

ON TELEVISION

On Television, Ltd.

388 Broadway, Studio 4

New York, New York

10013 U.S.A.

(212) 925-5289

Mary Megee

Executive Director

November 12, 1992

Kathleen Hall Jamieson

Dean

The Annenberg School for Communication

University of Pennsylvania

3620 Walnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104-6220

Dear Dean Jamieson:

Congratulations on the outstanding critical commentary you provided about the media's role in the election process, week after week with Bill Moyers on LISTENING TO AMERICA. Through the programs and the new book, you have guided many viewers to look more critically at political campaigns and ads, and they seem to have voted more intelligently this time as a result!

As you advised, following up on our earlier conversation now that the election is over, I'm seeking your assistance with a new proposal. ON TELEVISION: THE MEDIA LITERACY MOVEMENT is planned as a videoconference for education professionals. The enclosed draft summarizes the aims, approach, themes, and anticipated participation. In brief, we would gather on videotape varied perspectives on how to teach critical viewing, and would edit the findings into short presentations within a three-hour, live, interactive program bringing together leading media educators with teachers at satellite-receiving sites across the country.

Having taken the liberty of writing you in (page three) as our preferred host welcoming participants and introducing conference goals, I would appreciate your consideration of this invitation to host the videoconference and to have it originate at the Annenberg School for Communication. Secondly, I would ask that you evaluate the proposal for submission to the Annenberg Foundation for possible support. Please let me know any recommendations you may have on the proposal.

We also are producing an hour-long PBS documentary--called ON TELEVISION: THE MEDIA LITERACY MOVEMENT--which would include a substantial amount of footage from the videoconference. Both the conference and the documentary have the potential to significantly extend teacher awareness and public understanding of ways to harness the power of TV for education. Connections by the Education Satellite Network and the Network for Instructional TV, in addition to national outreach by PBS, bode well for broad-based participation.

Last week at a symposium at the Quebec Institute for Research on Culture, I had a chance to discuss the proposed videoconference briefly with George Gerbner and asked if he would give a talk on "The Message behind the Message." I was pleased at his interest. Roselle Kovitz of the Public Television Outreach Alliance (PTOA) said she feels the time is right for this videoconference and the documentary on

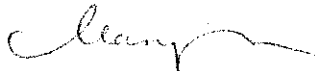
Page two, M. Megee to K. H. Jamieson

media literacy, particularly since PTOA and PBS have named "critical viewing" as an educational priority this coming year. Nancy Hoene, Instructional TV Director for WDSE-Duluth, and Mariele Rowe of the National Telemedia Council also told me they are enthusiastic.

Before closing, I want to express my appreciation for your efforts to help secure finishing funds for ON TELEVISION: TEACH THE CHILDREN and am sending along a cassette of the program. Scholars, teachers, and parents from around the country continue to call, asking for the tape and study guide for use in college classes and school workshops. Excerpts from letters, including notes from Erik Barnouw and Henry Geller, are included here.

I look forward to discussing all of this with you. Who knows; maybe we can interest a member of that bright new team coming soon to Washington to help lead the movement.

Best wishes,



Mary Megee

Enclosures

ON TELEVISION

On Television, Ltd.

388 Broadway, Studio 4
New York, New York
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November 20, 1992

Mary Megee
Executive Director

George Gerbner
Dean Emeritus
The Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania
3620 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6220

Dear George:

Just a fast note to say it was great to see you in Montreal. I'm inspired, and looking to move ahead on all the work we talked about.

Am enclosing a copy of the videoconference proposal just sent to Dean Jamieson. Although the videoconference and a documentary are highlighted in this material, I am eager to produce a separate, special program with you as well, such as **THE MESSAGE BEHIND THE MESSAGE**. Recent talks by phone with Roselle Kovitz, Nancy Hoene, and Marieli Rowe reveal lots of enthusiasm for each of these projects.

Also, I've been continuing to talk with Susan Martinson, who wants to work with you and with me. Susan has that wonderful energy and initiative, plus the talent and skills we want to apply. Her logo design for the new **cultural environment movement** material matches the spirit and the tone of the writing.

I would like to see Susan representing On Television, observing and documenting your Spring classes, as the tapes would be integral to all three "products" that can be made, pending the support. As you know, she's got to have a salary; but I can't predict how quickly On Television will bring in enough funds for that. Let's talk as soon as possible about funding strategies.

Our Rutgers U. association should be decided within the next few weeks, and a number of other big proposals are pending here. It would seem that, with three well-received programs delivered to PBS, the time for this TV-about-TV effort should be at hand.... *


I was glad to hear about your other new exploits, including the cable TV study. Keep me in the loop on all the fast-breaking news.

All best,



Mary Megee

* P.S. Could you please write me a paragraph about the On Tel program(s)?

Thanks!


ON TELEVISION

On Television, Ltd.

388 Broadway, Studio 4
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Mary Megee
Executive Director

December 1, 1992

Ms. Diedra Lyngard
The Pew Charitable Trusts
One Commerce Square
2005 Market Street, Suite 1700
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Dear Ms. Lyngard:

It was a pleasure to talk with you today and to hear about the important meeting you organized in October on the role of the philanthropic community in addressing communications issues. I appreciated your comments on the group's rapt attention to Dr. George Gerbner's presentation. Dr. Gerbner continues to be an inspiring commentator within the On Television programs-- as well as a key advisor to the project and a mentor to me.


In view of the leadership that the Pew Charitable Trusts are taking in assessing the impact of the modern information environment, I look forward to an opportunity to get together with you and your colleagues. I am eager to follow up on the public interest concerns addressed in our third installment, ON TELEVISION: TEACH THE CHILDREN--in particular, how can the power of TV be harnessed to support the nation's educational goals?

