume of public affairs information is rising; the size of the staffs available to cover it, and the capacity of channels available to bring their reports to us, are not rising as rapidly. Increasingly, the kind of reports that it used to be possible to get onto the air, or into the paper, now cannot have the space they used to have, or cannot now get in at all. The danger here is a loss of continuity, and of detail.

The trend away from independence concerns us.

As the channels of communication through the mass media congest, more and more organizations are setting up their own media, to report on their own actions and decisions, and to offer their opinions directly. Some of these are non-profit organizations, such as hospitals. Some are business organizations, now producing their own tailored-circulation magazines. Some are the traditional labor newspapers. More and more are government agencies, moving into newsletters now not so much for their own employee family as for distribution broadly to a special audience they assemble. These new, privately owned, channels are useful, and not inappropriate. Much of the work is quite professional. But they are not the equivalent of an

independent press. There is a danger, in these publications, of withholding information; and a danger of 'editorializing'. Our concern is that these might, in time or by some readers, begin to be thought of in the same category as the general and independent community media.

The trend toward specialization concerns us.

The general character of the audience for public affairs information is important. The citizen needs to know what is happening on all the dimensions of public life. Information should not become the property only of the individuals and organizations with some particular interest in that particular area.

Some persons argue that a subject area can be covered in greater depth and detail, and with more sophistication, in the specialized publications; and that a citizen wanting to know about developments in other fields should simply take, and read, a number of such publications. We have two objections: partly, that there is not, realistically, time; and, partly, that this assumes an interest and awareness already existing. The whole point of a general medium of communication is to digest important information across a broad range of subjects; and to make the citizen aware of a development that he or she ought to know about, and would be interested in. Without media of general circulation, performing this 'alerting' function to citizens of all backgrounds, it becomes difficult to see how there is, in the full sense of the word, a 'community'. If television and newspapers were to fragment (as magazines and radio have, essentially) into specialized services for particular groups in the population, we would be concerned. Could the Twin Cities area, then, really function effectively to raise and resolve those

problems that involve the community as a whole?

The growing tendency to personalize public affairs has some implications that concern us.

We understand the impulse behind this, and we would be the first to agree that the citizens must be attracted to read, before they can understand. Yet we are concerned, because in the process of personalizing public affairs information a subtle but important shift has taken place, of which we do not find even the people in the media yet aware. The tendency (given the interest also in focusing on the impact of events) is to personalize the people affected by a decision, rather than the prople making the decision; and more than this, to personalize the people affected directly and immediately.

Once again: It is important to say clearly that we believe individuals and groups--whether trying to get something, or trying to stop something--need and deserve some access to public attention. Our concern is that the tendency in the media to 'personalize' comes together with the growing skill of organized groups in manipulating 'media events' to bias the discussion of issues in a serious The interest of the general public, affected only indirectly, is not made clear: How does a television crew, literally, 'show' the general public? Commonly, the only answer is to picture a spokesman for an institution, which undertakes to represent the interests affected indirectly and longer-term. examination of the coverage of the power-line dispute strongly suggests that the pattern of coverage thus produces an impression that the issue is between 'the people' and 'the institution'. The choices are, of course, much more difficult:

They are between people as landowners and people as users of electricity; between people as hospital patients and people as payers of insurance premiums. In a word, between us and us.

The increasing emphasis on explaining the impacts and consequences of actions has some features that concern us.

We appreciate the usefulness of telling the citizens how they will be affected by the expansion of an airport, or by a change in the tax law. But, given the limit of resources that always exists, this tends to pull coverage away from the early and critically important period before the event has occurred, or the decision has been made, when the issues are still, as we have said, 'in process'. To play their important and legitimate role in the process, the citizens need to know above all what issues are arising, and what alternatives are under consideration; and when; and This is much more difficult for an information medium to do. It is, in effect, a story without an ending; without 'winners' and 'losers'. concerned that, in the effort to build audience, it will be neglected, with serious consequences for the policy process.

Equally of concern is the absence of mechanisms for dealing with these concerns, and with the impacts these changes in the media have on the public affairs system in the community.

The organizations whose job it is to handle public affairs information are, as we have found, improving dramatically their own ability to understand the forces at work on their business, and on their audience; and improving their ability to make changes in their media, in response.

What is not yet well developed is an arrangement for dealing with--and, at a minimum, even for knowing about--the secondary impacts that these changes in newspaper, radio and television coverage and comment are likely to have on the officials and citizens who are participating actively in the community's public affairs. By and large, the re-planning of the coverage or format of a newspaper or of a television program is treated as an internal matter for that private organiza-The editors were quite willing to discuss with our committee the steps they have under way, when we inquired about them. And occasionally an editor has talked about the changes under way, in the column he writes. There are times, too, when changes proposed in a news organization (as, recently, at one of the major television stations) does become, one way or another, a subject of news coverage in itself, by other media. But, in general, the whole process of adjustment by the news organizations to the forces affecting them goes on without a high degree of involvement of individuals and institutions in the community--certainly in terms of consenting to changes made or proposed, and largely even in terms of knowing about such changes. This extends even to such relatively minor changes as the rearrangement of 'beats', or even the replacement of reporters on beats, which is reported only occasionally, and then by other media (such as the Twin Cities Journalism Review) and which comes to be known by the community mainly as readers see a new name appear in the 'by-line' over the stories on a particular subject area.

It is this gulf in communication, between those making changes and those affected by the changes—or, more properly, the feelings created by the gap in communication—that concern us. It builds frustration and resentment, that expresses itself in the stream of complaints about media performance of

which the news media organizations are currently so aware.

No useful answers lie, however, down the road of governmental action.

This would be, simply, inappropriate. The kind of public affairs information system we envision has, among its central principles, diversity, openness and independence. None of these things is fostered by the concept of regulation, on some kind of 'public utility' model. That would destroy the system, in a misguided effort to save it. The effort by the community to maintain and improve its system of public affairs information must, rather, build around the idea of nongovernmental, voluntary action based on a sense of responsibility to the community, and the stimulus of competition to perform.

There should be a process of 'agenda-forecasting' organized by the community, for the major media of communication involved in public affairs information.

We recognize that every news media organization has some kind of process of its own for scanning the horizon, trying to pick up issues that need attention, and actions and trends that should be covered. In the case of the newspapers, with their large reporting staffs, this becomes a very substantial process. And our findings indicate that in a number of cases changes are being made that will improve it still further—moving the horizon out farther in time, for example.

Why, then, is it important for a counterpart process to be organized in and by the community itself? We see four reasons:

- * The public affairs of a community as large as the Twin Cities area are so large and so complex that even a staff of the size of the largest newspaper cannot systematically cover it. | Almost inevitably, the earliest sense of problems emerging, and the earliest awareness of corrective actions beginning to be taken, lie in the community, with the people in and close to the system of public affairs. News organizations as a whole, like even a good reporter covering the Capitol, depend on being alerted to "things you should know about". This is especially true when reporters come in from other cities, when they do not undergo an intensive education about the history and institutions of this community and when they tend to turn over fairly rapidly on their beats. Necessarily, they draw on the system of record and on the stock of experience and the perceptions of people in the community.
- * The community--understandably-approaches the question of 'what
 ought to be covered' with a different point of view. The news organization thinks primarily in terms
 of what is, or will
 Citizens and organizations think in
 terms of what's important to debate,
 and decide, in the community.
- * It is appropriate that persons outside the media--if they are the ones concerned and in some cases complaining--accept the responsibility for coming in with constructive and useful suggestions about what should be done.
- * Finally, the fact is that a process of this sort exists, now, in any event. There is a stream of suggestions about coverage flowing into the media at present. And it will continue. The need is simply

to improve it. Too much of it is after-the-fact: complaints, too late, about what was done wrong, or inadequately, or missed entirely. And there are too many gaps in the process: too many groups that, perhaps because they lack the resources for a public-relations effort and perhaps because they lack the knowledge about the system, do not have access to the process.

We were impressed by the indications from editors in the media that they would be receptive to such a process. In part, this emerged from their comments about the Minnesota Press Coun-They believe in it, as they stressed, and they cooperate with it. But there is, inevitably, a certain lack of enthusiasm for investing very substantial amounts of time going over --as one of them said--things that are essentially history. They would prefer, as they told us, to have the community tell them more clearly, and more in advance, what it is that is (Obviously, errors of comwanted. mission will continue to need to be dealt with in a kind of post-audit.)

What should the process involve?

The most important thing to say is that much if not most of it is already being done, now. A wide variety of individuals and organizations are presently assessing needs, and scanning for trends, analyzing problems and planning their own programs. The need is largely to identify these activities, and to summarize their principal findings, and to pass them on to the news organizations and others. It is this 'identifying' and 'summarizing' function which needs to be set up in the community (see page 3).

The process therefore would be decentralized, diverse and relatively informal. Whatever (and it should be a small) office were gathering and

transmitting the information would not be expressing an opinion of its own with respect to what is or is not a community problem, or as to what are the priorities among problems. The process should not be an effort at consensus. No single small group could possibly be well-enough informed, or wise enough, to express such a judgment about so diverse and complex a community.

There should be an expansion of the flow of public affairs information through the broadcast media.

It is important to recognize both the accomplishments and the limitations of the broadcast media, in dealing with public affairs. Some very good things are done in this community. And in some respects--particularly with Minnesota Public Radio and now with Channels 2 and 17--important improvements have recently been made, or are being made.

But it is important also to note that the performance of the broadcasters is uneven. And to note that service to the community—in the area of public affairs, among others—is a requirement that goes with the license to broadcast.

A reasonable expectation, we have concluded, would be for a half-hour program, on a serious and important public affairs topic, containing a substantial amount of filmed material, on each television channel, once a week, in prime time. A high-quality television program can have real impact.

There should be an improvement of the flow of public affairs information into and through the print media.

