

## Marquis Childs

# Trials beset newspapers

The newspapers of this country—beset by drastic cost increases, disrupting new technology, and increasing public skepticism as to their credibility—are in a time of testing that is without parallel, said columnist Marquis Childs.

Addressing the University Press Club of Michigan, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author noted that in carrying out a national study of public attitudes toward press and television for the Ford Foundation he interviewed many editors and television executives.

"I found great uncertainty about the extent of credibility and commitment in their audience," he said. "This concern was sharpened as the impact of advocacy journalism—sterner criticism would call it—adversary journalism—was felt in the crisis over impeachment and the scandals of Watergate."

Childs said he had found across the country a strong reaction on two scores: the so-called "monopoly con-

trol" over the news by a handful of men in New York, and the charge of "slanted news."

WHILE THESE charges may be highly subjective, he added, they are just as pertinent today as they were 50 years ago when Walter Lippmann concerned himself with them in his book "Liberty and the News." Lippmann suggested that if publishers and authors did not face such charges, "some day Congress in a fit of temper, egged on by an outraged public opinion, will operate on the press with an axe."

"That was in the heyday of the sensational press," Childs said. "Wild headlines and wilder news stories were the order of the day. The press has long since outgrown that highly colorful phase. A vast improvement in sobriety and responsibility has taken place."

"But at the same time the critics are more knowledgeable and more sophisticated. Therefore I believe that

the danger Lippmann expressed in that distant time is nearly as great today as it was then."

This is shown by the public support given the Nixon administration's attempt to curb the press or a part of it and in a variety of other ways.

"The press must make a far greater effort to tell its own story. The theory in newspaper offices is that no one is interested in how a paper is put together, how news is selected, and presented."

"I think this is not true. I believe the public wants to know and can be interested if the inside story is properly presented. A good beginning has been made with ombudsmen or readers' advocates on some papers."

"IN ANOTHER area, too, the press has an obligation to educate the public not only in self-interest but for the general good of the nation."

"I was shocked to find in a poll taken for the project that so many, particularly among the young, failed to have any understanding of the origins of the First Amendment or its significance as a fundamental freedom. Shield laws to one side, this is basic to freedom of speech and the right to print."

"Failure to understand its importance will open the way to demagogues and demagogic laws such as that which in Florida required newspapers to afford comparable space to a public figure who had been criticized. The law was declared a violation of the First Amendment by the Supreme Court."

"If we are to keep an independent press in the last years of this century we shall have to do a great deal more than we have done thus far."

## Smith joins TIA staff

Roger Smith, former deputy director of public services for the City of Southfield, has joined the staff of the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County (TIA) as director of traffic engineering services.

Smith, 37, will direct a countywide national demonstration project funded by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning and administered by TIA.

This project, the first of its kind undertaken in the nation, will seek to measurably reduce Oakland County's traffic losses through coordinated planning and implementation of priority traffic engineering needs.

Smith said a current countywide photographing project, which will provide all communities in the county with a computerized traffic sign inventory, is the first program the traffic engineering project is expected to generate. The photographing program will be completed by the end of June.

Smith was with the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation for 11 years and the private consulting firm of Reed, Cool & Michalski before joining the Southfield engineering staff where he worked for five years.

He is a registered professional engineer and has held top leadership positions in a number of professional associations.

## MSU offers tree help

Michigan residents trimming trees damaged by the March ice storm, may find two Michigan State University Extension publications useful.

They provide guidelines about determining if a tree can be salvaged or should be removed, and if an owner is unsure a chain saw, how to operate it safely," says Howard J. Doss, MSU Extension specialist.

These bulletins, available at local county cooperative extension offices, are "Repairing Storm Damage to Shade and Ornamental Trees," F-962, and "Safe Chain Saw Operation," Agricultural Engineering Information Series, AEIS No. 367.

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Participants and Schedule of Performances:

#### SUNDAY, May 2

2:00 P.M. Birmingham Seaholm Band  
Director: Robert Kutscher

#### MONDAY, May 3

1:00 P.M. North Farmington High School Stage Band  
Director: Doug MacQueen  
7:30 P.M. Southfield Jr. High Bands  
Directors: Tom Miller and Joel Johnson

#### TUESDAY, May 4

1:00 P.M. Women's Trio from Owosso  
Polka-Dots Women's Barbershop group

7:30 P.M. South Oakland Chapter Barbershop Quartet

#### WEDNESDAY, May 5

1:00 P.M. Birmingham Seaholm High School Mixed Vocal Ensemble  
Director: Eugene Branstrom  
7:30 P.M. Farmington Musicale Chorus  
Director: Mrs. Helen Anderson

#### THURSDAY, May 6

1:00 P.M. Birmingham Musicale Scholarship Winners  
7:30 P.M. Brother Rice High School Jazz Band  
Director: Brother Morris

#### FRIDAY, May 7

1:00 P.M. Madrigal Choir from Powers Jr. High in Farmington  
Director: Mrs. Margaret Koltz  
7:30 P.M. Porpurn Quartette from Birmingham

#### SATURDAY, May 8

1:00 P.M. West Bloomfield High School Stage Band  
Director: Gary Hill  
3:00 P.M. Southfield Bicentennial Youth Chorus  
Director: Mrs. Harriet Lapine



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