

M E M O R A N D U M

February 17, 1993

To: Pam Johnson

From: Howard Finberg *HIF*

Subject: The Saturday Republic

Pam, starting with a conversation with John Oppedahl and using the latest Republic readership results, I've been doing a great deal of thinking about the Saturday paper.

Saturday provides The Republic with a unique opportunity and challenge. For too long, many newspapers, including this one, have looked at Saturday as an extension of the weekday (Monday through Friday). While our readers (myself included) see Saturday more as an prelude to Sunday. Reading habits, as we've discovered, are different on Saturday; that figures, as our lives generally are different. One in four readers say they spend more time reading or looking at the Saturday paper than they do a typical weekday edition. And these readers tend to have children under 18 living at home and live in households with two or more people are employed.

Understanding and responding to that difference is the opportunity and challenge facing the paper. We need to look at ways of strengthening our relationship with our Saturday readers (both the 7-day a week reader and the Weekender buyer). I'm not suggesting that we abandon traditional journalism on Saturday (any more than we abandon such journalism on Sunday). Rather, I feel that we need to find ways to provide "added value" to those readers.

As we've talked, the managers and staff at The Republic have been "meeting to the maximum." However, with the results of the readership survey fresh in our minds and given the long process necessary to develop a paper-wide action plan, I think we should start on part of this project. Attached is a timetable that puts us in a position to offer a new kind of Saturday newspaper by October or November.

One of the keys to the success of this project involves the right mix of "thinkers" and "doers." Here are my candidates for invitations to work on the Saturday Project (in no particular order):

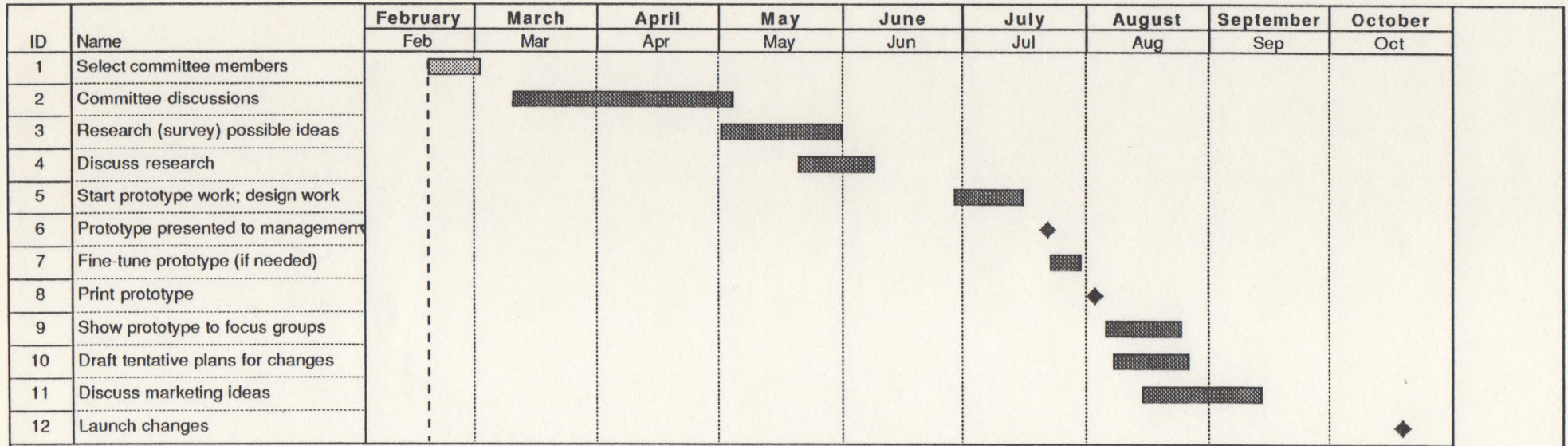
- * Phil Hennessy (an editor who has successfully worked on unconventional projects in the past)
- * Susan Love (doesn't know enough about how city desk works to say it "can't be done")
- * Bill Hill (sports is a key element)
- * Amy Carlile (she want to work on this and has some excellent thoughts)
- * Vinton Supplee (important that the copy desk is involved and his input will be vital)
- * Judy Nichols (a reporter who knows more than most about how newspaper is put together)
- * Diana Shantic (design needs to play a role in the process)

We could add others if necessary, but I would like to keep the group small enough so that it can be effective. As I wrote in a previous Projects Memo, some of the areas we could look at involve:

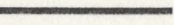
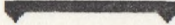
- * Saturday centerpiece, much like Sunday
- * A week in review feature
- * Color color comics (and some additional once-a-week comics)
- * A feature for parents and kids to share and read together
- * Stronger packages for things to do around the house (gardening and home repair)
- * Stronger auto and auto repair features (not necessarily locally produced)
- * Personal finance (banks are open because people do money stuff when they have time; also see Saturday New York Times. They recently started a page and one-half package on this subject.)
- * Health or fitness feature(s); again, this generally is the time when readers think about this subject.

I'm sure that the committee will develop even more topic areas that could greatly secure our hold on Saturday readers and provide ways of increasing their loyalty to The Republic.

HIF:td



Project:
Date: 2/17/93

Critical  Progress  Summary 
 Noncritical  Milestone 