We say this--again--recognizing that the Twin Cities area is fortunate to have strong and responsible newspapers, with an outstanding record of community service. Again, it is the future that to some degree worries us.

The need is not for a larger volume, or quantity, of public affairs information. There is enough now printed. The need, rather, has to do with content. Specifically:

- * More depth. This is not an easy concept. Depth is not length. It has to do more with the ability of the editor to relate today's developments to what is going on elsewhere, and to what has gone on here before. It requires experience, and research where the experience is lacking. Which means it requires time.
- * More continuity. The public policy process cannot be understood, nor can the citizen know how to play his role in affecting it, unless there is a responsible commitment to follow an issue from its beginnings through all the steps to a final decision, noting the major points of action before they occur as well as after they occur.
- * Earlier attention to issues. As we noted before, a part of the function of the system of public affairs information is to alert citizens, and political leaders, to issues, changes and forces that need to be

dealt with. It is not enough to wait to report their existence when they finally have come near enough for political officials to be forced to discuss them.

Newsletters and community magazines, with a speciality in or at least an emphasis on public affairs, are a major possibility. A number have been tried. None has taken hold, at least with the success achieved in some other major metropolitan areas.

with improvements in the 'network' of public affairs information, however, and in library and reference services (see below); and with the increasing practice of free-lance writing opening the way for contributions from a broad range of well-informed persons in the community, the future may be brighter for a publication monthly or oftener specializing in local public affairs.

There should be a much better organization of the 'reference' system in the Twin Cities area, to provide access to the record of events and to the history of public affairs.

Especially in view of the possibility that the newspapers will do less, in coming years, in the way of being 'papers of record', it will be important to be sure there is, elsewhere in the community, a collection of the major documents on public affairs issues. And, even more important, a knowledge of how to access them.

This should be largely a function of the libraries of the region, a number of which are currently interested in, and developing, new roles—especially in their reference service. The first step is, clearly; to get a much fuller idea of the capability that exists at present, taking 'the library system' of the community in its largest sense: public libraries and private libraries; general libraries and special libraries. We should also know much more than we do about the connections that exist between them. And it would be useful at least to begin some planning about the ways they might more aggressively move out to potential users--whether business firms, or organizations otherwise participating in the public policy process.

There should be a fuller and more systematic review of the on-going performance of the system of public affairs information.

The mass media are a part—though only a part—of this. Like any institution, they will be helped, on balance, by suggestions and comment from the perspective of a party outside the system. The Press Council has come to play this role, in a limited way, where errors of fact or judgment are alleged. But this is only one kind of 'review'. The reporting of one medium by another is also useful, and should be expanded. There is room, too, for the comment by professional voices in journalism—perhaps from the schools of journalism.

There should also be greater attention to the rest--and the larger part--of this complex system of public affairs information. The basic need is not so much for criticism as it is simply for identification and description. Citizens (and people in public affairs) need to know more about the newsletters, discussion groups and other channels through which public affairs information is organized and distributed. Some kind of combination of 'guidebook' and 'bulletin board' would seem to be required.

There should continue to be a close monitoring of developments in the technology and business applications of new systems of communication.

New technologies that could have a major impact on the system of public affairs information have appeared, here as elsewhere in the nation. For the moment, their spread and development are held back. But they need to be followed closely, by some organization able to examine their potential both for the opportunities and for the difficulties their growth might bring to our area.

Cable television is one of these. So

is 'pay-TV' by a broadcast signal. So is facsimile transmission. As this 'electronic mail' spreads, it could cause a deterioration in the postal service. Finally, changes in the basic system for the pricing of telephone service could have an impact.

In terms of the community, these developments are being watched mainly in the Metropolitan Council, through its Communications Advisory Committee. This is a small program, at the outer edges of the 'social framework' planning of the Council. It is almost certainly an under-emphasized program area, and the Council should upgrade the resources going into this area in the course of its next work program and budget review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions we recommend as follows:

There should be a new process, based in the community, for identifying the issues that need to be resolved.

Three questions follow out of this recommendation. The first is who would be involved in the 'design', and how. The second is what the 'agenda-forecasting' process should look like, and how it would operate, once set up. The third is what should be done with what comes out of the process, as it begins to work.

Designing the process

Spring Hill Center, or some other group which has a role in the Twin Cities area as a facilitator of discussions, should convene the first set of meetings that will begin the design of the agenda-forecasting process. It should do this in cooperation with groups interested in community issues, such as (but by no means limited to) the League of Women Voters and the Urban Coalition; and with groups interested in the system of public affairs information, such as (but by no means limited to) the Minnesota Press Council and the University of Minnesota School of Journalism. Representatives of the major, and other, media should participate in the design.

Financing should be sought for a brief but intensive effort to lay out the specifics: the participants, the procedures, the frequency, the financing, the use of the results.

The design should be completed by the fall of 1978.

There should be no assumption that the group involved in the original design of the agenda-forecasting process should be, or would be, the group ultimately designated to coordinate or to conduct the ongoing process itself.

The process itself

It should be essentially a process of identifying and collecting the issues perceived by, and the agendas of, a broad range of groups in the Twin Cities area. This should include groups and interests organized as institutions; but not be limited to institutions. There should be a positive effort to seek out the interests perceived by, and the agendas of, interests that are un-organized, and those of individuals.

Both public and private groups should be surveyed, in writing or through discussion meetings, with respect to research, policy studies, proposals and actions that they have, or that they see, moving into the policy discussion in the community, and needing coverage by the media, during the succeeding 12 months. The 'design' will recommend the establishment (or designation) of some minimum organization, or office, whose job it will be to coordinate the gathering of this information.

The results of the process

The coordinating office should put into print a summary of what it hears, and learns, from all the groups it surveys. This document should be widely circulated. (This is in contrast to the 'ascertainment' conducted by the broadcasters, in which no central record is kept of the information presented, and in which the information goes only into the files of the individual station.)

The document should be given to the major media and their editors. It should also be circulated widely in the community, to the groups that have participated in the agenda-forecasting process and to others in the policy process and who are in other ways active in the public affairs information system: neighborhood papers, discussion groups, local magazines, etc.

As the process of reporting on the community's agenda unfolds, the major media should periodically consult with those involved in the 'fore-casting' process. This would provide an opportunity for the media to assess, at least in broad outline, their public affairs coverage, and at the same time provide individuals and groups in the community an opportunity to offer constructive suggestions, early, and without the sense of 'challenge' that is involved in the quasi-legal framework of the Press Council.

Each television station in the Twin Cities area should set in motion steps that will lead to the production of a high-quality local public affairs program by the end of 1978.

The program should have these characteristics:

Be in prime time

The first thought should be for the one-hour slot in the early evening, which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) some years ago required stations to fill with local programming.

Appear weekly

Be produced by the station, either inhouse or on contract. There should be the normal effort made to attract advertisers to the time slots around the program. We hope Twin Cities area business firms would respond favorably, and thereby help support this programming.

Be a serious and high-quality production

These are elusive criteria. Yet we think both the stations and the community will understand fairly clearly what we mean. It ought not to be simply another screen full of 'talking heads'. Nor--to the extent it moves to spend significant amounts of money on film--should it be simply another way to present sex, violence and corruption. It could be journalism; it could involve access by--or interaction with--the public.

The daily newspapers should — in any major re-planning of their basic product — consider the impact that changes in coverage would have on the process of raising and resolving issues in the community.

Changes in the type or scope of coverage, as we have seen, are likely to produce changes in the process of policy-making in the community, and in the nature of what emerges from that process. So, in a real and direct sense, the community interest is involved in changes in the coverage of public affairs. In making changes, the newspapers should use this re-planning so far as possible as an occasion to improve the flow of public affairs information to the community. The newspapers should talk with persons in the policy process, to understand these changes, and the reaction they might produce. This would be in their own interest. More important: Their effort to understand the impact of their decisions on the policy process would be in the public interest.

Timing is important, since one newspaper re-planning is under way in the
summer of 1978, and another is soon to
begin. Obviously, the discussion we
envision would be fairly simple, were
the process of community agendaforecasting, which we have recommended,
already in operation. But it will not
be difficult, even so. A set of conversations with persons active in community and public life can easily be
arranged.

In the effort to improve the flow of public affairs information which passes through their pages, the news-

papers should work toward a pattern of coverage that has these characteristics:

- * It should make the citizen aware of the issues early after the problem is identified, and contribute to an understanding of them.
- * It should help the citizen participate in discussions about the problems, and what ought to be done.

Announcement of the meetings at which problems and proposals are to be discussed is particularly important, here. The 'calendars' of such meetings should be continued and, if possible, expanded.

* It should be continuous.

The newspapers should follow the rise and development of the major public issues in such a way that reports give the reader a sense of what came before, and of what the next steps are likely to be.

* It should serve in part simply to 'alert' readers to a development in an issue-area, as well as (on occasion) to explain developments in full to the readers.

For many citizens participating in public affairs, it is enough just to be told briefly what occurred: What action was taken, or what was said. They will understand its significance. It is not always necessary to take the time and space required to explain the development at length. This 'alerting' can be done with much less time and space. Much of this is done, today, for news about arts and entertainment, or about business. It should be done, too, for news about public affairs.

The libraries of the Twin Cities area should prepare an inventory of the reference resources that could strengthen the support for the system of public affairs information.

The newspapers, radio and television concentrate, as they must, on things of current interest. They cannot be expected, individually, to maintain the full system of public record, internally and at their own expense. Rather, there has to be a system for identifying and describing the historical and reference material that exists in the community for reporters and others to use in their efforts to add depth and perspective to their understanding and presentation of, or comment about, today's events.

This needs to be better organized. There should be (in effect) a guide-book to the principal places, and persons, where information about the major topics of public affairs interest is collected and available.

The system also needs to be expanded. More needs to be collected. And important gaps in the collection need to be filled.

