Editor:

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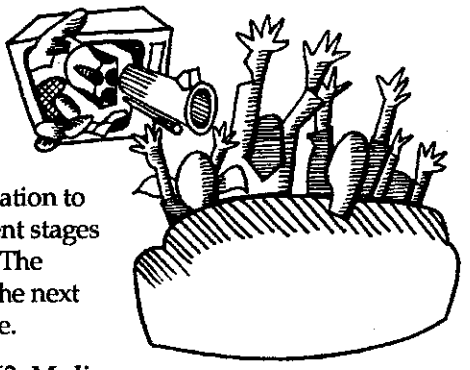
From the screen to the street... violence is *murdering* our culture.



How can we lessen the impact and incidence of violence in our world and in the media?

Beyond Blame: Violence in the Media, a comprehensive learning program linking media literacy education to violence prevention, is in development stages at the Center for Media and Values. The cornerstone for this major project is the next two issues of *Media&Values* magazine.

The first—available now—is issue #62, ***Media and Violence Part One: Making the Connections.*** It looks at how and why violence has so thoroughly infiltrated our media and popular culture. ***Part Two: Searching for Solutions,*** due out in October 1993, will explore alternatives to violent media. Overview articles and practical activities make them excellent resources for reference or teaching.

Media and Violence: Making the Connections is available (pre-paid only) for $5 each, plus $1.50 postage/handling. Contact the Center for Media and Values, 1962 S. Shenandoah St., Los Angeles, CA 90034; (310) 559-2944, FAX: (310) 559-9396. Call for quantity discounts. MC/Visa accepted.

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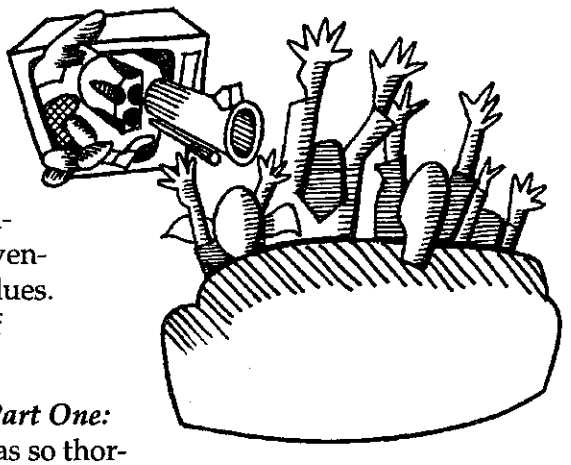

With a U.S. homicide rate of 23,000 victims a year — and rising — we have a major public health epidemic on our hands. What can we do to prevent its further growth? How can we lessen the impact and incidence of violence in our world and in the media?

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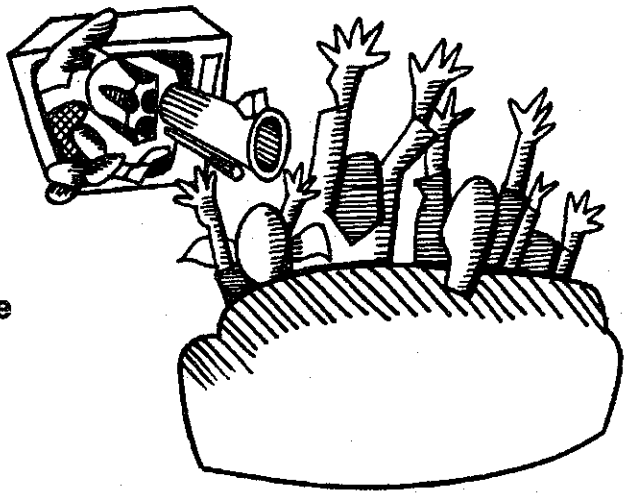
Announcing!

Beyond Blame:

Violence in the Media



A multi-media educational resource package to be published by the Center for Media and Values Los Angeles

Proposed Components:

1. ***Media&Values* magazines** (2 consecutive issues)
   Media and Violence: Part I: Making the Connections — off press July, 1993
   Media and Violence: Part II: Searching for Solutions — October, 1993

2. ***Leader's Guide w/Handout Masters***
   - **8-10 learning activities designed for adult groups**

   Focus: understanding the impact of violence, dealing with inadquacies of the rating system and setting their own family standards for violent entertainment.
   - **8 - 10 learning activities designed for children and teens:**

   Focus: decoding violent entertainment and managing feelings. Example: learning to recognizing the number of "jolts per minute" in movies and TV and why they are there.

3. ***Video components:***
   - **30-minute video**

   Documentary style — for community education. Visually summarize the issue of media/violence and how to reduce exposure to and impact from media violence. Also to be cleared for broadcast and/or public access.
   - **Video segments**

   Several short 3-5 minute segments to use in the context of a teaching/learning situation: *Example:* a 5-minute segment showing kids how stunt people create their magic: fake blood bullets, breakaway bottles, etc.

4. **#10 size booklet** (for low cost purchase in quantity):

   Four Myths of Media Violence / And What Parents Can Do

5. **Public Awareness Package promoting alternatives to media violence**
   To include a colorful poster by an award-winning artist. Also, PSA's, logo sheets and masters available for licensing by community groups to create local media campaigns

Final Delivery Date: December, 1993
Selling Price: To be determined.

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"We must not overlook the powerful potential of media literacy for violence prevention: to challenge and change the pervasiveness and impact of violence in our media and popular culture."

For additional information or to explore collaboration or underwriting, contact

CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES
1962 S. Shenandoah • Los Angeles, CA 90034 • 310-559-2944 • FAX 310-559-9396

Los Angeles Times
SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1993

PERSPECTIVE ON THE MEDIA

Use the Mind to Confront Violence

Parents, caregivers, churches, Scout leaders can learn how to get children thinking about what they see.

By ELIZABETH THOMAN

Violence cannot be sanitized out of our culture even if, as I hope, gruesome and gratuitous violence becomes more and more "politically incorrect" in popular entertainment. Over the decades, we've seen the media industry self-censor many negative ideas and images—from the Amos 'n' Andy stereotype of African-Americans to the depiction of alcohol, cigarettes and hard drugs as glamorous. There are some things that responsible writers and directors just don't do anymore. Excessive violence should be added to the list.

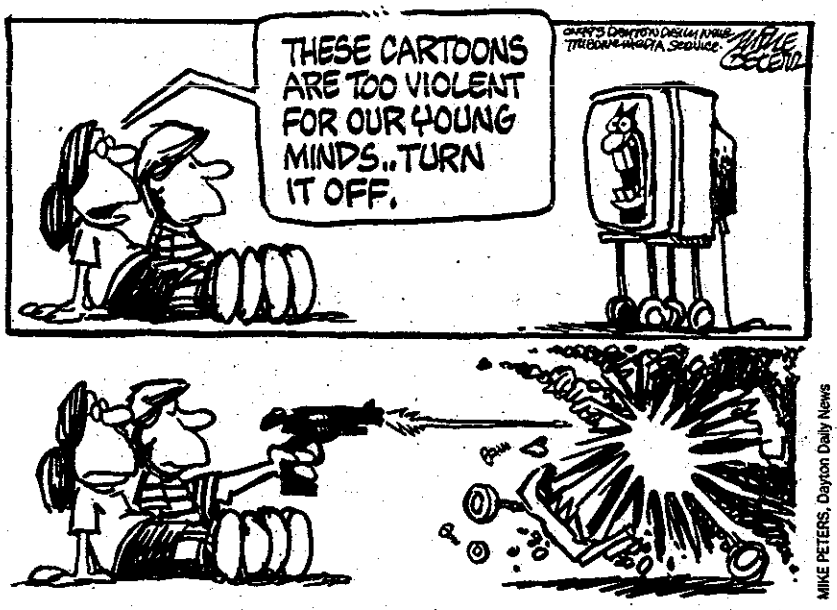
There will still be violence in the media, as in life, because there is evil in the world and human nature has its shadow side. There is also grinding poverty and substance abuse and meaninglessness that create a seedbed for violence as a way for some to cope with injustice.

The parameters of our public discourse about media and violence are complex. There are 1st Amendment concerns as well as public policies resulting from years of deregulation of the media industry and the erosion of the public-interest standard in favor of marketplace forces.

As so many observers point out, violence is the stuff of our fundamental mythologies, including the myth of the American West. While Hollywood may feed these myths, it did not start them. Nor can Washington legislate them away. "Parental advisories" may help some, but they are not a solution.

