



IRWA has come a long way since its inception in 1934, but throughout the decades, education has always been at its the center. The Association has constantly emphasized the importance of providing excellent right of way education to members. To learn more about our courses, visit irwaonline.org/courses.

The following piece is an edited and abridged republication of an article from the February 1967 issue of Right of Way Magazine. As 2021 draws to an end, and we begin another year in our own “era of change,” we hope you enjoy reading about where we’ve been, appreciate how far we’ve come and be inspired by where we’ll go next.

Note: The publication refers to the International Right of Way Association (IRWA) as its former name, the American Right of Way Association (AR/WA).

EDUCATION TODAY AND TOMORROW

BY JOHN B. CARPENTER, A.S.A.

Address given before Michigan Chapter 7, AR/WA Boyne Mountain Lodge, Boyne Falls, Michigan, Sep. 15, 1966

As a keynote to this paper, I would like to a story about three big league baseball umpires:

“It seems these three umpires were having dinner together after working a ball game. The discussion, of course was ‘shop talk’; and they got on to how they called balls and strikes. The first umpire said: ‘I calls them as I sees them.’ To this, the second umpire said, ‘Well, that’s fine, but I always calls them as they are.’ The third umpire came in with this comment: ‘They’re nothing until I calls them.’”



Folks, we are living in an era of change, nothing is certainty, particularly in the right of way profession.

At the recent seminar for real estate executives presented by the Graduate School of Business Administration on the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus, which was attended by six members of this Chapter, this point was brought up a number of times. Dean William Haber of the University's College of Literature, Science and the Arts called this an "era of conscious social change." This era is exemplified by:

1. Population growth and changes to urban-rural mix: we are now a nation of about 197 million persons of which nearly 3 million are moving to our already crowded urban areas annually.
2. Rapid accumulation of wealth and increasing incomes: the medium income in 1965 was \$6,900.00 and the typical college graduate wants nearly that much to start work.
3. A rise to prominence of submerged and oppressed peoples: both nationally and internationally, the United Nations has doubled in membership since 1945.
4. Extension of leisure: recreation is the most rapidly growing industry in the United States. In fact, the tourist segment in Michigan alone will add an estimated 1 billion dollars to our state's economy this year.
5. Adventures in space: Gemini 11 is down now after a record-making orbital flight.
6. A rapid increase in destructive weapons.
7. And finally, a spread of mass education.

I would like to speak on this last area of change and how it affects our Association.

A recent article in Query, the publication of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters (C.L.U.) gives some very interesting statistics:

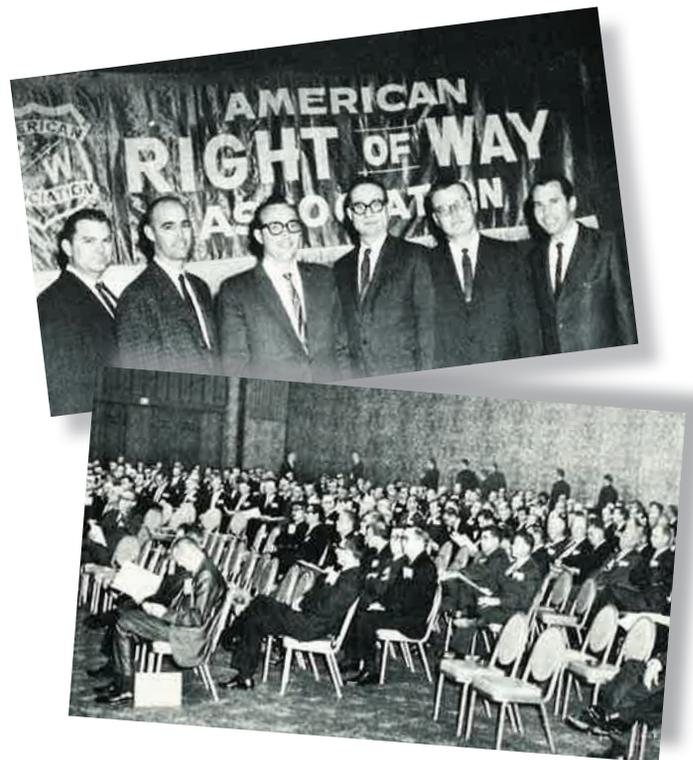
1. Currently, over 60 percent of all Americans under 35 are in some form of educational program: this group includes my six-year-old in the first grade and many of you in this room.
2. The median educational attainment in the United States, and this is somewhat surprising considering the high school dropout problem, is 12.2 years or slightly better than a high school education. This figure is up markedly from just a few short years ago.
3. Technological advances are demanding more educational preparation.