Finally, this library/reference system should become more active in moving its services out, to its potential users.

This effort should take the following form:

- * It should be initiated by a library or library institution. Logical entities would be MELSA--the Metropolitan Library Service Agency--or the Special Libraries Association.
- * It should involve the 'special' and private libraries, as well as the general public libraries.

- * The 'guidebook' should be distributed widely, not only among editors and writers for the media, major and minor, but also among groups interested in issues and in the system of public affairs information generally.
- * It should include material available through oral interviews, as well as information in the written record.
- * A first inventory should be made available by January, 1980.

There should be a significant expansion, and upgrading, of the coverage of the institutions that make up the system of public affairs information.

What the media do is a matter of growing interest to the public--and, in the case of public affairs information, to citizens actively participating in the community's policy process. Like government and the other institutions of public affairs themselves, the news media will be improved and strengthened by well-informed and responsible outside comment and criticism.

Newspapers, radio and television stations should explain to the public more fully what they are doing, and why, and how.

This would be simply an extension of what has recently been emerging on the pages of the newspapers: the columns by the editors, for examples.

There should be more 'cross-media' coverage.

Newspapers, for example, should continue to expand their coverage of what television, radio and the magazines are doing. And vice versa. It is important that this deal with issues of greater seriousness than ratings and the comings-and-goings of personalities. The review in a newspaper of what is appearing on television, for example, should be done with the same care as a review of what a professional sports team is doing, or what a symphony orchestra is producing. And it might, at least occasionally, be written by a reporter assigned to the problem area that was the subject of the television program, rather than to the reporter on the 'television' beat.

Independent institutions should become involved in appraising the performance of the media.

The Minnesota Press Council should continue its present program, of receiving and hearing and commenting on complaints brought by citizens about what has been done by the newspapers and by the broadcasters, and possibly about what has not been done.

The University of Minnesota School of Journalism should give serious and careful study to the possibility of organizing and publishing locally a 'review' of journalism in the Twin

Cities area that would be comparable to the best journalism reviews in other major metropolitan areas. This is especially important, in view of the suspension of the Twin Cities Journalism Review, which had been this area's only effort at any kind of review.

The Metropolitan Council should continue and should expand its studies of the developing technology of communications.

The Council, as the responsible planning agency for the Twin Cities region, should strengthen its efforts to identify the needs and objectives of the community, in the expanding area of communications. It should then—if and when it finds changes in the technology that suggest significant changes in the region's system of communications—make specific recommendations for action.

The Council should report biennially to the Legislature and to the community on the prospects, and implications, for the Twin Cities area.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

What do the members of the committee see as the essential contribution your report is making to the community?

To some extent our perceptions differ.

To some, it provides a way for the community to express to the media its concerns both about what is happening in our community and the way the media are responding to these issues.

To others, the central contribution of the report is much less focused on the media: The key thing is the process of getting together people and groups in the community to share information about developments with each other.

One member of our group put it a little differently--seeing it as a bringing together of the "program planning going on in different places in the community". The program planning in government agencies, for example, with the program planning going on in private organizations; and both, with the planning of coverage and format that is going on in the media. Others felt that simply the introduction of some greater element of conscious longer-range thinking about the community's system of communications will be helpful.

Perhaps the simplest summary is to say that the committee sees its report as closing a gulf that exists between the producers and the consumers of public affairs information. When you see the media of communication playing such an important role in the community's decision-making, and call for them to do so much more, how is it that you aren't more critical of their present performance?

Mainly, because we recognize we are now setting a new test, by which the media ought to be evaluated. It would be unfair to criticize their present and past performance in relation to a standard not set for them at that time. And, in general, we would prefer to look not backward, at things which cannot now be changed, but forward to what will be done next.

We are not sure what would constitute a measure of 'performance'. There might be some objective measures: awards, for example, on the one hand; or errors and corrections, on the other. But we did not set out to measure 'quality' in the media. And we were not equipped to do so. Most of the measures would likely turn out to be subjective in any event.

Some of the committee's comments about 'economic' obstacles suggest it believes the media really cannot do more than they are doing at present. But if costs are up, so too, probably, are advertising rates. How do you really know they can't afford more?

The committee's fundamental effort was to emphasize that these are private,

commercial organizations, that the community so heavily depends on for the generation and circulation of the flow of public affairs information. It is essential, therefore, to consider their economic and financial strength, and the forces that affect it. And, here again, concern is perhaps not so much with the immediate present as with the future, and the way things are trending.

The circulation of afternoon newspapers, for example, seems to have been declining steadily in cities all across the country—with a few exceptions, such as Buffalo, New York. The revenue from advertising is not independent of the circulation. And the circulation is not independent of readership. So there is a real, if not direct, connection between what affects the economic health of a newspaper and its ability to devote space to public affairs, which we know to be low in readership.

There is also another kind of practical consideration . . . which essentially asks whether you should do something even though you can't afford it. This came through to the committee most clearly from a speech by an executive of the newspapers in Louisville, Kentucky. That morning newspaper knows that only 30 per cent of its readers read anything on the business pages. In a recent year, they used 1,850 tons of newsprint to make those business pages. Is it worth \$546,000, he asked, to print what 70 per cent of their readers say they totally ignore?

These are expensive media. The committee was told it would cost about \$250,000 a year to add just one page to the daily Minneapolis Tribune—taking together the cost of writing and the cost of producing it. A half hour of public affairs on television, with camera out of the studio and with editing, would probably begin at

something between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and could be much higher.

Can you explain a little further this notion of publication 'validating' an issue, or proposal?

It was an observation made to the committee on more than one occasion by persons who have worked with community groups, or causes, and who had come to be impressed with the credibility gained as the result of simply being covered.

Perhaps what's reflected here is not essentially different from what's reflected in the old saying to the effect that if it's in the paper, it must be so. Or from what's reflected by the politician's desire to have his campaign and his statements covered, so that—to the electorate—he comes to exist.

But more seems to be involved than just the public's awareness of a person's, or an idea's, existence. Advertising—for a candidate, or for a cause—can provide awareness. What is added, by coverage in the news pages of a newspaper, is a dimension of legitimacy, that is probably increased to the degree that the reporters and editors of that newspaper are believed to be professional journalists, writing and printing what is true and what is important.

Is 'public affairs information' only news, coming through the media?

Not at all. The committee would emphasize that it sees the 'media of communication', and especially the general community media, as only a part of the total system for the distribution of public affairs information . . . though they do happen to be the largest, and by far the most conspicuous and most-discussed.

But, in the aggregate, it is quite possible that most of the information moves in a very large number of private communications, mostly oral. People talking to people, about things they're mutually interested in.

It can be 'news' when it's reported privately and informally, as well as when it's written down or when it comes through the television screen. But there is more to it than news. Perhaps a better word is simply 'intelligence': organized, relevant information. There are some famous discussions of this question, reproduced for or reviewed with the committee. One is the chapter on "the news and the truth", in Walter Lippmann's Public Opinion. Another is John Dewey's The Public and Its Problems.

Did the committee consider, for print journalism, the kind of format that 'educational' or 'public' stations represent in broadcasting?

The committee did have considerable discussion about some publication of this sort. From its conversations with persons who do research on public interests, and public participation, it became aware of much the same picture that has emerged for the researchers studying readership for newspapers. There is a relatively small part of the total public that follows closely the details and specifics of policy debate. For a time the committee did consider urging a publication tailored for that active and 'attentive' group, within the metropolitan area or the state. thought was that it should be published by a newspaper, as a spin-off from its large information-gathering resource. Editors told the committee, however, that very little of the information that is gathered, and that would be of interest, is not

used. And the committee felt that information of interest ought to be published in the newspaper itself, and made available to the whole community, rather than in some format of much more limited circulation.

More specifically, what kind of improvements do you have in mind for the news portions of television programming?

We do think improvements are possible in the news broadcasts in terms of the service they can provide to the community's need for public affairs information. Generally, this would involve some change in emphasis from reports about disasters to reports about newsworthy developments related to problems of the community and efforts being made to solve them.

These would probably require more time to report. But in this connection we were interested to note, just in the final weeks of our committee's activity, the stories in the newspapers and elsewhere about the changes in the format of the national network news programs. These are apparently now beginning to include longer segments-some running perhaps up to ten minutes-at which each night the network does a particular story in depth, within the context of its overall news program. Despite the fact that the advice until recently has been to keep stories on television news very short, we read that this new format has been well received. What suggests itself is some counterpart, in locally produced news programs.

We were interested, too, to receive just at the end of our work the first issue of a new newsletter produced by a television station (WCCO-TV) and distributed to a list of non-media persons in the community.

Wouldn't it be an impossible job to get together all in one library or reference service all of the lists of what's available in local public affairs?

Obviously, nobody is ever going to get all of the information about local affairs together in one place. Or even a complete list of the books, reports, magazines, and so forth in which this information is contained. That's not really what we're suggesting.

What we envision is something one step further removed still: that is, a central description of the way in which this kind of material is organized. Maybe a better way to say it is a list of the <u>catalogs</u> of information that are prepared in the community.

Let's give an example. Enablers, Inc., is an organization that pulls together a variety of programs and research and information about the problems of youth in the Twin Cities area. Some time back, Enablers put together an outstanding catalog of projects and programs available in services to youth, and of important things to read. What we envision being pulled together for the central "guidebook" in local public affairs is simply a reference to—for example—the Enablers catalog . . . along with

some description of the kind of information contained in it.

Another example would be the directory prepared by Northern States Power Co. a couple of years ago to all of the environmental organizations in the State of Minnesota. Again: 'The "guidebook" would not contain the names of all those organizations; just simply a reference to the NSP directory and a brief description of what it is, and contains.