Violence is a major health problem today and we must find workable solutions to prevent its further spread. I believe that media-literacy education must be a component of any effective effort at violence prevention, for both individuals and society as a whole.

Media literacy, as defined in a 1992 report from the Aspen Institute, is the movement "to expand notions of literacy to include the powerful post-print media that dominate our informational landscape." In classrooms as well as informal groups such as Scout troops or parenting classes, people of all ages learn to apply a variety of critical-thinking skills to the thousands of images, words and sounds that bombard us daily. Although well-established in other countries, media-literacy education is just beginning in the United States. It's about time.



Media-literacy programs do not excuse the storytellers of society from responsibility for our cultural environment. But here are five ways that effective media-literacy education can contribute to lessening the impact of violence in our lives:

- *Reduce exposure, by educating parents and caregivers.* How many times have you been to a movie rated "R" for violence and seen children there? Adults, especially men whose viewing habits tend toward action-adventure, need to get the message that too much media violence can truly harm children. Parent organizations, churches, libraries and community groups can sponsor media-literacy programs to help parents develop and enforce age-appropriate viewing limits.

- *Change the impact of violent images that are seen.* This can be done by deconstructing the techniques used to stage violent scenes and decoding the various depictions of violence in news, cartoons, drama, sports and music. It is important for children to learn early on the difference between reality and fantasy and to know how costumes, camera angles and special effects can fool them. Media-literacy activities need to be integrated into every learning environment—schools, churches and temples, after-school groups and clubs.

- *Explore alternatives to stories that focus on violence as the solution to interpersonal conflict.* Schools and day-care centers, libraries and families need to have collections of books and videos that provide positive role models to help counterbalance the actions and attitudes of today's "superheroes." Through media-literacy classes, parents can also learn to transform undesirable images from popular culture into opportunities for positive modeling. One father, for example, agreed to let his child watch "Teen-Age Mutant Ninja Turtles," but only if the child would imagine a fifth turtle named "Gandhi." Later, they discussed how "Ninja Gandhi" might get the Turtles out of trouble without violence.

- *Uncover and challenge the cultural, economic and political supports for media violence as well as the personal ways we may each be contributing to it.* Media-literacy education empowers viewers to make the connections between what they see on the screen and what they experience at home, at work, at school. Media violence is not isolated from other social issues. And we must not forget that the root of our cherished freedom of speech was not the freedom to protect creativity but the freedom to challenge the political and economic status quo.

- *Promote informed and rational public debate in schools, community and civic gatherings, religious groups and in the media.* The reality of our current situation demands that we ask ourselves what kind of culture we want our children to grow up in and whether we can continue to allow the media to profit from products that are clearly contributing to a social condition that endangers public safety.

Elizabeth Thoman is executive director of the Center for Media and Values in Los Angeles and the founder of Media & Values magazine, from which this is excerpted.

As I see it

Time has Come for Media Movement / By Elizabeth Thoman, CHM

TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS promised a life made easier. For many of us it has resulted instead in more "free time" in which to be busy. Given the pace of our lives, what better way to relax after a numbing day than by kicking back before the TV with a snack to calm the body and escapist fare to soothe the mind? The problem is there is no escape.

"Mindless entertainment" is a misnomer. Even the most ephemeral sitcom or video movie has an impact on the psyche. There is no question that a subtle information implant occurs while we relax in front of the tube. The question is what messages about values do we receive at a time when our critical defenses have been drained.

The answer is no secret. The mass media tends to favor instant gratification and the quick fix, confrontation over communication, image over substance, and limitless material gain for the simple reason that . . . well, it's progress!

But do we really need that? Is that what we want our children to learn?

The average American TV set is on for over seven hours a day. That means young people have been watching MTV, soap operas, cartoons, and reruns long before parents take over in prime time. And *that* means the mass media (of which TV is but one example, albeit the most obvious) has joined home, school, and religion as a major influence on the values our children develop.

Perhaps the most important role of parenthood is to teach our children the skills, values, and behavior that will allow them to live fulfilled lives as adults. For children growing up today, spiritual and psychological survival requires knowing how to deal with mass media: not only television but also music, advertising, movies, video, and cable.

Parents and others who influence the choices young people make—religious leaders, educators, youth workers and librarians—need to develop an entirely new approach toward how they think about media. In fact, few people really do think about it. Television, radio, video, and cable just seem to be there, ready at the flick of a switch.

TV characters like Michael and Hope (Ken Olin and Mel Harris) of "thirtysomething" can seem to be actual members of the family. Sr. Elizabeth Thoman, CHM, believes that television creates a "media environment" that real families must learn to manage creatively.

Anyone can watch TV. Little credit is given for being a perceptive media consumer, and no one is blamed for being a bad one. We may occasionally use critics to determine a specific movie to see or a book to read. But almost never do we seek help on how to be a more discriminating media user.

We need a values-based media awareness movement that teaches individuals to be critically aware of the influence of mass media. Only after we have developed an awareness of our needs and how media does or does not serve them can we begin to look for programming that supports rather than undercuts those needs.

For more than a decade, *Media&Values* magazine has worked to lay the groundwork for such a movement. Over the years we've created issues analyzing militarism in the media, the influence of sexual violence in media, rock and its role in the lives of young people, and advertising and the consumer economy.

Media&Values has been a pioneering resource applying to mass media the principles of social analysis developed by Brazilian educator Paolo Friere and adapted in the United States by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, SJ.

And the magazine's board of directors recently voted to expand into a Center for Media and Values to serve as a clearing house for individuals and organizations wanting to explore common concerns about the influence of mass media. Functioning as a "voice of values," the center will develop conferences and training programs, provide print and electronic resources for media education in homes, schools, and religious organizations, and seek to build a constituency that cares about socialization in the media.

The movement we envision is grounded in an ethic that is at once Judeo-Christian and liberating. Its concerns are the family, equal access to the media for all society, the dignity of the individual, the value of ethnic, religious, political, and cultural diversity, and the right of children to grow up protected from crass commercialism.

Its intent is to bring fresh, critical insight to bear on how media decisions are made, the limits to artistic or commercial expression, how to deal with objectionable material, how media can enhance the human condition, and how media affects the kind of society we want our children to grow up in.

Our objective is to help people separate the positive aspects of mass media from the negative and to give them tools to initiate the change they wish to see in both the mass media system and their own participation in it.

The recent proliferation of many new media alternatives has made real media change possible. When there was only ABC, NBC, CBS, and occasionally PBS, there seemed to be little room for growth. But the advent of video, computers, and 100-channel cable systems opened up choices. A healthful media diet can now be promoted and learned just as we've learned to read the labels on our foods and to make choices about fats, cholesterol, and caffeine.

Viewers on this media diet will learn to consume TV by the program rather than by the clock. Most people now do not turn on their sets to watch a specific program but just to pass the time. A values-based media movement, however, seeks a society that is educated to make choices, to browse through the media menu, to be aware of individual needs and how media can or cannot satisfy them.

If audiences begin to choose their media less automatically and more intentionally, those cumulative acts of choice will ultimately change the very nature of our media environment.

This is not to ignore the accountability of those who create the images and stories of popular media or the marketplace economy that drives the entire media industry. But the issue of mass media's influence in our lives is not resolvable by placing blame or pointing fingers. Viewers make choices too. And those choices send a message to media owners and producers.

In commercial mass media, the only entry point for effective, long-range change without censorship is the consumer. But how do you get people to act? Where's the link between what appears in the pages of *Media&Values* and what can happen in a church basement in Lawrence, Kansas, or a family room in Nashville, Tennessee?

A network of people around the nation with resources can motivate others to act—teachers, youth leaders, family counselors, and pastoral ministers. That's why the Center for Media and Values is so important.

Development of the center is crucial if concern over media is to become a recognized public policy question addressed by the grass roots and the media.

The signs are growing that mass media is the next arena for a values-based consumer movement. But it takes a long time to get a movement going. One criticism of past media reform efforts is that they had too short a vision. They expected media to change almost overnight, as if a letter-writing campaign could transform children's television or a film boycott could turn the movie industry around. *Media&Values* recognizes we're in there for the long haul.

In some ways, though, we will never have a completely enlightened media society. All we can do is keep raising the questions as it is done within the political and economic processes that continually need retooling.

As I see it, however, there is little time to waste. To delay is to condemn the next generation of media consumers to a steady TV diet of life-denying values.

"Mindless entertainment" is a misnomer. Even the most ephemeral sitcom or video movie has an impact on the psyche.