At this writing, in association with WQED-Pittsburgh, we are seeking funds to proceed with the next four prime-time On Television reports. The series is a nationally broadcast examination of the cultural, political, and economic functions of TV in society. Of course, the outlet for these reports is PBS, since commercial TV does not tend to self-report. We also are seeking funds to develop a national videoconference on the Media Literacy Movement.

Promoting the teaching of "critical viewing" as well as critical thinking at every level of schooling, the On Television video reports and study guides are intended as policy-oriented analyses of communications findings, undergirding a core media literacy curriculum for teachers. We will be joining with Rutgers University to continue our study and to prepare accessible materials with which teachers, and parents, may help young people develop skills necessary for responsible citizenship and gain more value from their TV experiences.

I am enclosing a package describing themes and issues, the three tapes, and notes from Henry Geller and Erik Barnouw--very energizing, as we come around the bend on this. Thank you so much for the initial interest you expressed in this work. I look forward to continuing our discussion.

Best wishes,



Mary Megee

Dear
George -

His meeting here
Cand in Phila, (I'm
sure). Hoping you've
well. Will call
before June 21.

All best,
Mary

ON TELEVISION

On Television, Ltd.

May 18, 1994

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LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE ON TELEVISION ADVISORY BOARD

Dear Colleagues:

Greetings after too long a time. I'm writing to let you know of significant developments for the On Television project, some related to the recent Capitol Hill focus on television awareness.

First, we're pleased to announce an association between On Television, Ltd., and Rutgers University in establishing the Media Education Laboratory at the Newark campus. An invitation follows shortly for our press conference, Tuesday, June 21st, which will officially open the Laboratory. In addition to developing the On Television project (ten new programs, a national video-conference and documentary on media literacy, and a media education "sourcebook" for teachers), the Laboratory is implementing an undergraduate academic television curriculum which similarly emphasizes the social, political, economic, and cultural impacts of TV. (See description, enclosed.)

Since September, 1993, I've been a member of the faculty at Rutgers and director of the Media Education Laboratory. On Television producers John Boyer and Jeff Thaler also are teaching at the University and are, respectively, Assistant Director and Curriculum Coordinator of the Laboratory. The collaboration entails opportunities for testing the programs and other materials within the culturally diverse Newark community.

Broadcast Distribution: ON TELEVISION: TEACH THE CHILDREN, examining the role of television as an educational force, premiered on more than 300 PBS stations across the nation in September, 1992. PBS officials lauded this program's contribution to the Back to School Week prime-time schedule and expressed their interest in airing future programs in the series. The program and the related study guide were well received, and have since been used extensively in all manner of educational settings.

Videocassette Distribution: The strong response by the education community prompted California Newsreel to distribute TEACH THE CHILDREN and the two previous On Television programs as a package for universities, libraries, schools, and community groups. (The newsreel flier is enclosed.) The program and study guide are being used by these organizations to introduce critical viewing skills and to examine the commercial "curriculum" of TV. The National PTA, for instance, recommended these materials to all 29,000 chapters for local workshops. Newsreel principals have expressed their interest in acquiring rights to any new On Television programs. Unlike most other distributors, Newsreel pays advances against future royalties; these funds are applied to program production.

Outreach: Over the past year or so, I have presented excerpts from the programs and addressed a wide range of media issues in U.S. and Canadian

forums, among these the Quebec Institute on Research and Culture, the Children's Television Alliance of Canada, the Annenberg School for Communication Conferences on Critical Viewing, the Association of Professors of Film and Video, the New York State PTA, the Shelter Island School District, New York University, and Brooklyn College's ALL ABOUT TV (WNET/13).

Congressional hearings and public concern about TV violence as a national health issue have generated striking interest in our media education effort. In Washington last summer, John Boyer and I met with Education Secretary Richard Riley to invite his participation in the video-conference. We also met key staff members working with Senators Paul Simon, Ernest Hollings, and Edward Kennedy; Representatives Edward Markey and Charles Schumer; and officials at PBS, CPB and the NEA. To all of them, we presented the On Television project as a practical step toward media literacy that would help counter the effects of TV violence and encourage the use of TV to support the nation's education goals.

Project Support: Gail McClure, Ph.D., a specialist in technology and education who is Vice President for Communications at the Kellogg Foundation, recently gained approval for a significant grant toward our media literacy video-conference. She also offered her assistance in enlisting several other partners to join Kellogg and Rutgers in providing support for the full On Television project. Also, we just learned that the Aaron Diamond Foundation will award a grant at the end of May toward another facet of the project.

The Rutgers Development Office is sending out a joint proposal to the Freedom Forum, and will be following up on a number of other interested agencies. In addition, the University is providing public relations assistance, studio and remote production facilities, office space, technical and administrative services, the full-time salary of the Laboratory Director, and half-time salaries of the Assistant Director and Curriculum Coordinator.

Meanwhile, with student involvement, work is preceding on pre-production research, select reels, etc., for the next four programs in the series:

ON TELEVISION: WHAT'S THE NEWS
ON TELEVISION: THE TV GENERATION
ON TELEVISION: THE ELECTRONIC FAMILY
ON TELEVISION: HEALTH AND HAZARD

I appreciate your generous help over the years, and invite your continuing counsel. This coming Fall, I'm hoping to have rough-cut segments and plans for the video-conference to review in an advisory meeting. But first, the press conference; details coming soon.

Best wishes,


Mary Megee