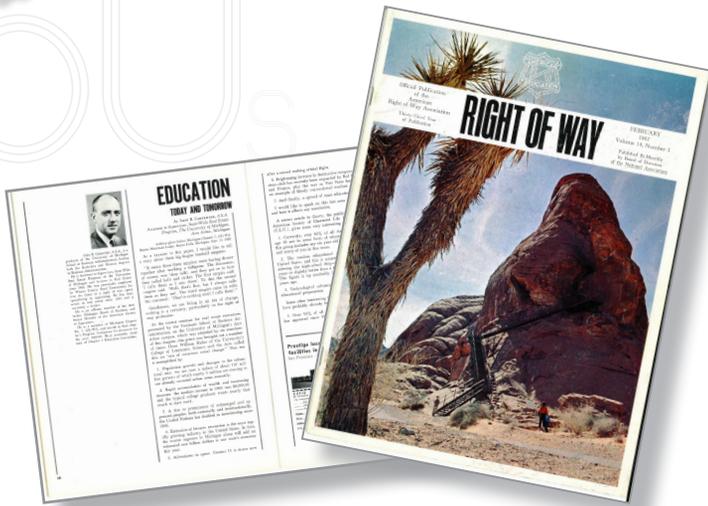
Some other interesting facts, which I'm sure you have probably already heard, are:

1. Over 50 percent of all published scientific material has appeared since 1950 or just 16 years of nearly 5,000 years since Noah navigated the Ark.
2. Over 90 percent of the scientists who lived are alive right now.

Finally, this is the real shocker, 50 percent of the expected job classifications expected in 1985 (less than 20 years from now) do not even exist today.

Getting back a little closer to today, the 1970 college enrollment picture of the United States looks like a student body over 6 million, requiring a teaching staff of better than 600,000 instructors, professors and other academic types. In the State of Michigan, we have experienced a similar boom of our college enrollment and physical plants. This fall, it looks like the "big three" (the University of Michigan, Michigan State, University and Wayne State University) will have over 100,000 students. As an index of the expansion of higher education in Michigan, let's look at the junior or community colleges: in the early 1950s, there were only three with a total student body of about 1,500, while today, there are nearly 10 times as many schools with a total enrollment of over 80,000.





Education is the big business and a continuous operation. A college degree has an extremely short effective lifespan if not kept up to date by continuing education. It has been estimated by those more learned in this field than me that a doctorate in engineering has a life of 10 years, one in physics nine years and in mathematics only six years due to the speedy advances in the “state of the art.” This is true of degrees in other fields or professions.

Using this same line of reasoning, I believe this is true for us in the right of way profession. I am sure that each of us can reflect on our present operation and find many things have changed over the past few years. Let’s just think for a moment. What are we doing today that is different from, say, the last year or five years ago? Many of the appraisal procedures I learned in the early 1950s have been modified or superseded and some even fallen into disrepute. I am sure you can recall many changes brought about by the modernization of your operation, the sophistication of property owners or by changes in local, state or federal law. How can you keep up with this era of change? If you don’t keep up, you’ll be in the dust on the roadside. This trite answer is more about education and continuing education. But how?

Most of us belong to professional organizations in our specialty: Appraisal Societies, Real Estate Boards, Bar Associations, Engineering Societies, Title Associations and the like. Each of these organizations has some form of continuing educational program for its members, as we do in the American Right of Way Association on both a national and Chapter level. As a starting point, I would suggest you take full advantage of the benefits offered by such membership.

Another means of keeping up with the “era of change” is to be well read. You could set up a program of reading everything or at least much of what is being written in the field. But I must point that the time spent reading, in many instances, can be spent in more productive labors; and I might add for those working for a fee, more lucrative work.

Our organization has already developed two very fine courses in cooperation with Dwight Stewart at Temple University. I believe these to be a starting point and the fruit of labors by our national Education Committee. The two courses fill a definite need, and I am proud to have been able to spend a very little bit of my time discussing them with Mr. Stewart.

But is this enough? You must have some personal program of continuing education, or you will be liable to be left behind. This is the reason for our Chapter’s Education Committee in the Association, and the “why” of the statewide certificate program in real estate at the University of Michigan, with which I am associated. I know you have had some contact with our program. In fact, 52 of our members have received a final certificate, including three past presidents. But what about the other 300 members of the Chapter? A quick survey of our program files indicate that less than half of the membership have ever taken one of our classes; however, nearly 40 percent or slightly over 100 have taken at least four courses. I think we, as a Chapter, can do better than this. As you know, our Chapter acts as a co-sponsor for the two courses in the statewide real estate program: Real Estate Right of Way Acquisition and Negotiation of Right of Way.

As chairman of the Chapter’s Education Committee, I would like to report on the labors of my fine committee. I have a real hard working group of people who have developed a program of education for you. The report of preliminary labors has been presented to the executive board and accepted. I would like to outline our four-part approach to continuing right of way education:

1. Continuation of our co-sponsorship of the courses offered by the University of Michigan.
2. Provide each member with a bibliography of right of way source material.
3. Include in each Chapter Newsletter a book review of a new technical or professional publication prepared by a member.
4. Institute a plan for a series of one-day educational seminars to be held around the state.

Are you doing your very best as a right of way professional? This can be your ticket to bigger and better things. It’s all up to you. 🌟



John B. Carpenter, A.S.A., is a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Business Administration, having both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in business administration. He is assistant to supervisor, statewide real estate program of the University of Michigan and lecturer in real estate since 1965. He was previously employed by Wayne County Road Commission for over six years as a right of way agent specializing in appraising. He has been active in real estate since 1952 and is currently a broker. He is a member of Michigan Chapter No. 7, AR/WA, and serves as the Chapter’s program committee co-chairman for the year 1964-65. He is presently the chairman of the Chapter 7 Education Committee.