JOAN ALDEN

Sr. Elizabeth Thoman, CHM, is the founder of Media&Values *magazine and the executive director of the new Center for Media and Values. A member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary (Davenport, Iowa) for 25 years, she is a graduate of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California.*

THOMAN

Center for Media and Values

UPDATE:

Developments/Directions/Connections

TO: Friends, Funders and Colleagues
FROM: Elizabeth Thoman, Executive Director

DATE: August, 1990

Media literacy is on the move!

Evidence is mounting that a movement for media literacy is rising everywhere and the Center for Media and Values is in the thick of it. The following items and enclosures will provide you with key information and background to keep you informed of developments in the field, our involvement and that of others. Stay in touch and let's keep networking!

• Perhaps the most significant event of the year was the international conference on "New Directions in Media Education" sponsored by UNESCO and others in Toulouse, France in July. Check the enclosed report noting what I learned and what directions I see.

• Here in North America, the province of Ontario, Canada is now, I believe, the world leader in innovative approaches to media literacy education. All students, grade 7 -12 are required to take courses in media studies as part of the English/language arts curriculum. The Association for Media Literacy, composed of 1000+ teachers, is doing an excellent job in writing textbooks and curriculum, developing creative lesson plans, providing teacher training and, in general, pioneering new methods to empower students to become critical and aware citizens in a mediated world. Jay, Roz and myself all attended an excellent 4-day conference sposored by the A.M.L. in Toronto in May. Over 400 teachers came from Canada; 18 people came from the U.S.! It has taken 10-15 years of slow struggle for Canada to reach this point. The U.S. is only beginning.

• The concept of "media literacy," however, is growing in the U.S. Several influential publications have recently focused on the concept in major articles:

-- *Teacher* magazine (200,000+ circ.) , in its May/June issue, featured the first article on the topic to appear in a major educational publication.

-- *Utne Reader's* July/August issue (250,000+ circ.) gathered a cover-story collection of articles from the alternative press (including *Media&Values*) on "Television: Tuning In, Turning On, Taking Charge."

-- This week, their Sept./Oct. issue hit the newstands with a review of *Media&Values* calling it the "most useful tool available for sorting out the images, ideas and values that swirl around us each day." Copy enclosed !

-- *Our Sunday Visitor*, a national Catholic parish newspaper (170,000 circ.), featured a cover story August 12 on the Center as a resource for educational programs for media literacy in schools and parishes.

-- In early October, *Family Circle* (circ: 6 million!) will include a story on helping parents evaluate TV, quoting the Center extensively and promoting memberships along with our fall issue on media and children: *Growing Up in a Media World.*

• In the religious community, the educational unit of the National Council of Churches has organized a study program on "Gospel, Culture and the Media" that will be used widely for adult education in Protestant churches in both the U.S. and Canada this fall and winter -- creating a "critical mass" of local folks studying media in society. The study materials are an excellent systemic values analysis of mass media in contemporary culture. *Media&Values* issues and workshops are highly recommended for supplemental reading and follow-up.

• So, looks like things are cooking! If you are not already a member of the Center for Media and Values -- *do join* using the membership brochure enclosed! Keep yourself informed. And keep the Center growing!

Conference Report

New Directions in Media Education

an international colloquy sponsored by UNESCO,
the British Film Institute,
and CLEMI (Centre de Liaison de L'Enseignement et des Moyen D'Information)

University of Toulouse, France
July 2-6, 1990

report prepared by

Elizabeth Thoman, executive director
Center for Media and Values
Los Angeles, CA

Participants:

180 from 40 countries. Most were media education teachers or national staff officials from European countries where media education programs are an established and well-developed field in both secondary and elementary public school systems. A number from Europe and Australia teach media studies theory or practice at teacher-training colleges. 24 participants were funded from Third World countries.

U.S. delegates included

- Ralph Amelio, a high school film teacher from Chicago
- Debbie Demick, a PhD candidate in education at U. of Arizona,
- Bob Muffaletto, active in International Visual Literacy Asso; teaches at U. of No. Iowa
- Kathleen Tyner, exec. director, Strategies for Media Literacy, San Francisco
- Elizabeth Thoman, exec. director, Center for Media and Values, Los Angeles

Some learnings:

1. Definition of terms: There is still much discussion on whether the correct term is "media education," "media awareness," or "media literacy." It feels like "media literacy" will win out because of the mental association with "literacy" meaning the ability to "read" and process information in order to participate fully in society. However "media education" is firmly entrenched in England, Australia and other countries pioneering the field. The term "media studies" is also used, particularly in Australia.

But whatever it is called, the concept of "media literacy" incorporates both **knowledge** of the structure, economy and function of mass media systems in society as well as the **analytical skills** to "read" both the aesthetic and ideological content of mass media messages.

2. Urgency: In the past 50 years, modern society has passed from an age of *linguistic literacy* to an age of *electronic literacy*. Therefore media literacy is not a luxury but a necessity in contemporary times.

-- Indeed, how can anyone become a fully functioning citizen in a democratic society if he/she is manipulated by commercial media? What is at stake really is the future of democracy.

3. Methodology: In the past 20-30 years, we have grown in our understanding of how mass media works in society and how people interact and process media messages.

a. In the 50's-60's we understood the viewer as a "tabula rasa" -- a blank slate on which mass media could write its powerful messages. The educational agenda, therefore, was **innoculation** -- "in order to protect both our children and the continuity of our cultural values from the worst excesses of the media." The tools were discrimination (of "good" media from "bad" media) and aesthetic appreciation (of the "good.")

b. in the 70's/early 80's the field moved from aesthetic questions toward **ideological** ones: How and in whose interest do the media operate? How are they organized? How do they produce meaning? How do they represent "reality?" And *whose* "reality?" The development of a **critically informed intelligence** became the key objective rather than nurturing a finely-honed aesthetic judgment.

c. In the 90's we now understand that media viewers are also *producers* of meaning. We are constantly trying to "make sense" of the many media messages we encounter everyday. There is a constant interaction between the *text* of the message, the *context* of the media event and the viewer's *background, past experience, value system*, etc. The educational goal is now **empowerment** of the viewer to process the messages of the mass media and produce meanings that are both personally and societally relevant.

-- therefore, media literacy involves more than just radio/TV/film/print *content*. Because of the symbiotic relationship between mass media and the consumer economy, media literacy is really about our economic/political/cultural reality which includes mass marketing, advertising, "popular culture" and the whole manufacture and management of information whether done by networks and advertising agencies or, increasingly, by national governments, special interest groups and institutions of every size and shade of opinion.

-- there is not just "one way" to watch TV (or even read a newspaper); each person must be fully empowered to watch their "own" way -- a way that benefits and empowers them to be fully functioning citizens of society.

-- furthermore, audience education means not just learning to choose among available choices but, if need be, to create their own version of reality (democratization of media), if and when the available mediated re-presentations do not reflect their experience of the world.

4. Elements Required for Development of Media Education in any country:

• establishment of curriculum guidelines (nationally or regionally) by appropriate educational authorities.

• teacher training programs at the university level. This is not a degree program in journalism or broadcasting (which are primarily career oriented) but rather degree programs in *education* with a specific specialization or major in "media studies."

• teacher support -- in-service educational programs, summer "refresher courses, " national organizations (similar, e.g. to National Council for Teachers of English), etc. through which teachers grow and develop in their chosen specialization -- and through which the specialization itself evolves and develops through feedback by grassroots teachers.

• educational resources for teaching -- writing, testing and publishing of the textbooks, lesson plans, activity sheets, videos or other A-V materials, posters, supplemental booklets, etc. needed for teaching -- developed in collaboration with all of the above.

Unless a country has all four elements in place, ongoing, and in sync with each other, it will not be able to successfully implement media education for all of its citizens.

5. Training for media education

• In truth, media awareness should be integrated into all aspects of education, formal and informal. So all persons involved in any kind of "teaching" -- including day-care providers, religious educators, youth directors and perhaps even social workers and

counselors, need to take some courses in media studies in order to integrate media criticsm and consciousness into their work. Experienced teachers may need opportunities for summer study and for new approaches needed to best teach today's media-wise students.

• Teachers who specialize in what might be called "media studies" need a specific stream of training that involves:

1. Study of the various *theories* of media education.
2. *History* and *key concepts* of media education.
3. History of *key forms*: TV, film, radio, newspaper, etc.
4. Basic *production* in both print and electronic media
5. *Practicum* in teaching skills for media studies matched to the appropriate developmental level of the grade being taught.