There are other, similar directories done in other areas of public affairs. For example, the League of Minnesota Cities puts out a complete listing of all municipal officials. But there are a number of areas in which this function is not so well performed. Nobody to our knowledge, for example, keeps track of all of the major studies (in-house, or consulting) that are under way—and this might be extremely valuable for newspapers or for citizen organizations to have, as a guide to issues likely to be coming into policy discussions.

So one important function of the guidebook could also be to identify and to list the gaps. And perhaps the organization responsible for the guidebook could also take some steps to encourage organizations logically in a position to do so, to fill those gaps.

BACKGROUND

Newspaper Studies of Readership

Both the metropolitan daily newspapers were good enough to share with the committee information about their recent studies of reader behavior.

On January 26, Lee Canning, former editor of the Minneapolis Star, then promotion director for the newspapers, and more recently business manager, summarized these studies as follows:

Mr. Canning emphasized that, while the studies are methodologically sound, they do not provide definitive information regarding people's interests and newspaper readership. "Basically, the studies are directional." They provide the paper with some idea of the trends in readership.

There is a large number of types of studies done for the newspapers or clients of any type. Mr. Canning discussed two: One measures people's interests and the second group measures actual readership. The "interest surveys" measure impressions...what people say they will read or what they say they are interested in. Readership surveys measure actual readership.... what people actually read.

Differences in definitions may account for different survey interpretations. A readership study by Leo Bogart suggests that the public wants more "straight news". Mr. Canning explained that for some people in the newspaper business "straight news" means stories dealing with current events...hard

news. However, in this particular study, "straight news" included stories dealing with topics like "the best food buys". In another readership study, the Harris survey found that people also wanted more "straight news", but again the term was not being used in the traditional fashion.

In 1970, 600 suburban Twin Cities residents were surveyed regarding their "interests". The result showed that people have the greatest interest in information about their own community; national news was ranked second; international news third, and news related to their school district was ranked fourth. Mr. Canning suggested that the high amount of interest in the news about the neighborhood or community might explain the relatively recent proliferation of neighborhood newspapers.

The Minneapolis Star has recently completed a survey of over 5,000 people. The survey covered 25 issues of the Star. About 5,200 different items were covered in those 25 issues, and they were all included in the readership study.

Mr. Canning stressed that there are "all kinds of ways to measure a news story". Readership is one way. Other methods include writing style, length of story, and the degree of regularity in readership for specific types of stories or subjects.

The average column inches printed on a particular topic was compared with an index of readership. The following

types of content had the highest readership indices: sex, consumer affairs, fire/disaster, people, adventure, and law/crime. The following topics had the lowest indices: government and public affairs, sports, and editorials. When the readership indices are compared with average column inches printed, it becomes clear that the newspaper's content does not always correspond to readership. For example, while sex ranked highest in terms of the readership index, there was only an average of five column inches printed on the subject. Government and public affairs, which had a readership index of less than half that for sex, had an average of about 192 column inches. The disparity was slightly greater for sports stories.

Results showed that the reader would "take as much as you can give him" on subjects that were of personal interest. This finding tends to rock the traditional view in journalism that stories should be relatively short and to the point.

Those stories with more "emotional appeal", those with a high human interest value or related to needs of the individual, seem to receive the highest readership.

There was a definite preference of the "feature writing style". In fact, the index showed that the "feature style" was preferred by almost two to one over the "straight news" style. Here, "straight news" is defined in the traditional journalist's sense.

Participants were asked to rank a series of topics according to their "importance". This ranking was compared with actual readership. A partial listing of the results is in the table below.

Subject	Subjects ranked according to "importance" as stated by participants	
Up-to-date news	1	17
Weather	2	12
Editorials	3	19
Sports	2 3 4 5	- 25
Human interest	5	6
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *		
Investigative	15	E
reports		5
Consumer items	16	2
National		
còlumnists	17	4
Advice	19	1
Profiles of in-		
teresting peop	le 23	3

-Comparing "interest" with actual readership --

"Interest" areas	Ranked in terms of stated level of interest	Rank in terms of actual readership
News about your	-	10
community	1	10
Things happening	•	11
in Minnesota	2 3 4	11
Weather	3	9
National news	. 4	17
Conservation/	5	14
environment	3	14
News of Mpls./	5	7
St. Paul Health hygiene	6 7 8 es 9	7 4 2 12
Consumer tips	, 0	2
Outdoor activitie	ac Q	12
How to make or	5 3	
do things	10	19
do carrigs		• •
••••		
Famous personali		
ties	21	1
Personal relation	ns/	-
family	14	3
Interesting peop	le 18	5
Your child's edu		
cation	15	6
Repair/decorating	q	
your home	13	8

-Daily readership	interest	 Subjects	ranked	as
follows:				

	Ranked in terms of stated daily readership interest	Rank in terms of actual dail readership
Humor	2	8
Weather	7	12
Local people in new	s 3	9
Advice column	4	ĺ
Crime	4 5 6	4
Television	6	13
Local government	7	28
Consumer affairs	8	2 6
Med./health	9	
Editorials	10	23
• • • •		
People	20	3
Family life	24	5
Education	21	10
Home/yard/car proje		ii
Business news	23	26
Pol, social communi		20

In general, the survey shows that people tend to say they want the newspaper to provide analysis and background regarding public affairs and up-to-date news. However, what they actually read is quite a bit different. Another example: They say they are not interested in consumer items, but these stories apparently get read if they are printed.

On April 27 Mr. William Cento, the managing editor of the St. Paul Dispatch, talked with the committee about their studies and their response to the findings.

The readership surveys help our decisions about what to print. The fact that much of the governmental news isn't read doesn't lead us to reduce the amount of coverage we give to these areas, but it does lead us to devote more coverage to some things readers do emphasize. We have a new "people in the news" feature. We're putting additional resources into articles about entertainment. We've just invested a lot of resources in our "living today" and Saturday features also.

I have to feel that if an issue is explained clearly in a newspaper, citizens who read about it can make sounder judgments than if there were not any explanations. I don't think we have to spend much time on the relationship between information and the governmental process: Good government depends on an informed public. We now have a two-reporter team which investigates and explains current issues. Since its creation three months ago, it's written about such subjects as the gay rights question, the power line dispute, the I-35E freeway, the awarding of construction contracts to minority contractors, and truth in restaurant menus. In the "Pro/Con" feature we've discussed hazardous waste disposal, laetrile, the stadium, parimutuel betting, and whether the Winter Carnival is a waste of time and money. We do a 12-page Voter's Guide. We list the precinct caucus locations. During the legislative sessions we print daily schedules of meetings. Even though surveys tell us readers are not reading governmental stories, we still recognize the responsibility to cover city, county, state offices and agencies without flagging one bit.

While I can't back this up with statistics, I believe most readers are general readers who go through the paper thoroughly. Relatively few readers, I think, buy a paper just for one section—TV, consumer, entertainment, etc. The Dispatch news hole is up 13% over last year, most in the special sections. Personally, I think that any additional dollars next should be spent for general news coverage, not more features.

How large is the audience especially interested in public affairs? I don't believe there is a substantial number of readers interested in day-to-day coverage of public affairs and government per se. I do believe that as issues arise an intense interest may

develop among certain groups of people affected by an issue. For example, residents along, say, I-35E might not be interested in day-to-day coverage of governmental news, but they become intensely interested in what the mayor has to say about that project.

In ten years, newspapers probably will look pretty much as they do today. I don't see facsimile distribution in that time period. Maybe beyond fifteen years we'd have some kind of TV in homes with a capability also for a hard copy print. Newspaper editorial offices probably will remain downtown. Printing will be done in satellite facilities outside the city limits, close to the paper's main circulation areas. Staffs will be larger, I hope, and contain more specialists. There will be more zoned sections. I think we'll see a swing back to harder news. The afternoon paper may be extinct, replaced by an all-day paper -- with common features, made over for breaking news. again, if reading levels continue to fall off, there may be many fewer newspapers.

The Broadcasters' Ascertainment

On April 6 the committee received an explanation from David Fruend,
Assistant Professor of Journalism at the University of Minnesota, who organizes the group portion of the ascertainment for the broadcasters in the Twin Cities area.

This process is required by the FCC as a part of its licensing procedures. The FCC sees the ascertainment as a part of its effort to get broadcasters to "operate in the public interest".

There are two parts to the ascertainment. First, each broadcaster must do a survey of public opinion. The survey provides the licensee with information about the general public's view of local problems. Second, the licensee is required to survey community leaders regarding community problems.

In the past, this was done every three years when the station's license came up for renewal. Now, the survey of community leaders is done on an ongoing basis....four times per year, twelve times during a license renewal cycle.

Mr. Fruend works with local broadcasters to organize and coordinate the survey of community leaders. This is done by the broadcasters as a group. The idea here is to save the community leader's time. Instead of talking with each broadcaster individually, they meet with the broadcasters as a group.

The FCC's regulations are quite specific. They allow the broadcasters to survey community leaders as a group. Each must interview between twenty and thirty leaders at a time or about 220 per three-year cycle.

The stations participating in the group ascertainment submit a list of leaders to Mr. Fruend. In some cases, he will augment this list with some of his own suggestions. The stations draw their lists from a list of twenty institutions or elements supplied by the FCC, as follows:

- 1. Agriculture
- 2. Business
- 3. Charities
- 4. Civic, Neighborhood and Fraternal
- 5. Consumer Services
- 6. Culture
- 7. Education
- 8. Environment
- Government (Local, County, State and Federal)
- 10. Labor
- 11. Military
- 12. Minority and Ethnic Groups
- 13. Organizations of and for the Elderly

- 14. Organizations of and for Women
- 15. Organizations of and for Youth (including Children) and Students
- 16. Professions
- 17. Public Safety, Health and Welfare
- 18. Recreation
- 19. Religion
- 20. Other

In addition, the FCC is also concerned that there be some balance in terms of ethnic, racial and sexual breakdowns. The concern is primarily that the group of community leaders be as broad as possible.

