

Kathryn J. Garza

5 Morgan Lane ~ Wallingford, PA 19086 ~ US.

Phone/FAX (610) 565-4289

MEMO TO: Dr. George Gerbner**DATE:** March 23, 2002**RE:** CEM Conference

Just a few notes/comments/suggestions/questions for now, since I've not yet been able to do much research on subject area.

Cursory review of CEM Monitor and notes you gave me, plus my own recollection of our conversation lead me to suggest that 2nd/3rd Conference be staged as a culmination of school-year-long series of discussions and activities in which students in any country and at any level could participate...what better way to get grass roots involvement than through schools?

I would (tentatively) **target World Conference (WC) date for late June/early July 2003** in order to (barely) give us time to plan themes and projects, reach teachers, distribute materials (thank God for internet downloading!) and involve both students and communications professionals (including academics) in serious discussions prior to WC. By scheduling end June we should be able to get teachers after school year ends, but avoid hot weather mid-July to mid-August.

As to widespread participation, how about something along lines of a science or history fair, but called "media fair," or along lines of spelling bee & culminating in "model UN" scenarios. Actually, the more important part of the year would be discussion in each classroom of the various (8-10) topics supplied at 3-4-week intervals via Internet. Once students at every grade level (i.e. primary, secondary, college) have explored various aspects of each topic (in manner and depth appropriate to grade level), they could then decide which idea most appealed to them for either a "media fair" display project (probably best for younger kids) or an interactive debate contest. The "winners" of local "contests" could then proceed to state and national contests, with national teams participating directly in World Conference and ultimately interacting with counterpart panelists involved at professional level at WC. If we can pull this off, I can't think of better way to involve youths, teachers, media and "brethren", raising awareness, participation and interest in issues. **And if we can involve local media professionals as judges we will have natural inside track to media coverage. Who knows, they might even become committed to change!**

Another nice thing about such an approach is that the participants would naturally want to report back to their classrooms/schools/towns about what happened at next higher level, and there would be great interest in reports of what occurs at WC, as well as natural starting point for further discussions the following school year. Then all we have to do is schedule another WC in the next year (bi-annually), to start process again. We could even have one of the topics require involvement of the "over 50" crowd so that growing segment of the population is actively participating in the process.

I also feel that CEM would be more successful if it had an easier-to-pronounce-and-remember name. Not ready to make suggestions just yet, principally because I don't know what orgs are already "out there." However, I do feel there has to be an acronym with greater "crowd" appeal. And that appeal is what you need now.

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March 23, 2002

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In order to accomplish the above, we would probably have to meet the following (approx.) deadlines:

- **Outline of planned schedule ready by May 2002**—narrowing down topics, themes, approaches, placement of announcements and ads to teachers, etc.
- **"Firmed" Schedule by June 2002** to provide lead time for advertising in educational magazines so teachers have time to sign up for discussion series for coming school-year (Fall 2002 through Spring 2003)
- Have **initiation kit ready by July 2002**, to be made available via internet or mail order. Only "initiation kit" needs to be available before September 2002. The remaining material—consisting chiefly of discussion topics/alternative topics(?) can be released each 3-4 weeks over internet.
- **Does CEM have Website?** I may be able to help get one up quickly and relatively cheaply. Good idea to have one anyway. Essential if we hope to go this route to getting grass-root involvement.
- Suggest we encourage discussion of each "primary" topic, with submission of summaries of each topic each 3-4 weeks, and review of submissions quarterly in CEM internet journal.
- Publication of "best" submissions on all levels on net.
- Model "professional" discussions at WC on topics covered by students (plus more?), so that **grass root participants** (mostly students/educators) **see their input considered at highest level**. Would add much validity to grass root "ownership" of concepts.

Personally, I feel we should stick to three or four major topic areas each conference, with 8-12 subset topics falling under major topics. It seems to me that most of the topics mentioned in your exchanges actually fall into above divisions, which I see as:

- **Censorship: by governments, societies/religions, or bottom-line business considerations**
- **Media & Education: are we producing good (well-informed) citizens or robotic consumers?**
- **Cultural Diversity: how can we protect ourselves against the great UniCulture of US media?**

To these categories I would add another in order to get funding (and to examine a real issue):

- **Media and the War Against Terrorism—The sleeping time-bomb encased in our exports of violence and "good life" images by entertainment media.** Are we aiding the creation of distrust, envy, terrorism with contents of our media exports? Is it coming home to roost with terrorist hatred of our apparent image? How can we effectively demonstrate that our real world is better than our media image?

Perhaps Homeland Defense and/or NIH, *et al* would be interested in finding out just how our exported image is affecting our foreign relations, and what could be done about it. First, **what is our image abroad** (especially in unstable countries breeding terrorists)? Second, if action is taken against us because said image invites "correction" and/or "destruction" of our supposed decadence, what can we do to: (1) contain the damage; (2) minimize the effect of our exported images; (3) supplant damaging images with more positive/realistic images? What is the responsibility of the media exporters who make the \$\$ from the images sold?