6. There appear to be four levels of media education around the world:

a) Countries where media education has a **firm foothold.** That is, all four of the above elements are in place and working. Example: England, Scotland, Australia, most European countries and the province of Ontario, Canada.

b) Countries where media education is **uneven.** For example, there may be a national curriculum but not any textbooks or teaching materials being published. Or there may be teachers interested but no policy or curriculum frameworks for teaching. Example: Austria, Ireland, Italy, some developing countries, such as India and the Philippines.

c) Countries where media education is **relegated to non-school situations** -- by design or by neglect of the public school system. Usually other institutions try to fill the gap as best they can, particularly for their own constituency -- e.g. churches, youth programs, women's groups, trade unions. Example: United States. Also many Third World countries .

d) Countries where recent **political and social change has opened up new opportunities/needs** for media education. Example: Soviet Union and Eastern block countries which are just now de-controlling their mass media systems paving the way for market-driven communications systems.

Implications/Applications: Center for Media and Values

1. Confirmation that

- The movement for media education is an urgent need world-wide;
- Most other countries (especially English-speaking ones) are ahead of the U.S. in both public policy and implementation;
- The U.S. needs to get its act together before it can contribute much in the world forum.
- There is tremendous potential for organization(s) taking leadership in this area.
- No one organization can do it all. Groups that develop need to specialize in one aspect or another. There's plenty of work to do; no need to compete or duplicate effort.

2. Realization that

• most highly developed models/methods for media education (Europe particularly) seem to be organized primarily for implementation in the elementary or secondary school classroom. There is some talk about media education in other settings (trade unions, women's groups, youth programs, etc.) but few really organized efforts.

• The U.S. has a unique educational structure compared to many other countries. Our education system is controlled at the state level (and there are 50 autonomous states) rather than nationally. So implementing a national curriculum (as Scotland or Denmark did) is impossible here. There are influential states (e.g. California) but effective widespread implementation of media education in the public school system is going to take a long, long time.

• However, the U.S. does have a tremendous heritage of community, parental and family involvement *at the local level* through religion, youth programs, community centers, etc. that seems inconceivable to Europeans particularly. (The churches there, of course, are mostly museums.)

The U.S. could perhaps best contribute to media education in the world by pioneering methods of media awareness education that are parent-centered and family-based. The concept of "parenting" and even the need to attend "parenting classes" or to participate in "parent support groups" is also primarily a U.S. phenomenon. Basing media literacy as a "parenting skill" is not only unique in the world, but ultimately influences the locus -- the home -- where informed media choices must take place anyway.

• Given this situation the U.S. and the Third World (especially where churches are involved in base communities using "group media" and political/economic consciousness-raising) may have more in common than the U.S. does with the school-based programs in Europe/Canada/Australia.

3. Needs to fill (a beginning list):

• get some *models* going of good media awareness education -- in churches, in youth programs, in parenting groups. Concentrate on getting innovative materials "out there" and nurturing a network of people using them effectively.

• develop effective *publicity channels* for communicating the growth of the Center in parallel with the development of the media education field -- e.g. our own membership newsletter, syndicated columns, talk show interviews, etc. Need to build teams of knowledgeable speakers and writers in the field -- volunteers and/or freelancers.

• provide resources/leadership for *national policy conference/consultation* on media education for the U.S. in the decade of the 1990's. (This is already initiated for some time in 1991 in collaboration with the Aspen Institute.)

• *publish/publicize theories and methods from other countries* -- e.g. work of Len Masterman in England whose theories build on Friere's empowerment model and echo the editorial philosophy of *Media&Values.* Linking up with Masterman broadens, deepens -- and validates -- directions we have already started.

• *resource U.S. opinion leaders* in education, social services, religion, foundations -- through info packs, reprints, perhaps a special issue of *Media&Values* .

• Such an issue could also serve as a cornerstone of a "start-up" kit for starting a program of media education in a school, church, etc.

• The Center's library/reference center needs to *collect and display* textbooks, learning packets and other teaching materials from around the world -- for reference ourselves, for others who come to the Center or to take to display at meetings/seminars/conferences. Contacts made in Toulouse and materials gathered there have already expanded our collection significantly.

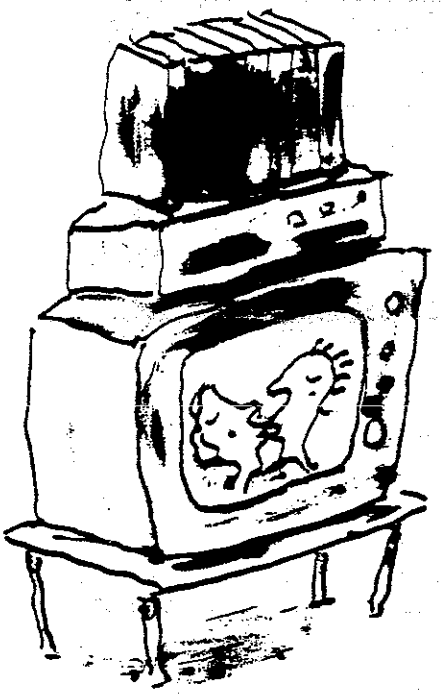
• possibly some of these materials are adaptable to the U.S. -- e.g. Canadian texts/teaching guides might be quite usable with only a few changes. We need to explore our capacity as a "center" which can provide *editorial expertise* in all subject matters related to media education/literacy.

• the Center might consider expanding its *mail order capability* to handle other books and resources that we consider key -- e.g. Masterman's *Teaching the Media.* The Center could be a "one-stop" marketplace for all the important material related to media education/literacy.

• find ways to *involve the media industry* itself in this challenging task -- not just through funding but through their enormous creative talent for storytelling and persuasion. Link into the idealism of talented individuals who were originally drawn to media careers precisely because they recognized the potential and power of the media to "change the world."

MIXED MEDIA

Noteworthy magazines, books, music, videos, etc.



MAGAZINES

Recommended Reading

Media & Values ($30/yr., 4 issues, includes membership in the Center for Media and Values, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034). We're bombarded with media images that describe our world—and us. Most of it isn't pretty: Insipid women are obsessed with lemon-scented cleansers. Arrogant men in glamorous jobs don't seem to know the meaning of the word *sweat*. Violent death is common, and it doesn't seem to hurt. Our "media environment" is a veritable jungle.

"Everybody blasphemes the media, blames the media," says the editor and founder of *Media & Values* magazine, Elizabeth Thoman. "But nobody had developed a systematic forum for raising questions about the impact of mass media in society."

But for the past 13 years, *Media & Values* magazine has done just that. Pulitzer Prize-winning media critic Howard Rosenberg of the *Los Angeles Times* calls it a "unique, visionary, and amazingly smart quarterly." In fact, *Media & Values* may be the most useful tool available for sorting out the images, ideas, and values that swirl around us each day.

Major articles probe issues such as sexuality, stereotyping and racism, violence, the media's connection to militarism, and the economics of the mass media industry. A recent issue focuses on the environment, featuring writers such as producer Norman Lear, Ben Bagdikian, and *Fortune* magazine's John Lawrence.

No other magazine I know of provides a general, thematic, and systematic discussion of this caliber. What's even better is that *Media & Values* doesn't stop there: It also tries hard to equip readers for action. Regular columns suggest ways to put the magazine's ideas into action in your community.

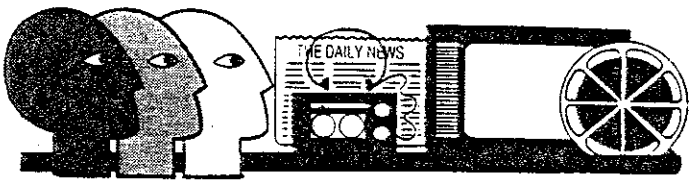
Thoman, a Roman Catholic nun, hopes *Media & Values* can help ignite what she calls a "media awareness movement for the 1990s." With more knowledge, listeners and watchers on the passive end of communication can be empowered to help shape our media environment. That may mean little more than simply discussing a TV show with your kids. But, as Thoman says, even that's a lot.

The magazine is now the cornerstone of the Center for Media and Values, which also provides workshop materials for schools, churches, and other groups; hosts conferences and training events; and even operates a telephone hotline. The center needs money: Memberships are $30 a year for individuals, $75 for organizations. This is a wonderful buy. Don't pass up a chance to be a part of it.

—Sara Saetre

ILLUSTRATION BY BONNIE TIMMONS

Media!



A lot of people talk about it...blame it...even blaspheme it. Now there's a new organization that's doing something positive • practical • productive to create more knowledgeable and selective viewers.

The **Center for Media and Values** is an educational not-for-profit membership organization created to stimulate creative and critical thinking and to promote thoughtful analysis and better use of television and mass media.