Four times a year the broadcasters will get together to listen to between 20 and 26 people on the list of community leaders. The sessions are rotated between Minneapolis and St. Paul. Each station sends two people to listen.

The stations used to be required to send somebody from their management. However, that requirement has been relaxed somewhat, and the station can send a non-management person as long as "management reviews the notes from the session".

Each speaker comes before the group and is asked to discuss "community problems, concerns, issues, and interests". The listeners may not ask any questions except those designed to clarify something a speaker has said. Questioning is limited so that the broadcasters cannot ask any "leading questions". Mr. Fruend emphasized that the FCC is quite strict on this point. They do not want any questioning except for clarification.

Community leaders tend to find the process "a little disconcerting".

Mr. Fruend observed that he thought some would prefer more of a discussion format.

The ascertainment is not designed as a critique of the media. Community leaders may only comment on the media

if they see it as a "community problem". The sessions are not designed for a critique of the media.

Community leaders are sometimes not sure what to talk about. For example, if a person from the agricultural community is asked to comment, does he speak only about problems related to agriculture? Or, can he cover a full range of problems...agriculture and non-agriculture alike.

Each broadcaster is responsible for its own interpretation and use of the ascertainment information. The group process is designed only to facilitate collecting the information. Some stations, for example WCCO, will do additional interviews on their own.

Cooperation from community leaders generally has been good. About 125 have appeared before the broadcasters so far. There have been only five "no shows" and only one person has refused to come.

The objective of the ascertainment is primarily to try to determine the public interest so a station can operate in it.

Each station fills out a report describing community problems and includes a program plan to address issues related to these problems.

While the FCC does not require that ascertainment meetings are private, the broadcasters want these meetings to be private. Mr. Fruend said that it is "not uncommon for people to ask whether or not they will be speaking for the record". The fact that they are not in public may influence their comments. The station managers do not want to make it any more difficult for people to speak freely. In addition, there is some concern that an open meeting might attract an unfriendly and unproductive audience.

Some experimentation has been done with televising the process. A live, callin format has been tried with TV.

Local broadcasters, however, do not see the ascertainment as a "public forum".

Rather, they are trying to get information for their own personal use.

Mr. Fruend said that the FCC does not have very good standards for measuring whether or not a station has acted in the public interest. "Unless there is a substantive challenge of a license, the renewal is mostly routine." Mr. Fruend also observed that the stations have to comply with the "letter of the law and not necessarily its spirit". While they may do an ascertainment of community problems, they may not do a very good job of discussing these problems in their programming.

For some, the ascertainment is more cosmetic than therapeutic. Some stations take it quite seriously, but others do not. There is nothing in FCC requirements which prohibits stations from doing more or from developing their own relationships with community leaders.

Ascertainment is different from the Press Council. The ascertainment is designed to determine community problems....to help stations decide where to focus their public affairs coverage. It is not a forum for criticism of the media's performance. At present, there is no relationship between the Press Council and the ascertainment.

The Minnesota Press Council

Also on April 6 the committee met with Cameron Blodgett, the Executive Director of the Minnesota Press Council.

The Minnesota Press Council emerged out of a series of events in the early 1970s. First, there were Vice President Agnew's attacks on the press. Second, recent national and local opinion polls have

shown low public confidence in the press. In addition, there were some bills introduced in the Legislature which would have, in a way, regulated the press. The Newspaper Guild was also thinking about starting a grievance procedure of its own. At that time, Bob Shaw of the Minnesota Newspaper Association, and Professor Ed Gerald of the University, initiated discussions for forming a Press Council. They were joined by Jim Hetland of the First National Bank of Minneapolis, and Judge C. Donald Peterson of the State Supreme Court.

The Press Council which emerged was patterned after the one in Great Britain. It is made up of an equal number of representatives from the media and the general public.

Press councils are relatively new to this country. By contrast, there has been one in Sweden since 1916, and the British Press Council was started in 1953. Their late arrival in the U.S. is largely explained by the strength of the First Amendment. This has kept the need for a press council to a minimum.

The Press Council's major function is to hear complaints regarding coverage in the media. After a complaint has been filed with the Council, the editor is informed. The complainant is urged to meet with the editor and try to resolve the complaint that way. About 13% of the Council's cases are resolved through this kind of meeting. Failing that, a written complaint is developed. Before the Council will accept the complaint, the person filing it must agree to waive his right to either legal action or action through the FCC. This waiver makes participation in the Council more attractive to the media. The written complaint is submitted to the news organizations involved, primarily to inform them that the process has moved to this stage.

The Press Council's executive committee will view the complaint. They will eliminate complaints regarding "editorial opinion" unless there is a question of fact. They will also refuse to hear complaints regarding the internal management of a paper or station.

Once the complaint is accepted, a hearing is held. These hearings tend to be informal. Testimony is taken and evidence may be introduced. Following that, the Council makes a determination. It will either "accept" or "reject" the complaint. When it accepts a complaint, the Council will usually make suggestions to the paper or station involved regarding corrective actions. When it rejects a complaint, the Council is upholding the actions taken by the media.

Council determinations are widely disseminated throughout the state. Most members will report the determination. The Press Council relies in part on peer group pressure for its success.

When the Press Council was started, it only covered the state's newspapers. About a year ago, it expanded to include broadcasters. This action was taken because the Council found that it was receiving complaints regarding broadcasters, and, in addition, the broadcasters are a major part of the state's media system.

The broadcasters have been reluctant about participating in the Press Council, partially because they were not involved at the start, and also because they feel that they are already regulated through the FCC.

Anybody may file a complaint with the Press Council. A complainant does not have to be mentioned or associated in any way with a story. Mr. Blodgett said that complaints could be filed regarding omissions. It is difficult for the Council to handle them. There is a danger of interfering with editorial decisions when it does. A complaint was filed by a group of Indians from northwestern Minnesota because they felt that matters of interest to them had not been covered, despite the fact that they represented a significant portion of the local population.

The Council's activities are limited to reviewing complaints. Its staff is limited, as is its budget. About one third of its budget comes from a matching grant from the Bremer and Northwest Area Foundations. Another one third comes from the newspaper community, and the final third from local corporations.

Mainly, the broadcasters feel they are regulated through the FCC. The Council would be an additional level. However, Mr. Blodgett thought that the Press Council was more of a "mediation group" rather than a regulator. Press Council also deals with some standards not covered by the FCC in its reviews, for example, truth and accuracy. Finally, Mr. Blodgett thought that the broadcasters would probably "do better dealing with the Press Council than with the FCC". could save them time and legal fees. They will also be working through their peers and getting feedback directly from the community.

Technology for Communications

The committee explored some developments in the technology of communications, which have implications for the system of public affairs information, in two meetings. The first was with Richard Wolff with 3M Company and with Jon Shafer, the former program director for the Communications Advisory Committee

of the Metropolitan Council. The second a week later was with Paul Tattersall of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company.

One of the products now moving into the market is facsimile. Essentially, this is a way to move "hard copy"-that is, a printed piece of paper -from one place to another, over the telephone system. Currently, technology makes this possible in something between six minutes and twenty seconds, depending on how much you want to spend. One way to think of it is as two copying machines talking to each other over the telephone. As improvements are made, the machines are getting faster. The system is not new: It was conceived over a hundred years ago. Transoceanic transmission of news pictures has been going on since 1907. But it's only been since about 1960 that it's begun moving into other businesses. In 1965 it became possible to use telephone lines. In 1969 the noise problem was substantially solved. In 1970 came the first portable machine. In 1974, automatic machines were introduced, and the first transmission of a page in less than a minute was possible.

Another way to look at it is in the growth of the business: In 1964 there were 5,000 facsimile machines in the United States. By 1974 this had grown to 102,000. It's estimated that by 1984 there will be 400,000 in operation.

Generally the machines are compatible with each other in this country at least. The transmission can be either over wires or via microwave and satellite. The automatic machines are important. Literally, it is now possible for documents to be loaded into a machine by an office staff before it leaves work at the end of the afternoon, for the machine then by itself to dial itself into as many as 90 other stations around the

country to begin sending pages throughout the night, so that a complete document is available in all those other locations when the office staff there comes to work the following morning.

Facsimile is leading into what is known as electronic mail. The U.S. Postal Service is concerned about the impact of facsimile on its first class mail business, a large part of which now consists of commercial information which senders may begin to distribute over private facsimile systems. post office is considering facsimile service as a kind of premium service-initially between New York and Washington. Mr. Tattersall told the committee that the loss of first class mail would be a major disaster for the postal system, and he thinks that this is much closer than almost anyone realizes.

Mr. Shafer told the committee that the capacity to transmit information is growing dramatically as a result of technological improvements. A typical copper wire can carry about 5,000 hertz. Coaxial cable (the kind used in cable television) can carry about 300,000,000 hertz. Fiber optics-essentially a strand of fiberglass very thin about the size of a hair-can carry about one billion hertz. addition, fiberglass weighs less than copper and is less expensive. He said he thinks that over the next 15 years the telephone companies will be increasingly installing fiber optics in place of copper wire.

While fiber optics will bring about some major changes, cable TV tech-nology has been developed and it alone is likely to cause some changes.

With cable TV, a signal is carried through wire and not through the air. The signal is put on the cable by a cable television company. Channel capacity is expanded to somewhere between 20 and 30 channels depending on the system. Each person subscribing to cable TV pays a monthly fee of between \$9 and \$10. In addition, most cable companies offer what is known as "pay cable" or "pay TV". This is special programming which comes over one of the new channels. In some cities it is metered and the customer pays a fee depending upon his use. In other places, a scrambled signal is sent, and for an additional monthly fee the customer receives an unscrambler.

All cable systems carry the local TV stations in addition to other programming. For example, in Minneapolis they would carry all of the commercial stations plus KTCA and Channel 17. They also might bring in a station from Atlanta or perhaps one from Chicago, and, on a pay cable or pay TV basis, a channel of special programming.