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MEMO TO: Dr. George Gerbner

DATE: March 27, 2002

RE: CEM Conference/2

Been thinking about name changes...if we could just christen the project with a separate, catchy acronym (like **Project HOPE** from a bygone era), we would actually be ahead of the game: we would have CEM continue as the umbrella organization, but be seen—correctly—as sponsoring the grass roots project. Still haven't thought of that great name. But give us all a bit of time and we'll find one with lots of crowd appeal.

Looking forward to meeting with you next week. It might be a good idea to have those lists of organizations not mentioned in CEM Monitor which are supportive of the movement, together with most likely sources for grants, etc. In the meantime, I promise to begin seriously trying to get hold of some talk-show hosts to promote your work.

My regards to Mrs. Gerbner.

Kathryn

From Stop-Fish
Project Medic (PM)
MRP Medic reform project
Medic cleanup
vs. Demos (MMD)

Flour moon - we

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5 Morgan Lane ~ Wallingford, PA 19086 ~ USA

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MEMO TO: Dr. George Gerbner**DATE:** April 17, 2002**RE:** CEM Conference/3

Dear George--

A draft of announcement follows. Have alternatives listed following draft with labels corresponding to labels/numbers on draft. Problem is, I really don't know what you and colleagues want as topics, etc., nor final dates. But this gives us ground to start process.

I can do a more "elegant" layout for replication if you need a single-sheet mailer. Soon as we determine details.

It would be a good idea for us to talk in a bit more detail as to what you see as my role in this endeavor. Right now I feel a little lost.

Regards--

Kathryn

Announcing 2003 Cultural Environment Movement Convention**_____ - , 2003 at Laval University(?), Quebec, CANADA**

The Quebec Convention will feature both specific topics, discussion of the progress of the Democratic Media Legal Project, and summary presentations of highlights in CEM's new Media Awareness Project (MAP), which will be inaugurated in June 2002 to stimulate grass root participation in CEM.

The general theme of the 2003 Convention will be an examination of the Impact of Bottom Line Mentality on Media and Society: Media Content, Children, Culture, Free Speech and Politics in Our Mediated World.

In addition to discussion of CEM's accomplishments to date and the Democratic Media Legal Project (DMLP), the convention will focus on initiatives developed by the many groups participating in the Media Awareness Project (MAP).

A variety of groups—ranging from grade schools to colleges, unions, civic groups and special interest groups (like AARP or AMA)—will be featured and awards announced in a preliminary conference, and MAP attendees will be invited to attend the CEM Convention as guests.

610 565 4289

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As in the past, workshops and panel discussions are planned. The general themes are:

1. Building a new coalition involving media councils in the U.S. and abroad and fostering exchanges in our commitment to broaden freedom and diversity in communications access, production and ownership.
2. Opposing censorship resulting from concentration of media ownership.
3. Sharing stories of countries success in opening media to democratic process and cultural diversity.
4. Supporting individuals and organizations working for more creative programming.
5. Promoting media literacy and awareness efforts to increase citizen education.
6. Working towards a realistic democratic agenda in national cultural policy issues.
7. Examining relationship of Media and Terrorism: do distorted views of American life portrayed in exported media products work to increase alienation from US and other exporting countries?

A Call for Proposals for Panels and Theme Sessions will be issues shortly. Please check our web site for updates.

CEM will be opening an interactive web site later this year to facilitate involvement of more people interested in exchanging ideas and sharing approaches that work. Our MAP questions and guidelines will be published from this website: mediaawareness.org [.com; .net].

Or: Project Media Awareness Program = Project MAP

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MEMO TO: Dr. George Gerbner**DATE:** April 18, 2002**RE:** CEM Conference/3

Dear George--

I recalled a very important topic for Quebec Convention as I fell asleep last night: "*The Quebec Experience* in limiting program content and advertising to children." I've inserted it as topic #8, although the order of any of the topics is irrelevant to me...but possibly important to Jacques Brodeur, *et al.*

I was trying to approach issues in terms of action to be developed, rather than mere discussion of ideas. All in neutral terms so no one is turned off before we make our points. As is often said, "Honey catches more flies than vinegar." (Not that we're interested in flies, but...)

Slightly revised draft of topics follows. Let me know if I'm way off base. Kathryn

As in the past, workshops and panel discussions are planned. The general themes are:

1. Building a new coalition involving media councils in the U.S. and abroad and fostering exchanges in our commitment to broaden freedom and diversity in communications access, production and ownership.
2. Opposing censorship resulting from concentration of media ownership.
3. Sharing stories of success in opening media to democratic process and cultural diversity.
4. Supporting individuals and organizations working for more creative programming.
5. Promoting media literacy and awareness efforts to increase citizen education.
6. Working towards a realistic democratic agenda in national cultural policy issues.
7. Examining relationship of *Media and Terrorism*: do distorted views of American life portrayed in exported media products increase alienation from US and other exporting countries?
8. *The Quebec Experience* in limiting program content and advertising to children

*Or: Project Media Awareness Program = Project MAP