The Center believes that a concern for values in today's media age is not so much knowing all the answers as asking the right questions. In addition to publishing the acclaimed magazine, *Media&Values*, the Center develops creative teaching tools and offers workshop designs for adult and youth groups on such subjects as the impact of television, racism and sexism in the media, how to get the most out of your video recorder, etc.

Although the Center receives basic support from subscriptions and memberships, *additional contributions are needed* to fund the research and development of new programs and projects. All members receive *Media&Values* magazine, discounts on educational materials, invitations to conferences and seminars and other benefits as well as the opportunity to be involved in creating the first national "think tank" and resource center bringing a values perspective on today's media environment.

Join the Center for Media and Values — today!

Regular:

• **Individual Member**	☐ $30	☐ $20 (Student/Senior)	
• **Community Organization Membership** (churches/synagogues, youth groups, etc.)	☐ $75		

Contributing:

• ***"Friend"* of the Center for Media and Values**	☐ $100	☐ $250	☐ $500
• **National Nonprofit Organization**	☐ $250	☐ $500	☐ $1000
• **Corporate/Industry Member**	☐ $1000	☐ $2500	☐ $5000

Contributions above the basic $30 or $75 memberships are tax-deductible.
Make checks payable to the Media Action Research Center.

Name _____

Organization _____

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☐ My check is enclosed.

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Center for Media and Values
1962 S. Shenandoah St.
Los Angeles, CA 90034
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Thank you for your generosity!

Your stamp is a donation. Thank you.

CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES
1962 SOUTH SHENANDOAH STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90034

A MESSAGE FROM ELIZABETH THOMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES

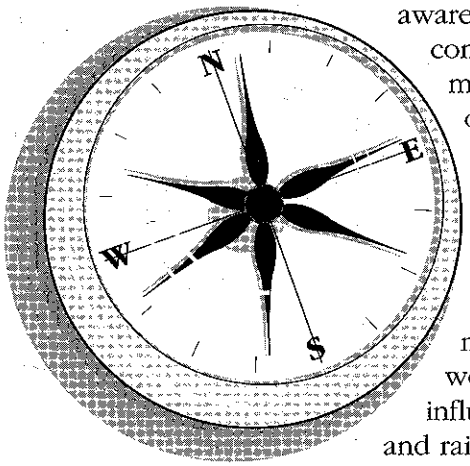
WE NEED A MEDIA AWARENESS MOVEMENT. Technological progress promised a life made easier. For many of us it has resulted instead in more "free time" in which to be busy. Given the pace of our lives, what better way to relax after yet another numbing day than to kick back before the family TV with a snack to calm the body and a little escapist fare to soothe the mind?

The problem is there is no escape. "Mindless entertainment" is a misnomer. Even the most ephemeral sitcom or video movie has an impact on our hearts and minds. The question is not whether there is a subtle information implant occurring while we relax in front of the tube. Rather, it is what values-messages do we receive at a time when our critical defenses have been drained?

The answer is no secret. The mass media tend to favor instant gratification and the quick fix, confrontation over communication, image over substance and limitless material gain for the simple reason that...well, it's progress!

But is that what we really believe? Is that what we want our children to learn? It's easy to bewail the quality of popular television and miss the point that the very fabric of our culture is being rewoven by the warp and woof of mass media and the advertising that supports it.

So what can we do? Where do we start? The place to begin is at the very beginning—and that means developing an entirely new approach toward how we think about media. It means developing a values-based media awareness movement that will educate individuals to become critically aware of the pervasive influence of media—not just the content of programs but the role of media in driving our consumer economy.



Whose Values? As the Center for Media and Values, we intend to bring fresh, critical insight to bear on such questions as: How are media decisions made? How can media *enhance* the human condition? Are there any limits to artistic or commercial expression? How do we deal with material we find objectionable? How does media impact or influence the kind of society in which we want to live and raise our children?

Values we would look for in our analysis include equal access to the media for all, dignity of the individual, and the value of ethnic, political, religious and cultural diversity along with the right of children to be children, that is allowing them to grow up protected from unbounded commercialism.

Our objective is to help people separate that which they consider positive about the mass media from that which they consider negative and to provide them

Continued on Page 6

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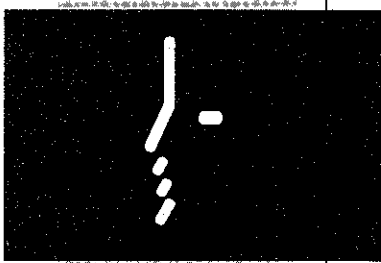
▼ *Media Makes News* page 2
▼ *A Closer Look at America's Funniest Home Videos* page 3
▼ *Re: Action—Center Members in Action* page 4–5
▼ *Movement News* page 6
▼ *Member's Resource Guide* page 7
▼ *Center Pieces* page 8



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES

ISSUE 1
SPRING 1990

CONNECT

INTRODUCING *CONNECT!*

Connect is the member's newsletter of the Center for Media and Values, a not-for-profit membership organization which empowers media users by providing resources for critical awareness about media. Share your ideas and experience with other members! Write or call us at 1962 South Shenandoah Street, Los Angeles, California 90034, 213/202-1936.

Jay F. Davis
Editor

Melinda McLain
Reporter

Phyllis Martinez
Art Director

MEDIA MAKES NEWS

Interactive TV Makes the Viewer a Director

The Academy Awards broadcast was watched by an estimated 1 billion people world-wide, but for 14,000 viewers in Montreal, it was a different show.

Le Groupe Videotron's interactive TV service, TVI, comes equipped with a special "zapper" which allowed the viewer to switch between hosts giving commentary in French, trailers on each of the nominated films, gossipy tidbits and clips of stars entering the Pavilion or the actual Oscar show.

▲ Tidbits from the media's coverage of itself, the latest from Hollywood and more!

▲ Media Myths

Le Groupe Videotron began by broadcasting interactive hockey games in January 1990 and has since broadcast its first interactive news show in which viewers screen 12 headlines and then choose from a video menu which story they would like to view in an in-depth segment.

If the revolution is choice, then meet the television revolution—interactive TV.

A New Grammar of Images

Robert Pittman, a senior executive at Time-Warner, Inc. and the creator of MTV, says we need to speak a "new language to our TV babies." This language is a "grammar of images" which Pittman argues created a communications gap between himself and his parents in the '60s. When watching the same TV newscast of the Vietnam war, his parents heard the commentary, Pittman watched the pictures and as a result, each came to very different conclusions.

In researching the audience for MTV, Pittman describes another difference. TV babies really can "do their homework, watch TV, talk on the phone and listen to the radio all at the same time. It's as if information from each source finds its way to a different cluster of thoughts. And at the end of the evening, it all makes sense."

Pittman ends his article with a call for all of us to learn to use this new language if we ever expect to reach this TV generation.

Enviro-Mania: The Hype for Eco-Awareness

Suddenly, everyone is an environmentalist and "the chic cause" is Mother Earth. Newscasts feature "Planet Earth" reports and Disney just named its first Vice President in charge of Environmental Concerns. Have we just awakened and begun to smell the pollution or are we simply following the lead of our Hollywood heroes to "Indiana Jones" our way to save the rain forests?

In a recent *Los Angeles Times* article, Connie Koenenn and Bob Sipchen wondered if the earth can survive Earth Day. Even though environmental activists welcome the long-overdue focus on the earth, it is unclear whether the concern is real or only a media fad.

The answer is yet to come, but understanding how the media covers, creates and influences social issues is a valid question in and of itself.

Watch for the answers in *Media&Values'* summer 1990 issue, *Spaceship Earth: Media's Role in Saving the Environment.*

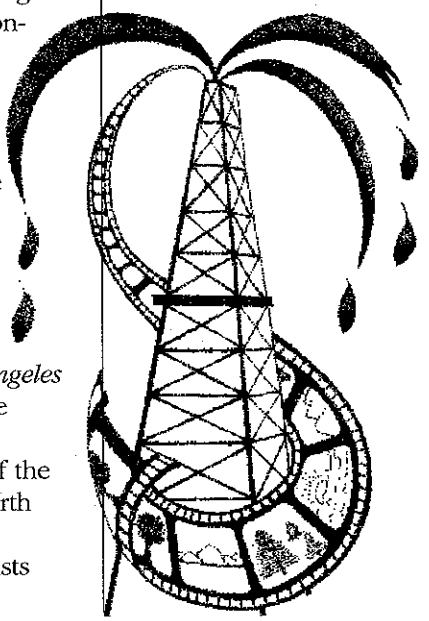


ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELE BRADLEY, 1990

MANAGING MEDIA MYTHOLOGY

The following are some commonly held assumptions concerning our mythical friend the media. This is a great topic to explore in your own media awareness group or with friends, just for fun!