Cable TV has been used to bring television to rural communities for some time. In most urban areas, it is relatively new. City residents, for the most part, have not had difficulty picking up the local television signals. It is generally thought that, in order for cable to be successful in the city, it must offer subscribers more than the local television station. After all, most of them can get these stations without paying for the cable.

Since 1972, the FCC has required that all cable systems in the 100 largest metropolitan areas be equipped with two-way capacity. This means that information can flow both to the home and back to the station. With the two-way capacity, viewers can be asked, for example, to respond to public opinion polls or to answer multiple choice questions.

Cable equipment has the capacity for providing a number of channels. However, the programming for these channels (i.e., software) has never really

been developed. And, since you need programming in order to make cable sellable, the systems have not done very well in most urban areas. At present, there are only a few programming packages to buy.

Recently, cable operators have found that "entertainment is what sells". And, by adding special entertainment channels, it might be possible to support other special programs, possibly some in public affairs. Or, with all of the new channel capacity, it might be possible to devote one channel entirely to public affairs and sell it to consumers as such.

Only a small portion of the metropolitan area is "wired". Consequently, there is only a small number of people to which to market cable programs. And, there is probably not a sufficient base for marketing something as specialized as public affairs programming. On the other hand, if the entire metropolitan area were wired, you might have the base upon which to sell a public affairs channel.

The FCC requires four different kinds of access channels: government, educational, public, and leased. Once a station has 3,500 or more subscribers, it must provide the access channels. This does not mean it must provide "programming". Rather, all it must do is make the channels available for programming by these groups.

In Fridley, the cable company was doing about four hours of locally originated programming per day. However, this has been curtailed. And, the local-origination channel is limited to covering the City Council. In Bloomington, about one hour of new programming is being produced per day. This programming is produced by a non-profit agency with one full-time staff person. Most work is done by local high school students. Staff

effort has been focused on training people to use the equipment and make their own tapes.

So far, there is not enough cable in the Twin Cities to support public affairs or any other kind of special programming. For example, in Bloomington only about 10% of the homes are There just are not enough homes to make the cable useful for either a municipal newsletter or announcements by civic organizations. There really have to be more homes on the cable in order to allow the full range of possible applications. Some of the applications now being developed may bring the revenues necessary to expand the programming. For example, some channels could be made available for data transmission or video conferences. Even if ten channels were used for these purposes, there would still be plenty left over for regular television and special programming. important thing is that they might provide the base to attract additional subscribers.

Mr. Tattersall briefly described for the committee what seems to be regarded around the country as the most important demonstration now under way: that is, the one set up by Warner Communications in Columbus, Ohio. Warner is investing several million dollars to

provide viewers with about 30 channels divided among regular television, community programming, and premiums. The premium programs are metered and the viewer pays an additional fee for each program watched. Premiums include for example special movies, sporting events, cultural events, backgammon lessons, and so forth. Another important innovation is in England, where the British Broadcasting Corporation offers what is known as C-FAX. This came in about 1975. With a modification on a regular television set, a viewer can call up an array of specialized information which appears as words on the screen in the home. Initially the adaption of the set costs about \$700. It's hoped, however, that this can come down to about \$150. Importantly, this material is transmitted through a broadcast signal and does not require cable. He said, however, he thinks that with experiments like the Columbus system, interest in cable is growing and there is likely to be more and more demand for cable programming. This appears to be more attractive to newspapers than the use of facsimile machines in the home. Facsimile would have to be loaded with paper in the home, which would require a distribution system. And it would require a new system of maintenance--whereas the maintenance system for television sets already exists.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

This study was programmed by the Board of Directors of the Citizens League at its meeting on May 26, 1976.

The charge to the committee was as follows:

"This assignment will focus on the public affairs information in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. will contact many different types of groups, public and private, in the metropolitan area about their needs for information and how well they feel their needs are being met now. We will reach conclusions on the relationship between public affairs information and the need of the people in this metropolitan area to understand its problems and what to do about them. We would meet with representatives of the communications media to seek to understand their own goals and the problems they encounter in effectively reaching the public. We would also look at the changes occurring in the business and technological aspects of communications (in print and over-the-air) and the impact of these changes on the public's ability to obtain the information it needs."

The committee began work on October 27, 1977 and submitted its report to the Board on June 14, 1978. It met a total of 30 times, in meetings averaging about 2½ hours. Some committee members also talked informally over dinner before the meetings.

In its early stages the committee tried to get an understanding of the flow of information about local public affairs: about the individuals and groups trying to get out a message they believe to be important; and about the individuals and groups seeking information they believe to be important to them. For this purpose the committee talked with a number of persons working directly in public life, in governmental and in non-governmental organizations, asking them their perceptions of the movement of information and its impact on decision-making. It was in the later stages of its work, after this flow of information came to be better understood, that the committee began talking more intensively with persons in the media of communication, through which this flow of information passes.

The persons who met and talked with the committee, and responded to questions, were:

Charles Bailey, editor, Minneapolis Tribune.

Curtis Beckman, news director, WCCO-AM Radio.

Milton Bix, former councilman, City of Golden Valley.

Cameron Blodgett, executive director, Minnesota Press Council. .

Lee Canning, then promotion director,
Minneapolis Star and Tribune.

William Cento, managing editor, St. Paul Dispatch.

Karen Clark, assistant information officer, Minnesota Senate.

Senator Jack Davies, Minnesota State Senate.

- James E. Dinerstein, Senate Counsel, (Metropolitan and Urban Affairs Committee).
- Philip Duff, editor and publisher, Red Wing Republican Eagle.
- Gary Eichten, director of news and public affairs, Minnesota Public Radio.
- William Flanigan, professor,

 Department of Political Science,
 University of Minnesota.
- David Fruend, assistant professor,

 Department of Journalism,
 University of Minnesota.
- Alvin H. Goldstein, director of public affairs, KTCA Television Ron Handberg, news director, WCCO Television
- Edwina Hertzberg, former executive director, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association.
- Thomas L. Johnson, Minneapolis City Alderman.
- Sumner Jones, Antioch Minneapolis Communiversity.
- Nancy Keating, editor, Frogtown Forum.
- Mike Larson, managing editor, Red Wing Republican Eagle.
- Rob MacGregor, editor, Southside Newspaper.
- Pamela Michaelis, director of development, Minnesota Public Radio.
- <u>Jonathan Motl</u>, executive director, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG)
- Maxine Nathanson, executive director,
 Minneapolis Citizens Committee on
 Public Education.
- <u>Bruce Nawrocki</u>, mayor, City of Columbia Heights.
- Charles Neerland, assistant vice
 president, Northwest Bancorporation.
- Senator David Schaaf, Minnesota State Senate.
- Jon Shafer, former program director,
 Communications Advisory Committee,
 Metropolitan Council.
- Ted Smebakken, director, Community
 Services and Public Information
 Department, Metropolitan Council.

- Wyman L. Spano, Wyman L. Spano Public Relations, Inc.
- David Speer, Padilla and Speer, Inc.
 Jean Steiner, director of public information, Minnesota House of Representatives.
- Paul Tattersall, Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company.
- Ellen Temple, Assistant Commissioner for Government and Community Relations, Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- Phillip J. Tichenor, professor of
 Journalism and Mass Communications,
 University of Minnesota.
- John Tilton, member, Minnesota Zoological Board.
- James Toscano, vice president for resource development and public affairs, Minneapolis Art Institute.
- Peter Vanderpoel, director, State Planning Agency.
- Tom Vandervoort, information officer,
 Metropolitan Waste Control Commission.

 Dan Wascoe, reporter, Minneapolis
 Tribune.
- Richard Wolff, 3M Business Products.

 Frank Wright, managing editor,

 Minneapolis Tribune.
- Peter Wyckoff, executive director,
 Metropolitan Senior Federation.
- <u>David Ziegenhagen</u>, editor, Burnsville Current.

In addition to its formal sessions, the committee--through its members and through its staff--followed closely the developments locally and nationally within its area of interest. The articles about media performance, and developments locally affecting the newspapers and radio and television stations, magazines, neighborhood newspapers, other publications and "live" forums for discussion were all brought to the attention of the committee.

The committee was also fortunate to have at several points the assistance and comments of the Minnesota Press Council, through its executive director, Cameron Blodgett.

The committee is particularly grateful to the persons in the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press, and at the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, for sharing with it so fully and so candidly information coming out of the research studies done by and for the newspapers, about the nature of the readership in this community. That information was extremely helpful in assisting the committee toward realistic conclusions, and in understanding the kinds of changes being made, and likely to be made, in the coverage of public affairs by the newspapers.

A total of 58 persons originally signed up for the committee. Fourteen participated actively to its conclusion. They were:

John Cairns, Chairman Herbert O. Bloch Sheldon Clay Wallys W. Conhaim Tom Eggum Jerry Enders Sylvia Frisch Katherine King Claire T. Olson Linda M. Schutz Steven P. Smith Wyman L. Spano Jean Steiner Jean Ward

Staff assistance for the committee was provided by Bill Blazar, Research Associate, and in the later stages by Ted Kolderie, Executive Director. Jean Bosch arranged all the meetings and provided secretarial support.

APPENDIX

Public Affairs Programming

The tables on the following pages report the regularly scheduled programming in effect as of the time the Citizens League did a special study of public affairs television in the summer of 1976. The lists also show the non-regularly scheduled programming—in this case, for the year preceding the date of the survey (July, 1976).

It is important to note that the definition of 'public affairs' is the station's own, and is what is reported to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as programming under this heading.

Included in the lists, too, is a summary of the topics covered by one particular program, which is probably the locally produced show in which the greatest amount of station resources is invested—the "Moore on Sunday" show on Channel 4.

