

Comments for Dedication
of Time Capsule
New Municipal Building
November 11, 1976

OUR RENDEZVOUS WITH 2026

In our Armistice Day observance we have acknowledged our debt to the men who helped preserve freedom. Now we turn to another debt--the obligation we owe to future generations, especially the generation that will open on July 4, 2026, the time capsule which we dedicate today.

We have spent much of the Bicentennial observance reliving history, gaining new appreciation of the accomplishments of our forefathers, reawakening our patriotic spirit. It is time to put the lessons of the past into action, building the world of 2026. Will it be a brave, bright, happy world, or one of decline and decay? Much of the answer is up to us and our children.

In recent weeks the autumn air has been filled with leaves, footballs, not much sunshine, but plenty of promises. Some of the promises can be dismissed quickly as political rhetoric. Others must be kept if the world of 2026 is to be a better world than the world of 1976.

Our new and re-elected leaders are answerable to us, providing the people work to keep them answerable. Our leaders and you and I are answerable to the people of 2026. What will they say about the world and city we give them?

In the next 50 years, will we expand and fortify human rights or sacrifice more and more freedom to growing government bureaucracy?

In the next 50 years, will we follow a disciplined program to use our energy resources efficiently or will we squander them while the economy stagnates and declines?

In the next 50 years, will we improve the quality of air and water or allow them and the environment to continue to deteriorate?

In the next 50 years, will the free enterprise idea be allowed to operate or will it drown in a sea of regulations?

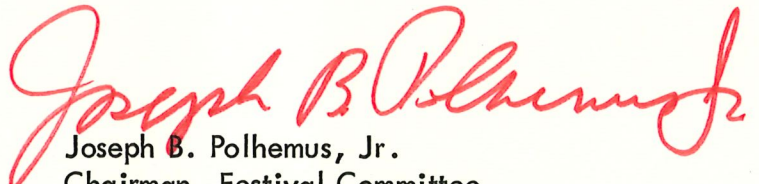
In the next 50 years, will the revival of patriotism and the reawakened national pride of the Bicentennial year flourish or give way to cynicism and disillusionment?

In his poem about the war for which Armistice Day was founded, Colonel John McCrae wrote, "if ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep, though poppies grow in Flanders Field." I hope that despite 60 turbulent, often war-torn years, that peace has finally come to Flanders Field. And that the World War I soldiers now sleep beneath the poppies. And that peace will prevail in 2026 and all the intervening years.

For better or for worse our duty to the past has been performed. Now our duty is to the future. It is in this spirit that we dedicate this half-century time capsule to be opened July 4, 2026. The plaque reads:

"To future generations, the people of Mansfield in our nation's Bicentennial Year present these symbols and records of our community life in 1976."

With this dedication let us join in a commitment, with God's help, to make our community of 2026 an even better part of the world than it is in 1976. Thank you very much.


Joseph B. Polhemus, Jr.
Chairman, Festival Committee
Mansfield Area Bicentennial Congress