Assumption: *Television primarily provides information and entertainment.*
Reality: Television primarily delivers a market to advertisers. It is a particularly well-decorated, super-deluxe, moving billboard.

Assumption: *All you need to watch television is a television set.*
Reality: Most people have no idea that watching television is a learned skill, just like reading a book or understanding poetry.

Assumption: *The United States makes more movies than any country in the world.*
Reality: India makes two to four times as many movies as the U.S. in any given year. ▲

THE SADNESS BEHIND "AMERICA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS"

By Howard Rosenberg

I have this terrific plan to win the $100,000 grand prize on ABC's "America's Funniest Home Videos." It involves a child who's 3. I go to the top of a building and drop a brick on his head. Better yet, drop Bob Saget.

Airing at 8 p.m. Sundays, "America's Funniest" is not only the season's surprise megahit, it's also downright megabominable, a half hour of mostly violent, amateur-produced slap-stick whose biggest victims are inevitably its smallest participants.

Children.

Riding the crest of the camcorder revolution, this is the series that asks viewers to send in home videotapes for possible inclusion on the show with sound effects and inane commentary by smugly caustic host Saget. The studio audience—which is periodically shown belly laughing at sequences that are about as funny as a hanging—decides the week's best video, with the winner earning $10,000 and eligibility for the season-ending big payroll of $100,000.

Got a baseball shot of an outfielder losing his pants while toppling over a fence in pursuit of a fly ball? Send it in. That one, which won the $10,000 last Sunday, was funny. So was a dance recital where two tots dressed as poodles got their tails tangled. So were bridesmaids who collided and fell down while trying to catch the bride's bouquet.

Most of the videos are anything but funny, however. Say it's funny when a garage door falls on a man's head, and I'll say you need therapy.

If you have a video of someone falling, this is your show. People here fall from chairs. They fall from horses. They fall from bikes. They fall from machines, sometimes perilously, as did the man shown toppling from an out-of-control rider mower.

However, none of this—whether the video bits are funny or flat, whether they're corny, whether they run too long—really matters. What does matter is the show's undertone of sadism when it comes to children. Some comedy.

What's funny about a toddler banging into a wall? Then another toddler doing the same thing? Then another? Then another?

A young boy rides his bike into a tree. Hard! Another child runs into a tree. Hard! A girl hits her head on a teetertotter. A mother accidentally hits her toddler in the face with a shovelful of snow.

But parents at home, don't you try this.

While watching, you're bothered not only by the somehow mean-spirited violence against kids and the trivializing of that violence, but also by something else, an ommission that's very curious.

What's missing here are the sounds of pain.

There is no sound of crying here because each video usually ends on impact with crunched bodies becoming the punch lines, leaving you only to speculate about the possible unpleasant consequences of these cute little scenes. You do hear yucks, though, the sound of the studio audience laughing like fools. After all, we can't have crying ruining American's funniest videos.

You just know that there are plenty of parents who wouldn't mind bruising their kids a little bit in the interest of making $10,000.

Here's a thought that ABC and the producers of this program may not like, but is worth considering: "America's Funniest Home Videos" inadvertantly encourages child abuse.

The network and producers emphasize that they do not want anyone making an unsafe video to get on the air, that before airing a tape they demand verification that no one was seriously hurt. But no absolute verification is possible. And even if the show does reject a video it suspects involved a child suffering pain or injury, the deed has already been done and the veto comes too late to help the child.

There are too many horrible parents who need no incentive to abuse their children. For those who require an incentive, however, "America's Funniest Home Videos" provides a whopper. You just know that there are plenty of parents who wouldn't mind bruising their kids a little bit in the interest of making a funny video that would win them a shot at $10,000 and maybe even $100,000.

The children are helpless to prevent it, but "America's Funniest Home Videos" isn't.

The show can prevent potential abuse by immediately announcing that it will no longer accept home videos featuring children. That would take courage, because for better or worse, kids are now the stars of many of the show's videos. Yet the cost of this safety measure—losing many good-faith videos in which children are not harmed or even jostled—would be justified by the results. ▲

▲ Television critic Howard Rosenberg wonders if 'America's Funniest Home Videos' fosters child abuse.

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In each issue of *Connect* we will feature analysis of the *concept* behind current TV series or other media experiences. Send us articles from your favorite media critic—or write one yourself!

FAMILY IDEAS

Some Guidelines for Watching Television

One question people invariably ask staff and volunteers of the Center for Media and Values is "What do you recommend people do about television? Should we stop watching it?" Here's what I say:

First, "No—don't stop watching television!" In a real sense, swearing off TV does little good. Our friends, our neighbors, our enemies, even our dogs watch television—so we learn about stylish shoes and hairdos from them—television by osmosis. We can't will away the influence of television by not watching it. Instead, let's learn how to watch TV! Some recommendations:

1. Limit the amount of time you and your family watch TV. Two hours a day might be a reasonable start. Provide fun alternatives for children.

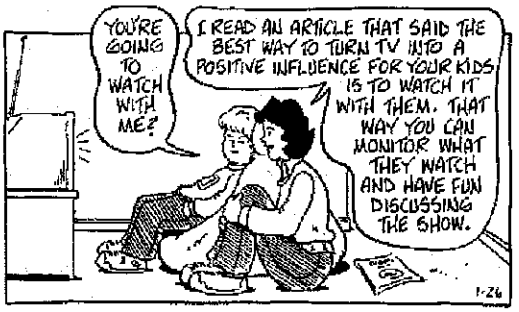
2. Plan your TV watching. Subscribe to *TV Guide* or become a member of *Cultural Information Service* (see resources, page 7), or another organization that previews television. Make conscious choices.

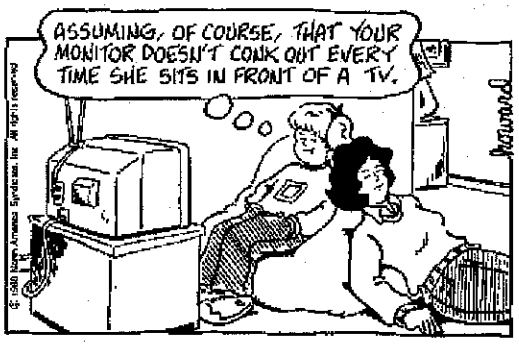
3. Talk back to the TV. Especially if you watch TV with children, make comments about commercials and sitcom storylines and about news. Children remember how adults react to television.

4. Schedule discussion time after watching TV shows. "What did you like most about the show?" "In what ways was the show unrealistic?" "How do you feel after watching the show?" "What made the show worth watching?" It sometimes helps to take notes while you watch; that way you can remember to discuss important dialogue and scenes.—*J. Davis* ▲

SALLY FORTH

By Greg Howard





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GETTING STARTED

Create a Reading and Clipping Team

On page two, you were treated to just one of the projects of a new group of Center volunteers. *The Reading and Clipping Team* is a group of individuals who have agreed to meet once a month to share media news, ponder media trends and to collectively dream the effects of a media awareness movement.

The initial group includes individuals who are involved in peace, environment, education, religion, health and women's issues. The group is diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, religion and education. Common to all is the commitment to be involved by analyzing, reflecting upon and taking action to create a media awareness movement.

This type of media think tank is a model you can replicate. Think of people who would enjoy coming together to discuss media issues and who may be looking for ways to get started in improving their media awareness. Whether your group is two people over breakfast, a college seminar class or adults gathered in a study/discussion group, we all have media experiences to share and media concerns to explore. ▲

▲ Guidelines for Watching TV
▲ Workshop Tips
▲ The Reading and Clipping Team

WORKSHOP TIPS

Media and Values Workshops with Youth

Media and Values workshops are designed for adults and older youth. What if I want to try one of the workshops with younger teenagers?

We tried the first workshop in the *Break the Lies that Bind* series with a mixed group of 13 to 17 year-olds. Here's what we learned:

1. Be more selective in choosing examples from magazines, newspapers, videos, etc. Try using more obvious examples of sexism and stereotyping for the first session of the workshop. Pick out examples of sexist ads ahead of time rather than letting younger youth choose their own examples.