Fitle	Format Topic	Frequency	Broadcast Tim.
WCCO-TV CHANNEL 4	•		
REGULARLY SCHEDULED			
Carmen	Children's with community interviews	250	
Clancy-Willie	Children's with community interviews	250	
Midday	News and interviews	250	
Community Events	-	Twice daily, weekdays	10 min.
Scene At Six	News	Every day	30 min.
Scene Tonight	News, action news, consumer information	Every day	45 min.
Newsmaker	Interview	• •	30 min.
Sunday Morning	Religions, public access	52	45 min.
Jobs Now	Job openings	52	15 min.
Seene Today	News	Sat. and Sun.	30
Newsmakers	Interviews		30 min
Moore on Sunday	Interviews, mini-documentary		30 min.
Business Scene	Interview	52	15 min.
Hobby Show	Instructional	52	15 min.
Peoples Opinions	Interview	52	15 min.
This Must Be The Place	Interviews, critiques	52	30 min.
NON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED	•		
People Who Care	State Social Service employee interviews	Series of 12 re-run	15 min.
People to People	Neighborhood personalities	-	50 min. wknd.
Woodlake Nature Center/I Heard A Whisper	Land use	-	
Fort Snelling Special	Documentary	Re-run	30 min.
Minnesota Fair Coverage	• •		Various lengths
Safety Patrol on Parade	Special annual show (produced with Junior Chamber of Commerce)		`

Title	Format/Topic	Frequency	Broadcase Time
STP-TV CHANNEL 5			
REGULARLY SCHEDULED			
arm Program	Specialized information	52	15 min.
Grandpa and Jim	Children's instructional	52	10 min.
ocal News Break	Breaks local news into national news	Daily	5 min.
win Cities Today	News/interviews	Daily	60 min.
yewitness News	News	Daily	30 min. 30 min.
lymn Time	Religious	52	30 min.
eople	Interviews	52 52	30 min.
lenry Wolfe	Interviews	52 52	60 min.
Open Forum	Interviews, audience participation	32	oo mii.
ON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED			
STP Reports Stadium Question	Interview/phone-in		60 min.
Prison Problems/Reforms	Panel discussion	<u>-</u>	60 min.
Preview of Minneapolis City Election)			40.
Wildlife Marsh Wisconsin) Day in Life of Minneapolis Policeman)	Single program		60 min.
Dutch Elm Disease)			
Cigarette Smoking)	Single program		30 min.
V D Problems)	o - t o		
United Handicapped Federation			15 min.
Minneapolis Election After the Election		· • • •	15 min.
Tribute to Cecil Newman	77's T		15 min.
The Late Spring of the North	- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		30 min.
Positive Look at North Minneapolis		· ·	30 min.
Twister/How to Survive A Tornado		+ +· ··	30 min.
Police Debate	Minority community/police debate		60 min. prime tin
Teacher Strike	Interview		30 min.
KMSP - TV CHANNEL 9 REGULARLY SCHEDULED Local News Break Rewsnine	Breaks local news into national newscast News (6:00 and 10:00)	Daily 6 days a week	5 min. 30 min. each
REGULARLY SCHEDULED Local News Break	News (6:00 and 10:00) Elderly news and information Interviews News and interviews American Cancer Society Shows Minnesota's Army National Guard and how citizens perform during battle-games and life as a soldier 1. Tall ship arrives in Duluth 2. Prison profile 3. Interview with ex-convict re: mental state of inmates in prison Dramatic special tracing the 1820 journey of 12 families from Canada through Minnesota wilderness		
REGULARLY SCHEDULED Local News Break Rewsnine Renior Citizen Forum Roung Issues/Focus Rews - Views RON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED Let's Call It Quits Rinutemen Bicentennial Army Documentary Rewsnine 30 Minutes	News (6:00 and 10:00) Elderly news and information Interviews News and interviews American Cancer Society Shows Minnesota's Army National Guard and how citizens perform during battle-games and life as a soldier 1. Tall ship arrives in Duluth 2. Prison profile 3. Interview with ex-convict re: mental state of inmates in prison Dramatic special tracing the 1820 journey of 12 families from Canada through Minnesota	6 days a week 52 52 Weekdays 1 1 1 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Weekdays 52 2 weekly 52 52 52 52	30 min. each 30 min. 30 min. 60 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 40 min. 5 min. 90 min. 10 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min.
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REGULARLY SCHEDULED Local News Break Lewsnine coin Citizen Forum Loung Issues/Focus Lews - Views LON-REGULARLY SCHEDULED Let's Call It Quits Linutemen Bicentennial Army Documentary Lewsnine 30 Minutes Lewsnine 30 Minutes Lewsnine Scheduler Scheduler Legularly Scheduler Legular Scheduler Legu	News (6:00 and 10:00) Elderly news and information Interviews News and interviews American Cancer Society Shows Minnesota's Army National Guard and how citizens perform during battle-games and life as a soldier 1. Tall ship arrives in Duluth 2. Prison profile 3. Interview with ex-convict re: mental state of inmates in prison Dramatic special tracing the 1820 journey of 12 families from Canada through Minnesota wilderness News, instruction Weather News, interviews Interviews News, sound off Religious Minority program Religious, information Instructional Problem discussion Children's stories	6 days a week 52 52 Weekdays 1 1 1 Daily Daily Daily Daily Daily Weekdays 52 2 weekly 52 52 52 52	30 min. each 30 min. 30 min. 60 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 5 min. 90 min. 10 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min. 30 min.

Below appears the list of local public-affairs programming on KTCA, Channel 2, the area's public television station. These are the programs regularly scheduled as of July, 1978, and the non-regular 'specials' carried since the beginning of 1978.

A cross-section as of the summer of this year catches KTCA at a point in its transition from the public affairs programming under the former management to the programming under the new management. In plain words, the relatively short list that appears here is not fairly reflective of the station's priority for public affairs. New shows, including a weekly public affairs 'magazine', are in planning, for the season beginning in the fall of 1978.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOWS:

- 1) THE BOTTOM LINE airs every Friday at 10:30 p.m. and is rebroadcast every Saturday at 6:30 p.m. on KTCA. Analysis and interpretation of four news stories with an editorial cartoon by Craig Macintosh.
- 2) PEOPLE AND CAUSES airs every Friday night at 11:00 p.m. on KTCA public access.

PAST PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALS

- 1) MINNESOTA REMEMBERS HUBERT H. HUMPHREY aired January 14, 1978, from 7:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Studio discussion and video inserts with moderators Charles Bailey and Alvin Goldstein, with studio interviews with reporters Gerry Nelson and Betty Wilson.
- 2) HUBERT HUMPHREY COMES HOME aired January 16, 1978. Pool feed.
- 3) GOVERNOR PERPICH STATE OF THE STATE, January 24, 1978. One hour.
- 4) TAXES: MANY HAPPY RETURNS aired March 5, 3:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Step-by-step instruction of state and federal income tax forms moderated by Sheldon Gold-stein with panel of four income tax experts.
- 5) ENERGY: THE HEAT'S ON aired March 2, 1978, 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A look at supply, demand, environmental and economic consequences of the energy picture.
- 6) ENERGY HEARINGS May 11, 1978. Moderator Yusel Mgeni and expert Mike Murphy with video roll-ins of that day's energy hearings.
- 7) INFLATION: OLD RIDDLE, NEW RULES aired June 9, 1978, 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Guest, London economist Norman Macrae and panel of four experts from area with moderator Mike Murphy.
- 8) THE ROSENBERG-SOBELL CASE REVISITED aired on PBS June 19, 1978, at 8:00 p.m. CST.

5:00 a.m. 5:00

7:00

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WCCO-4 CB\$	KSTP-5 NBC	KMSP-9 ABC	WTCN-11 IND.	KTCA-2	
				Not on air	5.00
	"Farm Program," specialized				a.m
	in formation, studio guest				6.00
	"Grandpa Jim," 10 minutes		"What's New," news, community problem discussion, instructional segment		
"Carmen," children's program	children's instructional		sognizer		7:00
entertainment but community interviews					7.00
"Clancy Willie," children's					
program, communnity interviews					
	Local news break from network broadcast	Local news break from network broadcast	"Schoo! Childrens Weather" complete weather summary for children		8.00
				<u> </u>	9:00
					10.00
		j			F1:08
	"Twin Cities Today," news, interviews		"What's New?" news, discussion, special features		
"Midday," news, interviews community events, live interviews	50% community guest 50% visiting celebrities		Operation Grandparents Operation Foster Parents		12 00 NOON
 			Let Me Speak to the Manager Cooking with Hank Meadows		
			<u> </u>		1 00
		·	"Profiles by Me!, " interviews		
					2.00
		,			3.00
Community events announcement,					4`00
5 minutes					
Community events announcement 5 minutes					5 00
"Scene at Six"	"Eyewitness News"	"Newsnine"	1	ļ	6.00
"Moore on Monday" (Mondays only)					
			:	"Public Affairs Forum" (Wednesday) "Inquiry" (Thursday)	7:00
				"Changing Channels" (Wednesday)	
	•			"Prispective" (Thursday)	
					8 00
1					9.00
		9.8	"News," feature: "Sound Off" viewer letters on community problems		
"Scene Tonight," news but . Action News - problem solving	"Eyewitness News," focal, national	"Newsnine," local, national		"Propie Causes" (Wednesday) public access	19 00
Case Unsolved police Consumer Inquiry			4		
People profiles Mini-documentaries				•	
Shoestring Living					11 00
					12.00
"Newsmaker," local interview	1				12.50
of community personality					
				1	1 00

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SATURDAY REGULARLY SCHEDULED LOCALLY ORIGINATED PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMS

