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EDITORIAL PRELUDE

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## Looking Forward by Looking Back

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*First, reread the original editorial that was on the first page of the first issue of the journal when it came out before men landed on the moon. It is reprinted here unaltered, despite some changes since then in general standard style and use of pronouns such as “he” for all people. In it, the journal’s first editor stated a hope and a vision, though later interviews indicated that not all of the types of content described were specifically planned. And following that reprint, the current editor looks back, as well as toward the future.*

It is a pleasure to welcome you as a reader-and potential contributor-to *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*.

The primary objective of the *Journal*, as determined by the CCI executive committee, is to report consumer-focused research. Secondly, it shall serve as a forum on consumer issues, present book reviews, and perform related functions appropriate to a scholarly/professional journal dedicated to facilitating and improving the performance of consumer affairs professionals whose academic and/or professional training and current activities cover a variety of fields and disciplines. In this sense, the *Journal* recognizes as one of its prime functions that of making available the research findings of a number of disciplines which have a major thrust toward understanding the consumer, his behavior, and the implications of his economic, social, legal, and political environment.

In view of today’s inundation with the printed word, a few comments might be in order about “Why another journal?” Individual articles in this and future issues of the *Journal* might have appeared in other journals (though, admittedly, some of the journals of the traditional disciplines seem not to reflect the ground swell of activity in the consumer field), but, except for those whose journal-reading scope covers an extremely wide range, many such articles would go unnoticed by consumer specialists in other disciplines. Thus, it is hoped this *Journal* will bring a focal point for

reporting of consumer-oriented research, progress reports on action programs in consumer affairs, exchange of reasoned viewpoints on public consumer issues, book reviews, replies, news notes, and other items of interest to scholars, teachers, students, and professional activists with a major, or even minor, part of their activities in consumer affairs.

We believe this assessment of need for a journal is accurate and hope that you will contribute to the *Journal* by offering manuscripts for consideration for publication, by sending replies or notes about articles which appear, progress reports of projects, and in other ways become involved in creating as well as “consuming” future issues.

Gordon E. Bivens  
*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*  
*February 17, 1967*

Two score and a couple years ago, a new and unique journal came forth with a focus on consumer issues. It recognized that the consumers' interests were a research topic for many disciplines, but no publication seemed to present itself as dedicated to those issues. The original benefit of *JCA* was to be, at the very least, a single outlet where many different perspectives could address these important concerns. And despite the decades of journal proliferation, and though even more journals online and in libraries deal with theory or research that *might* involve the consumers' interests, *JCA* still seems unique in its dedication to research on the consumers' point of view. Many modern marketing, advertising and agriculture economics journals study market segments, but research on what interests groups of consumers is not necessarily a study of the consumers' interests.

Over time, the academic world has changed, at least for those that study the marketplace. When *JCA* put out its first issue, few colleges or universities had departments of advertising or marketing staffed with research-oriented faculty. But as these new departments were created and evolved, their initial scholars might have held doctorates in psychology, economics or sociology. When *JCA* was still in its first decade, a student at a major land grant university discovered it in the specialized stacks of what was then called the Home Economics Library, though its articles could be written by authors from several different parts of the campus. *JCA* has always been a publication that took a serious look at those business practices from the point of view of consumers. Government agencies themselves desire insight into the consumers' interests, so not surprisingly,

many of those agency employees today state that this is one of the few academic publications that they regularly read.

Today, higher education leaders decry the specializations of academic work and they profess a need for “working across disciplines” as if it is a new idea. This journal has from its inception desired to be pan-disciplinary. This broad range of expertise and interests is reflected in the backgrounds of the eight people to serve as editor and the wide variety of expertise and interests of those now serving on the editorial review board.

Over time, the nature of publishing has changed. The work of an editor has changed as well. The consumers’ interests might not have ever been a ground swell into the future after the first issue, especially during times when it was believed that consumers were best served by helping business’ interests. And yet, the need for the journal is as real today as it was in 1967.

Herbert Jack Rotfeld  
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*December 10, 2008*