2. Consider including adult or older youth facilitators in small discussion groups. Facilitators can work with younger youth to suggest discussion directions and to be sure youth understand vocabulary in *Media&Values* articles. ▲

FOUR WAYS TO TURN PEOPLE OFF MEDIA STUDY AND MAYBE ONE WAY OF TURNING THEM ON

By Chris Worsnop

Turn Off Number 1: Media Studies as Civil Defense. There's a way of thinking about mass media that is based on the premise that the mass media are bad for you and that you need to be protected from them by a righteous breastplate of knowledge concerning the detailed nature of their evil.

But where is all the counterbalancing stuff about all the benefits we get from being a mass media society? Do we really believe that the Vietnam War, Watergate, Irangate, etc. would have been subject to such public scrutiny without the mass media?

If we approach media study with a this civil defense attitude, then there is an almost sure fire guarantee that people will switch us off, counting our dire warnings as just another manifestation of unenlightened paranoia and lack of understanding.

Turn off Number 2: Media Study As Ideological Means Test. Another approach subjects every piece of media content to some sort of suitability test based upon ideology. No matter what set of ideals you are trying to promulgate with this form of selection, the point is that you present a twisted view of the world, and exclude many excellent pieces of media work simply because they do not agree with pre-determined standards.

The leftist, for instance will bathe in media that dump on acid rain, free trade, pro-life, and similar issues. A rightist looks for media to support a different set of values. Both are nothing less than censorship, and result not in media study so much as media conditioning.

Turn off Number 3: Media Study As Multiplication Tables. Perhaps you've come across a few of the publications that treat media study as if it were a set of new multiplication tables to be memorized. I'm thinking of the approach to media that assumes that everything has to be reduced to lists of terms and techniques to be memorized and tested.

The study of film becomes the memorizing of names given to camera shots and angles. The study of newspaper becomes the study of the terminology of journalism. The study of TV becomes the memorizing of facts about studio set ups.

Arguing that people can't understand the media without knowing the terminology first is like saying that it's necessary to understand how the Muppets are worked by their handlers before one can watch *Sesame Street* properly.

Turn off Number 4: Media Criticism 301. Look out for the great literary criticism trap, in which the media are seen merely as alternatives to books and therefore are to be treated in the same way as books: hunt the Christ figure; seek the symbol; uproot the archetype; find the myth; explore the genre.

How many people do you really know who tune into their favourite TV show because of its "Jungian" archetypes? Considerations like these are valid and important, but they are not appropriate for most of us. Leave them in the advanced university courses where they belong.

The Turn On. Media study ought to be an exploration. Parents, teachers, workshop leaders should be exploring as much as those they lead, and should be learning the same amount too, perhaps more.

The skill of a leader in media education

Continued on Page 7

LETTERS

Luz Maria Orozco Aragon of Davenport, Iowa reports that she "is presently teaching a course on Censorship and Pornography and has made good use of several articles in *Media& Values*. "We looked into *'What the Media Teaches Our Kids about Sex,'* (Spring 1989), and loved the headline 'Sex Doesn't Start with a Kiss. It Starts with the Media.' Students (ranging from traditional college age to grandmothers in their sixties) liked the quality of reporting plus the 'relevance' of the information."

Dr. Donna Allen of the Women's Institute for the Freedom of the Press in Washington, DC writes: "Your *Redesigning Women* issue is MAGNIFICENT! Not only have you covered many different aspects of the women and media scene, but you devote significant amount of your pages to the most valuable part of all—useful action-oriented suggestions and experiences. That is so often overlooked."

Jim Ferguson of Memphis, who tried out an early version of one of the the *Break the Lies that Bind* workshop sessions with a group of men's group leaders, reports that some present had a difficult time naming a real-life role model. In other words, said Jim, several men in the group had no other roles models for men except those they saw on television. Wow. ▲

Members are urged to share experiences and observations. Write to *Connect* care of the Center for Media and Values, 1962 South Shenandoah Street, Los Angeles, California 90034.

▲ Letters from Members

▲ How to turn on Media Dialogue

MEDIA AWARENESS MOVEMENT

Continued from Page 1

with the tools to initiate the sort of change they wish to see in both the mass media system—and their own participation in it.

Selecting a "Media Diet"
The proliferation of alternative media sources allows all of us to have more control and diversity in our media consumption. With the advent of such choice, a thoughtful media "diet" can be promoted—and learned—just as we've learned to "read the labels" on foods and make choices about fats or caffeine in our diet.

We believe that if audiences begin to choose their media less automatically and more intentionally, those cumulative acts of choice will ultimately change the very nature of our media environment.

We need to stop complaining and start looking, really analyzing what we see, hear and read. And engage our friends, family and coworkers in the dialogue, too.

A media movement is clearly on the horizon! As members of the Center, you're already on its cutting edge. ▲

▲ Birth of the Center
▲ How You Can Help the Center Grow
▲ New Members

BIRTH OF THE CENTER

The Center grows out of the quarterly magazine, *Media& Values*, the leading resource for media awareness in the U.S. and Canada. For 12 years the magazine has challenged readers to think seriously about and question the impact of mass media and new technology on our social fabric and the quality of human life.

In the fall of 1989, *Media&Values* was reorganized as the Center for Media and Values and incorporated as a not-for-profit tax-exempt organization. Its Board of Directors includes representatives of the educational, philanthropic and religious communities, the media industry and the business sector. (Meet the Board on page 8.)

Researchers and educators are also offering their expertise and assistance as consultants and members of editorial and educational advisory boards. (You'll meet them in future issues.)

The first projects of the Center include organizing a membership base and repackaging each issue of *Media& Values* with a leader's guide and workshop process for use at the local level with adults or youth. As the Center grows and develops, we'll hold conferences and seminars and create additional educational resources, including videos, for helping families and individuals learn about the impact and influence of television, video, cable, music and the glue that holds it all together: advertising. ▲

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Join the Center—or if you're already a member, spread the word. A lot of people talk about the media, blame it, even blaspheme it! Now there's a new organization doing something positive/practical/productive to help us all be more aware. We need your participation to grow into a major national organization.

2. Volunteer your time and talent. Our Los Angeles office needs lots of help—people to answer phones, enter membership records, help with mailings. We also need experienced hands in marketing, publicity, advertising and fund-raising. Or maybe you'd like to join the Reading and Clipping Team (see page 4) to review books and collect resources for our research library. Join the Center's growing volunteer family! Call Shelley Brown, at 213-820-1346.

3. Make a Financial Contribution. The Center is actively seeking corporate and private financial support through Founding Memberships from individuals and Organizational and Industry Memberships from local and national groups. In any new project, foundation grants are few and far between. So it is generous contributions by people and organizations who believe in our mission that will make it possible for the Center to survive this first organizational year. The Center still needs start-up funds of nearly $50,000 for 1990. Contact Elizabeth Thoman at 213-202-7652 if you can help or need presentation materials for corporate or private sources of funds. ▲

NEW MEMBERS

The Center acknowledges the recent generous contributions and support of the following:

▲ Founding Members ($1000+)
Norman Felton
Ann and Bruce Ramer
Stanley Sheinbaum
Arthur Price
Joan Palevsky
Gary David Goldberg
Ron Shelton
Charles Fries
Bruce Corwin
Lew Wasserman

▲ "Friends" of the Center ($100+)
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John/Gertrude Thoman
Betty Silver
David Crippens

▲ Organizational Members (Local, $75+/National Non-Profit, $250–$2,500)
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WAYS TO TURN ON MEDIA AWARENESS

Continued from Page 5

doesn't reside in the amount of knowledge that she or he has amassed which others lack. Skill resides in the ability to help people learn. *We should approach the media as inquiry.* Our objectives should be to see what questions turn out to be important about the media, what methods we can devise to find out the answers, and what the answers turn out to be.

Nobody needs to assume that there are going to be right and wrong answers either.

But there will be good learning and weak learning; worthwhile investigation and poor investigation; clear thinking and muddled thinking—and these are things worth knowing about and worth placing at the head of our objectives in media studies. ▲

Adapted from Mediacy, the newsletter of The Association for Media Literacy in Toronto (vol. 10, no. 3, May, 1988).

Your input is important in keeping us abreast of important new resources. Tell us about resources other members may find useful!

The Media Literacy Resource Guide, published by the Ontario Ministry of Education, is a must for anyone teaching media awareness. Says Len Masterman of Nottingham University: "The *Resource Guide* fills a gap in the Media Education literature so admirably that cultural differences don't seem to matter very much. The efficient and expeditious worldwide circulation of this guide is a matter of some urgency." The *Guide* is a comprehensive resource for teaching about all current mass media, from television to popular paperbacks. It combines theory and practical suggestions. To order, send a check for $7 to: Government of Ontario Bookstore, c/o Publications, 880 Bay Street, 5th floor, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8, Canada.

