

# CONNECTIONS

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2007

A Year's Review  
from the Perspective  
of Citizens

WHAT IF?

IMAGINE THIS

COULD IT BE THAT?

MAYBE THE QUESTION WE SHOULD BE ASKING IS...

Introducing the  
**READERS' FORUM**  
See page 33

# What You Need to Know about *Connections*

**W**ith this issue of *Connections*, the Kettering Foundation introduces three significant initiatives for the newsletter.

The first is a decision to change *Connections* from a biannual publication to an annual. This new schedule corresponds with Kettering's review cycle, which goes like this: each year, Kettering focuses its research through a particular point of view, or, as we say at the foundation, lens. The foundation's research has three fundamental foci: citizens, communities, and democratic institutions. This reflects Kettering's hypothesis that democracy requires the following:

- citizens who can make sound decisions about their future;
- communities of citizens acting together to address common problems;
- institutions that are legitimate in the eyes of citizens and that support a democratic society.

By publishing *Connections* once a year, it will serve as a record of the foundation's research focus over the previous 12 months. Therefore, as you'll find throughout the following pages, this issue of *Connections* reflects the foundation's research over the last year—through the lens of citizens.

The second initiative is the addition of a new section, the "Readers' Forum." As its name implies, the new section



features reactions and comments by *Connections* readers, who were invited to review drafts of many of the articles that appear in this newsletter. With the help of our colleagues Connie Crockett and Alice Diebel, we interviewed 13 people from around the country about how their experiences relate to these articles. This feedback is organized into three articles related to the

foundation's hypothesis about democracy, as noted above. The "Forum" is described in more detail on page 33.

To make the new section a true "Readers' Forum," the foundation has devised a new way for readers to react to—and even to read—*Connections*. This is the third initiative: the creation of a new discussion area on the foundation's Web site, [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org). On the Web site you'll find a new section devoted to this issue of *Connections* and comment areas where readers can participate in a forum around the ideas expressed in the articles published in this issue.

The addition of both the print and online "Readers' Forum" is an attempt to help readers better connect to *Connections*—and the Kettering Foundation. But remember: the online forum will only be as good as you our readers make it.

—Deborah Witte and Bob Mihalek

# CONNECTIONS

## CONTENTS

### 4 Politics from the Perspective of Citizens

*David Mathews*

#### Citizens and Local Politics: Transforming Community

### 7 The Paradox of Place in American Federalism

*Lara Rusch*

### 10 International Democracy

*Kenneth A. Brown*

#### Citizens and Bureaucratic Systems: Gaining Influence

### 12 Public Administrators and Citizens: Solving Community Problems Together

*Alice Diebel*

### 16 Public Agencies and Citizen Engagement: Getting Beyond the Customer-Service Model

*Phillip Lurie*

### 18 The Persistence of Power: Changing the System When the System Won't Listen

*Kenneth A. Brown*

#### Citizens and Local Boards: Opening Doors

### 19 Citizen Boards: When Local Isn't Enough

*Paloma Dallas*

### 23 Public Engagement in Five Colorado School Communities

*Alice Diebel*

#### Citizens and Collective Action: Demonstrating Results

### 25 Democracy's Challenge: Reclaiming the Public's Role

*John Doble with Janay Cody*

### 28 Deliberation and Public Action

*Elena Fagotto, Archon Fung,  
and Libby Kingseed*

### 30 Sources of Deliberation

*Edited by Libby Kingseed*

### What Others Are Saying

### 31 Who Cares About the State of Democracy ... and What Is It They Care About?

*Edith Manosevitch*

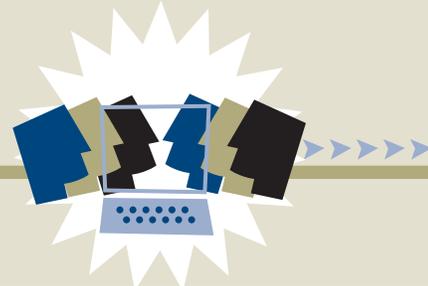
## READERS' FORUM

### 33 Readers' Forum: Your Connection *Bob Mihalek and Deborah Witte*

### 34 What Citizens Can Do ... and Can't *Deborah Witte*

### 35 Local Boards and Citizens: A Mixed Relationship *Bob Mihalek*

### 37 Putting the Public Back into Public Administration *Deborah Witte and Bob Mihalek*



### Books Worth Reading

### 40 The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule Is Giving Way to Shared Governance ... and Why Politics Will Never Be the Same

*By Matt Leighninger,  
reviewed by Harry C. Boyte*

### 41 Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi

*By John Dittmer,  
reviewed by Caitlin Bortolotto*

### 42 Profit with Honor: The New Stage of Market Capitalism

*By Daniel Yankelovich,  
reviewed by Matthew Johnson*

justice and equality in Mississippi, going as far back as the mid-1940s. Perseverance and grace are required of all grassroots organizers who desire to achieve collective action to break down the state of discrimination, violence, and hatred and to restore human decency.