	WCCO-4 CBS	KSTP 5 NBC	KMSP-9 ABC	WTCN-11 IND.	KTCA-2	
7.00				"Concern," public access religious community continuity problems	Not on air	7:00
				"Yard Garden," instructional specialized information		
8:00				"Probe," discussion - state and local problems		8:00
				"Bible Story Time," children's Bible stories		
9:00				"Madagimo," public access American Indian interest		9:00
				"Harambee," public access black community input		
10:00						10.00
11:00	:		į			11.00
12:00 NOON	"Business Scene," interviews business/community					12 00 NOON
	Hobby Show, 15 minutes instructional					
1:00	"Peoples Opinions," 15 minutes community problems interviews					1 00
2:00			-			2.00
3.00						3 00
4:00						4 00
5:00						% 00
6:00	"Scene at Six," news, features	"Eyew:tness News" news, features				6.00
7:00			·			7:00
8:00						8 00
9:00						9 00
10:00	"Scene Tonight," news, features	News				10 00
			"Newsnine," news, features		,	ì
11:00						11.00
12:00						12.00
1.00			News			1 00
1.45	"This Must Be The Place" interviews, critiques, community problems, voter registration					1 45
	L	L	L	<u> </u>	 	

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SUNDAY REGULARLY SCHEDULED LOCALLY ORIGINATED PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMS

	WCCO-4 CBS	KSTP-5 NBC	KMSP-9 ABC	WTCN-11 IND.	KTCA-2	,
⁷ 00	"Sunday Morning." public access church leaders, discussion, music			' Gospel Hour," religious broadcasi	Not on air	7.00
	"Jobs Now," job openings	"Hymn: Time," religious broadcast				
8.00	matrice (toria)					
9.00						8.00
3.00		'People' interviews - local				9.00
10.00		Treopie Wiews - 100a				
11.00		"Henry Wolf," in-depth interview	"Semor Citizen Forum," interview	•		10.00
7.00		usually national figure	specialized information			
			"Young Issues," youth news	1		
			"Focus," (alternate) interviews			
12 00	'Scene Today,' news, features		in-depth interviews			
NOON	"Newsmakers," interview profiles		"News:- Views, "news, features, interviews			12:00 NOON
1 00	Trewsingkers, milerview promes					
2.00	1	1				1:00
3.00						2.00
4.00						3.00
5.00						4.00
5.00	"Saran Tabas " man da a	<u> </u>				5:00
6.00	"Scene Today," news, features	"Eyewitness News," news, features			1	
6.00			1			6:00
7.00 8.00]				7:00
9.00						8.00
10 00	"Constant "	45	1		'	9.00
10 00	"Scene Tonight," news, features	"Eyewitness News," news, features				10.00
11:00			"Newsnine," news, features	1		
11:05						11.00
		"Open Forum," local interviews, audience participation		1	:	
12.00						12.00
1.00			1	"Harambee," public access black community access		
1 00					,	1 00
		1	1			1

	Topics for the "Moore on Sunday" Show, 1977-78
1977	
1/10	Political conflict in Jamaica driving tourists away Parimutuel betting
1/17	Implications of 55 mph speed limit Wolverines jazz band
1/24	Fear of wolves in northern Minnesota, Discos
1/31	Dog sled racing What's happened to the St. Paul City Councilcharter changes
2/7	ll-year-old composer Mandatory deposit effects in Oregon
2/14	Riding freights (rerun)
2/21	Experiences of people who have died and been resuscitated
2/28	Northern Manitoba trappers festival
3/7	Deinstitutionalization of mentally retarded
3/14	Follow-up on deinstitutionalized mentally retarded Minnesota industry's response to program on Oregon mandatory deposit law Choice CutInternational Falls Kazoo Band
3/21	A week with Rudy Perpich
4/4	Look back at Piper kidnapping
4/11	How psychology is used to sell
4/25	Autistic children
5/2	"Swing to the right" in the management of Stillwater Prison
5/9	Prostitution
5/30	Annual short film and video contest
6/6	Rerun (10/25/76)
6/13	Young composer (rerun) How to handle family car in emergency driving situation

1977	
6/20	55 mph (rerun) Portrait of Charlie Bush (KSTP Radio)
6/27	Full Moon/Demo Derby (rerun)
7/4	Riding freights (rerun)
7/11	Mexican-Americans (rerun)
7/18	Psychology in sales (rerun)
7/25	Travel agents' attempt to visit Cuba (rerun)
8/1	Man sculpting statue of Crazy Horse (rerun)
8/8	Austistic children (rerun)
8/15	Experiences of people who have died and have been resuscitated
8/22	Portrait of Perpich (rerun)
8/29	Deinstitutionalization of mentally retarded (rerun)
9/5	"Swing to the right" in management of Stillwater Prison (rerun)
9/12	Prostitution (rerun) should it be decriminalized?
9/25	Problems of Vietnam Vets
10/2	Talk of another independent truckers' strikeconditions for truckers
10/9	Fundamental schools Roadside zoo
10/16	Local opinions on mandatory retirement issue Roy Masongospel preacher, ex-trucker
10/23	Twin Cities gay community
10/30	The Cashboys (rodeo) Letters
11/13	<pre>In-depth discussion of issues relating to previous program on gaýs (forum)</pre>
12/4	Teenage sexualityTwin Cities teens talk about sex
12/18	Backstage look at the defense for the alleged Piper kidnappers, ordeal of Callahan family
12/25	Pooh's Polar PassageXmas special

<u>1978</u>					
1/1	Look back at the 1970s				
1/8	Lack of programs for gifted children Portrait of Dick Guindon				
1/22	Midwifery				
1/29	Profile of the "Rainy Lake Chronicle"weekly community paper Look at the nation's top drum and bugle corps				
2/5	Governor's task force on waste and mismanagement Minnesota's Olympic speed skaters				
2/12	History of Cedar-Riverside				
2/19	Nuclear power issues in light of NSP's Eau Claire plant proposal				
2/26	Superman Syndrome/Downtown Depot Blues				
3/5	Short excerpts from footage shot but never used				
3/12	State high school basketball tournament				
3/19	Station 6, Ladder 11, Opera				
3/26	Riding the freights (rerun)				
4/2	Cultural, historical exploration of the Mississippi led by actor playing Mark Twain (entire length of Mississippi River)				
4/9	Portrait of R. Boschwitz (the person and the campaign)				
4/16	Critical look at tax cut bill passed by the 1978 Legislature Professional women's boxing				
4/23	Debate on issues surrounding St. Paul gay rights ordinance repeal ordinance				
4/30	World Literature Crusade televised money-raising eventlocal clergy disagree with tactics; growth of 'Christian' businesses locally				
	Punk rock (specifically, local concert of Lou Reed)				
5/7	Underground homes				
5/21	Critical examination of business and city efforts to clean up Hennepin Avenue, questioning propriety and value of effort.				
5/28	Examination of claim that local TV newscasts give the public what it wants, but not what it needs. Walter Cronkite and other TV figures				

THE CITIZENS LEAGUE

. . . Formed in 1952, is an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit, educational corporation dedicated to improving local government and to providing leadership in solving the complex problems of our metropolitan area.

Volunteer research committees of the CITIZENS LEAGUE develop recommendations for solutions to public problems after months of intensive work.

Over the years, the League's research reports have been among the most helpful and reliable sources of information for governmental and civic leaders, and others concerned with the problems of our area.

The League is supported by membership dues of individual members and membership contributions from businesses, foundations, and other organizations throughout the metropolitan area.

You are invited to join the League or, if already a member, invite a friend to join. An application blank is provided for your convenience on the reverse side.

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WHAT THE CITIZENS LEAGUE DOES

Study Committees

- -- 6 major studies are in progress regularly.
- -- Additional studies will begin soon.
- -- Each committee works $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours per week, normally for 6-10 months.
- -- Annually over 250 resource persons made presentations to an average of 25 members per session.
- -- A fulltime professional staff of 7 provides direct committee assistance.
- -- An average in excess of 100 persons follow committee hearings with summary minutes prepared by staff.
- -- Full reports (normally 40-75 pages) are distributed to 1,000-3,000 persons, in addition to 3,000 summaries provided through the CL NEWS.

Citizens League NEWS

- -- 6 pages; published twice monthly, except once a month in June, July, August and December; mailed to all members.
- -- Reports activities of the Citizens League, meetings, publications, studies in progress, pending appointments.
- -- Analysis, data and general background information on public affairs issues in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Public Affairs

EMBLOVED'S ADDRESS

-- Members of League study committees have been called on frequently to pursue the work further with governmental or non-governmental agencies.

Community Leadership Breakfasts

- -- Minneapolis Community Leadership Breakfasts are held each Tuesday at the Grain Exchange Cafeteria, 7:30-8:30 a.m. from September to June.
- -- St. Paul Community Leadership Breakfasts are held on alternate Thursdays at the Pilot House Restaurant in the First National Bank Bldg., 7:30-8:30 a.m.
- -- An average of 35 persons attend the 55 breakfasts each year.
- -- The breakfast programs attract good news coverage in the daily press, radio, and television.

Question-and-Answer Luncheons

- -- Feature national or local authorities, who respond to questions from a panel on key public policy issues.
- -- Each year several Q & A luncheons are held throughout the metropolitan area.

Public Affairs Directory

-- A directory is prepared following evenyear general elections, and distributed to the membership:

Information Assistance

FMPI OYFR'S ADDRESS

-- The League responds to many requests for information and provides speakers to community groups on topics studied.

Citizens League non-partisan public affairs research and education in the St. Pau Minneapolis metropolitan area. 84 S.6th St., Minneapolis, Mn.55402 (612) 338-0791

Application for Membership (C.L. Membership Contributions are tax deductible)						
Please check one: Send mail to:	☐ Individual (\$20) ☐ Family (\$30) home ☐ office					
NAME/TELEPHONE			CL Membership suggested by (If family membership, please fill in the following.)			
ADDRESS						
CITY/STATE/ZIP			SPOUSE'S NAME			
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