

GREETINGS FROM US IN THE YEAR 2008 TO YOU IN 2108!

*“Today we reach forth our hands across the gulf of a hundred years to clasp your hands.”
—From a letter to the future written by the Women’s Department of the Cleveland (Ohio)
Centennial Commission and placed in a time capsule that was opened in 1996.*

With all the turning of the wheel, it has turned to us and now begins to turn to you. You are heirs to all we have.

The world we inherited is full of progress and new discoveries. Life spans are longer and less painful. Almost everyone in our life here is educated, at least to a twelfth grade level. School is free for any child, even those with special needs. Technology has eased the burdens of work. Technology has given us television, cell phones, personal computers at reasonable prices, global positioning devices, microwave cooking, wind power, solar power, air conditioning, fast commercial air travel, hurricane forecasting, laser medicine and antibiotics. In our lifetime we have sent astronauts to the moon and launched a space station. We have detection devices to monitor seismic activity and helicopters that can land just about anywhere. In Escanaba paper pulp is being converted into synthetic gas, a new form of energy. During our lifetime money has poured into science and engineering. Over sixty percent of our graduate students work in these areas. Discoveries that improve our lives are announced every day.

Our country has set the standard for safe food and medicines. As a country we grow more food than we can possibly eat and feed others in the world. Disease and epidemic monitoring provide prevention and controls. We have witnessed an explosion of information in the recent mapping of the human genome. DNA research allows us to explore the possibility of eradicating disease. The internet provides anyone with a computer instant access to information, communication, and entertainment. And our astronomers can provide us with data about our universe that a few years ago no one thought possible.

BUT . . . ALL IS NOT PERFECT

Today we bequeath to you a smaller world than the one into which we were born. Instant communications and rapid travel have made us aware of the blessings of our lives, while at the same time, we have become acutely aware that many people are living in conditions far from our ideal. Half of the world’s population lives in situations that we consider intolerable. One sixth of our

fellow human beings don't have access to clean drinking water; one fifth live on less than a dollar a day. Half of the women in the world do not have equal rights with men. The forests are shrinking; average temperatures are rising; the polar ice cap is melting, causing oceans to rise. Our environment has been threatened by over population and the production of toxic material which threatens the air we breathe and the water we drink. Detrimental foreign fish and water species have invaded our precious Great Lakes. And the entire world is threatened by the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The challenges of war, hunger, disease and environmental distress are affecting us all.

In 1908, our ancestors were challenged by many of these same things, but their concerns were centered around things local, not worldwide. In 2008 many of us are aware that we live in a world where a great gap separates the "haves" from the "have nots." We are acutely aware that "countless thousands mourn" because of disease, homelessness and war. Many people today live without freedom. There is no way for us to escape knowing this: we see all parts of the world on every evening newscast. The world we are turning over to you has many challenges, many serious problems.

BUT WE ARE FULL OF HOPE

The human spirit is strong and resilient. Just as we have made progress, we believe you will have done so too. In spirit we will be with you when you write the letter for the 2208 time capsule.

Have you harvested the ocean's power for energy and extracted drinking water? Have you found other energy sources that do no pollute and will not run out?

Do robotics do the dangerous and/or boring work that humans now do?

Is there a space station on Mars? What's new in your study of our universe? Are there commercial flights into space?

Is there clean water for everyone? Is the condition of our beautiful Michigan lakes improved? What have you found in your explorations of the oceans' depth?

How has genetic engineering improved the lives of people?

Do people have enough food to eat? Are they healthier than we were?

Have you found peaceful alternatives to war? Do all people live in peace? Do women and men live as equals? Do President Abraham Lincoln's words - "Freedom is the last best hope of Earth" – still ring true?

OUR WISHES FOR YOU

Standing by our capsule, soon to be sealed, we the people of 2008 fix our vision on you, who are standing here and reading our words. Our vision has been but a moment, but before we fade into the past, we send our earnest prayers for our country, this state, this village, and this fragile planet home we call Earth. Care for it and the people around you . . . for all people. We know that we are one community. We send our best wishes. Most importantly, we wish you peace.



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