Cultural Information Service publishes **Living Room Learning**, a preview of upcoming television shows, books, movies, video games and more. *Living Room Learning* contains content-based previews, but CIS also publishes more extensive discussion guides which are available at nominal cost ($1 each). CIS presents an excellent alternative to *TV Guide* and *Entertainment Weekly.* A six-month introductory membership is $19.95. Write: Cultural Information Service, P.O. Box 786, Madision Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

Worried about your children's obsession with Nintendo games? The National Coalition on Television Violence's recent survey of 176 Nintendo Video Games rates the best and worst. According to the survey, 71% of current video games licensed by Nintendo are harmful to children because of high violent content. For the complete listing, write NCTV, P.O. Box 2157, Champaign, IL 61924. Ask for their December 11, 1989 press release or a copy of *NCTV News,* Feb.-March, 1990.

First Workshop Kit Goes to Press. The Center's first Reflection/Action Workshop Kit is headed for the press in May. *Break the Lies that Bind* provides six hours of group activities for adults or teens on gender stereotyping and sexism in the media. Utilizing *Media&Values'* special two-part series: *Men, Myth and Media* and *Redesigning Women.* The workshop process explores images and values on television, advertising, news and technology. The ready-to-use kit can be ordered from the Center for only $19.95. And members—don't forget your 10% discount. ▲

JOIN THE CENTER TODAY!

Detach and Return this Coupon!

Yes, I'm excited about the Center for Media and Values and want to become a member! Enroll me as:

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- ❑ Organizational Member $75
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❑ I think what you're doing is vital. I'm enclosing an extra $_____ as a tax-deductible contribution.

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❑ Bill me.

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Mail to: **CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES** · 1962 South Shenandoah Street · Los Angeles, California 90034 · 213/559-2944

CENTER RECEIVES GRANTS FROM MACARTHUR, SKAGGS

The Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation recently awarded the Center a $23,000 grant for membership development including the hiring of new staff, the purchase of additional computer equipment and the creation of this newsletter. *Thanks!*

The L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation has continued their three-year commitment to the Center with a $12,500 grant for 1989. Thanks to both of these foundations for their visionary commitment to the exploration of values in the media!

MEET THE CENTER'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President of the Board is *Rev. Randy Naylor*, who heads the communications division of the United Church of Canada in Toronto. *Joann Watson*, assistant executive director of the YWCA of the USA, New York serves as vice-president. *Ann Ramer*, a community leader in Los Angeles is secretary and the Center's treasurer is *Christine Eberhardt*, an accountant with Maxxam, Inc. in Los Angeles.

Members of the Board include *David M. Bosko*, an attorney with Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, Los Angeles and *Elizabeth Calvin*, who handles women's and children's issues for the World Division, General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in New York.

William J. Cirone is the superintendent of the Santa Barbara County (CA) school system. His "Wired Bedroom" research project last year uncovered the fact that 41% of school kids have a TV or VCR in their bedrooms! *Myrlie Evers*, widow of slain civil-rights leader, Medger Evers, serves as a Commisioner of Public Works for the City of Los Angeles. Author and communications researcher *Stewart Hoover* teaches at Temple University in Philadelphia. Advertising executive *Joan Levine* heads the Griffin Creative Group in Los Angeles and *Gary R. Rowe* is vice-president of Turner Educational Services at Turner Broadcasting in Atlanta. *Carol Becker Smith* is director of communications for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Chicago and *Glenda Wina* reports on health issues for KCBS-TV News in Los Angeles.

Additional Board members up to a total of 20 are currently being sought from the civic, professional, business and media communities.

THE ENVELOPE—PLEASE!

Media&Values magazine has won not one, but two awards from the Educational Press Association (EDPRESS) for overall excellence. The recent double-issue, *Men, Myth and Media/Redesigning Women* and *The Birds, the Bees and Broadcasting: What the Media Teaches Our Kids about Sex* will be honored at the group's June awards dinner. Out of 1,100 entries, only 12% were selected by the judges.

In addition, *Media& Values* has been nominated by editors of the *Utne Reader* for their Alternative Press Awards. The citation is for overall excellence for our collection of 1989 issues.

NOTED DESIGNER CONTRIBUTES LOGO

Thanks to graphic designer *Vahe Fattal* for the design of the Center's new logo! And to his partner, *Russ Collins*, and their Santa Monica design firm, G.E.M./Fattal & Collins, for developing applications for everything from stationery to signage. Anybody for a coffee mug? ▲

Center for Media and Values
Media Action Research Center
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CENTER FOR MEDIA AND VALUES

News Release

Date: December 15, 1992
Contact: Beth White, 310-559-2944

"The best magazine on media in the U.S." celebrates its 15th Anniversary!

Los Angeles—A few years ago people both cheered and feared the 50th anniversary of television. Now everyone has reason to celebrate the 15th anniversary of ***Media&Values*** magazine.

In 1977, a newsletter was born which would evolve into the quarterly hailed by the *London Sunday Telegraph* as "the best magazine about media published in the U.S." Now, ***Media&Values*** celebrates its 15th Anniversary as the leading media literacy resource in the U.S. with a special 40-page issue on the theme of television and the establishment of a fund development campaign.

The 15th Anniversary Development Campaign is intended to raise $75,000 for a revolving new-projects fund. The fund will help ***Media&Values*** continue to grow and expand through **Media Literacy Workshop Kits™** and other pioneering materials produced by the Center for Media and Values. The Campaign will extend from the publication of this Anniversary issue, *Tuning In To Television: News, Views and How to Live with It* through May 1993 when it will culminate with an Anniversary celebration in the Los Angeles area.

As the launching pad for the Campaign, *Tuning In To Television* provides a basic anthology of "everything you always wanted to know about TV, but didn't know who to ask." According to editor Rosalind Silver, it "features the best of the magazine's cutting edge reflection and criticism, exploring the most vital issues related to TV over the past 15 years."

Major articles include:

• the classic essay on television's role as society's storyteller by media researcher George Gerbner;

• the magazine's 1989 research report on why males around the world dominate TV remote control devices;

— more —

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• an interview with screenwriter Dan Wakefield on television sexuality that predated the current "family values" debate;

• Jay Davis' "Five Important Ideas to Teach Your Kids About TV" that continues to provide the framework for a revolutionary approach to parental involvement with television in the home.

Other articles and sidebars look at bias in the news, how TV has changed sports, game shows and "non-fiction TV" as a social mirror, the impact of MTV and coverage of ethnic issues on television.

In addition, the issue includes a special article on the people the Center believes are some of the country's most perceptive TV critics — the women and men who create newspaper comic strips. The creators of *Jumpstart*, *For Better or For Worse*, *Sally Forth*, *Hi and Lois*, *The Family Circus* , *Zippy the Pinhead* and *LuAnn* talked to ***Media&Values*** editors about how their characters use — or abuse —TV and why television is so often lampooned in the "funny papers." The article is illustrated with several of their most biting comic strip episodes.

"Ultimately, this issue is a tribute to both our writers and our readers over the years," notes Elizabeth Thoman, currently executive director of the Center for Media and Values, who founded the magazine while a graduate student at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California.

"They are people who care about the future of our culture and our children. They are the people who have made it possible for ***Media&Values*** to become the valuable tool for media literacy education that it is."

"With support from members and generous donors, we can continue another 15 years of provocative analysis coupled with practical action," she added.

The issue is also the cornerstone for the Center's next Media Literacy Workshop Kit™ titled: *TV Alert: A Wake-up Guide to Television Literacy* to be published within a few weeks. Developed by media literacy teacher and specialist Barbara Osborn, *TV Alert* provides actual lesson plans, handout masters and background resources for teachers and leaders in schools, churches and community centers.

Founded in 1989 as an expansion of *Media&Values* magazine, the Center for Media and Values is the leading publisher of media literacy teaching resources in the United States. It currently has over 2000 members including individuals, schools, churches/synagogues, libraries and community agencies in the U.S. and Canada.

Tuning In To Television: News, Views and How to Live With It is available for $7 each with up to 40% discount for purchase in quantity. The issue is included free with the *TV Alert: A Wake-up Guide to Television Literacy* ($24.95+ $3 shipping). Memberships, orders and donations should be sent to Center for Media and Values, 1962 S. Shenandoah St., Los Angeles, CA 90034. VISA/MC orders, call (310)559-2944 or FAX (310)559-9396.