— Caitlin Bortolotto

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### *Profit with Honor: The New Stage of Market Capitalism*

by Daniel Yankelovich

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006

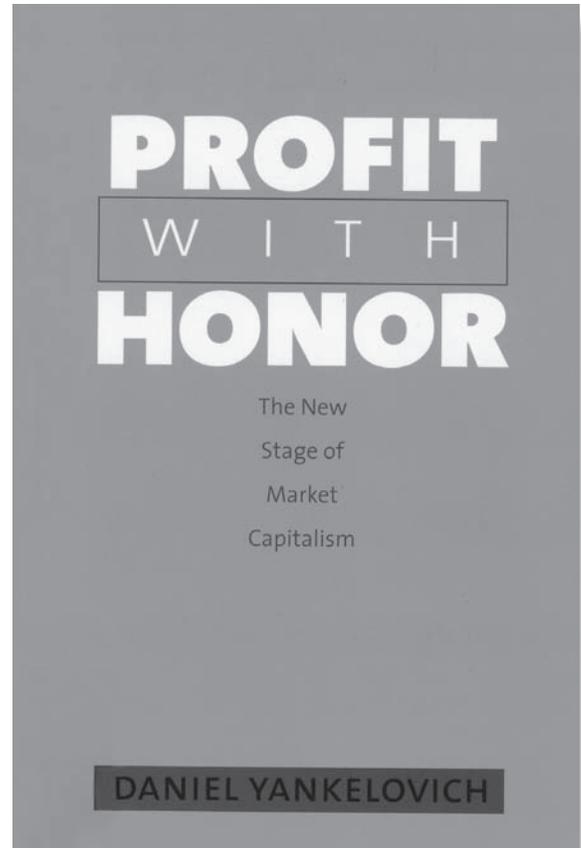
Perhaps even more troubling than recent questionable business practices and corporate scandals, says Dan Yankelovich in *Profit with Honor*, are the ways governments are trying to hold businesses accountable and rectify their wrongdoings. Increased laws and regulations seem to be the primary method, but fall very short of their noble purposes because they do not have a normative climate to support them. Yankelovich advocates for a combination of regulations and norms that mutually support each other in encouraging companies to do the right things, not the wrong ones. He offers a timely plea for the business community to turn the scandals of recent years to good use, both for business itself and for the larger society.

He contends that the main cause of recent scandals is “an extraordinary convergence of three trends, the sort of rare phenomenon that generates what people like to call ‘a perfect storm.’” (3) The three trends are deregulation, linking the richest part of CEO compensation to the vagaries of the stock market, and the steady importation of social norms from the larger culture into corporate life. The combination of these forces, Yankelovich

says, “invents a machine for scandal.” (4)

Coupled with increased corporate scandals and unethical behavior, Yankelovich points to the wider context of the American public. He contends that we have become “absorbed in, and distracted by, a struggle to rediscover our own ethical bearings.” (16) In essence, Americans want firmer ethical ground on which to stand, but are not exactly sure how to obtain it. They know something is terribly wrong, but do not have a clear sense of what it is, much less how to fix it. Most Americans, Yankelovich says, believe businesses should play a pivotal role in restoring ethical behavior. He contends that Americans now expect a higher standard from businesses: Americans want car manufacturers to lessen our nation’s energy dependence, BP and Shell to research alternative fuels, and Citigroup and other financial institutions to address the capital needs of developing nations.

He also posits seven deadly norms that are causing ethical confusion in America, especially in the business community: equating wrongdoing exclusively with illegality; winning at any cost; gaming the system as good sport; viewing “conflict of interest” as insignificant; regarding CEOs as royalty; twisting the concept of shareholder value; and equating free-market economies with deregulation. In isolation, each of these deadly norms is destructive to society, but, as Yankelovich asserts, their combined effect is the most destructive, as they are undermining traditional American adherence to the principle of enlightened self-interest, or more commonly stated, that one can do well by doing good.



Having significant experience in both the social sciences and business, Yankelovich does a great service to frame and analyze the growing problem of corporate wrongdoing that appeals to a broad readership. He goes beyond framing the issue and offers recommendations for businesses to become more ethical. Yankelovich introduces “stewardship ethics” to convey the commitment to care for one’s institution and those it serves in a manner that responds to a higher level of expectations. Furthermore, stewardship ethics is an idea that reconciles long-term profitability with the greater public good, concepts that some may see as mutually exclusive. This vision is surely needed, as sweeping change is already happening in the business world, and people have higher expectations of how businesses should operate.

— Matthew Johnson

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The Kettering Foundation, chartered in 1927, is a research foundation rooted in the American tradition of inventive research. Its founder, Charles F. Kettering, holder of more than 200 patents, is best known for his invention of the automobile self-starter. He was interested, above all, in seeking practical answers to "the problems behind the problems."

The foundation today continues in that tradition. The objective of the research now is to study what helps democracy work as it should. Seven major Kettering programs are designed to shed light on what is required to strengthen public life.

Kettering is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research organization supported by an endowment. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's Web site at [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org).

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