

Storytellers in a Culture of Storytellers

POLITICAL:

GRASSROOTS:

Target and begin production on shows for local access stations to produce programs about the stories their communities; e.g. WWII Vets Tell Their Tales, How I Came to America, Getting to Know the neighbors, Our Town Tales, Etc.

Promote and activate grandparents and elders to do storytelling with their own grandchildren and other children in their communities as well as sending stories via audio and video tapes. Contact libraries, Grandparent Day sponsors (schools, greeting card companies, etc.) and develop formats for recording and accessing community resources for such.

Promote the idea of parents turning off the television at least one night a week to do storytelling and storymaking with their families

Use CEM publication press release, Ad Busters Ad, National Council of Churches, etc. to promote the idea

Determine and pool resources of many coalition groups to put a newspaper on everyone's doorstep - a newspaper that tells the stories not told in the culture (it's conflict edge might be that it was against the "conflict style" of journalism). This newspaper could promote also the face to face storytelling in home, church, school, synagogue, mosque and more. This could be an expansion of the FAIR magazine approach but it implies struggling groups who can't get their stories into the mainstream pooling resources with something that has as strong an impact on the culture as popular TV shows like Cheers.

EDUCATION/LITERACY:

Identify and collaborate with Media Literacy forces - promoting storytelling and storymaking through cable, community access and interactive TV., including video letters

Identify specific community center(s) in which create and maintain

pilot/exemplary programs for story swaps, promoting goals of sharing ethnic and cultural histories, personal psychologies, unique visions, plus strengthening community ties.

Identify one school or school district and create an exemplary pilot program which would begin to coordinate a mechanism to nurture a storyteller in every school or school district (one of the last remaining folk institutions) to:

- be a conduit for support information (including research)
- model and teach teachers how to integrate storytelling into curriculum
- teach children, who will one day be parents, to tell stories to exercise free expression, tell stories they don't hear elsewhere (on violence prevention, conflict resolution, alternatives for looking at guns other than "bang, bang, you're dead")
- involve volunteers and professional tellers (Artists in Residence) to give students a wide array of models
- align and collaborate storytelling with media literacy and video arts movements
- start with one school district, demonstrate it and write about it
- pay attention to value based content in the stories
- use stories as a beginning place to compare other forms

Create a list of national advertisers whose budget allows the likes of \$1 million a minute in the Super Bowl and other lesser expenditures during the year. Ask them if they would give the equivalent of one lesser minute of ad time (\$250,000) to pay for 6 storytellers to work for a year in schools or some other needed arena.

INTERNET:

CEM/COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES:

Design and implement a campaign to promote the value of stories of family and culture as a way to celebrate the rich diversity of our countries as well as a way for people to become inspired about the richness of their ethnic and cultural roots and diversity.

Use our Coalition for networking with storytellers in education, cultural and health services settings:

NSA, Mo-Tell, EARS, NSN, NSL

International Volunteers Story Share Exchange (IVSSE)

Continue and expand University of Missouri's national teleconference to teach storytelling

Join with Swedish and Scandinavian storytellers each year in celebrating "Alle Berattres Dag (Everyone Tell a Story Day) on March 21. It means everyone everywhere tell a story to someone, a child or grandchild, your school class, spouse, lover, business associates. It can be organized events but its more TELL A STORY YOU CARE ABOUT TO SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT. Advertise it in storytelling networks, publications as well as other places.

Promote the idea to practicing storytellers and emerging tellers to shape stories that address the cultural environment, this might include:

issues of war and peace - conflict resolution

issues of the preservation of our physical environment

media stories

alternatives to violence in settling conflict

promotion of physical and mental health

politics

spirituality and religion

powerful stories about "union" - the common enterprise "we're all in this together"

ways to talk about violence done when people lie (e.g. Reagan, Lee Iaccoca, advertising) and what happens to children when media figures lie

Create a storytelling summit with Stephen Spielberg, our coalition and others to Sit and Think on the value of storytelling (Spielberg is collecting oral histories of holocaust survivors.)

Design a campaign for promoting storytelling and storymaking at all ages in our culture:

elders - to do life review and to pass on family and people's history

pre-schoolers - for language development and passing on of values

school age children - through school and other community activists

adults of all ages - to promote storytelling as a way to build

community using press releases, Ads such as those by AdBusters, radio spots, storytelling journals and newsletters, internet, word of mouth,

collaboration with media literacy groups and forces.

Create a mechanism for storytellers to teach the power and purpose of story formation and delivery to coalition member lobbyists and educators and speakers whose only resource often is to stand before a groups and "tell their story"

Determine and execute a promotional campaign for the value of storytelling in other applications, e.g. medicine, psychotherapy, business

Create a coalition of storytellers and good lobbyists who could do training in forming real life stories and delivering them in lobbying situations, for groups with important issues and little money who seem to be making up the gathering of the CEM Convention, i.e. providing coaches who know the power of a good story in a communication situation (live or mediated)

Petition the National Storytelling Association to pursue national media exposure for storytelling, to encourage them to focus not just on "celebrity entertainment storytelling", but rather, or in strong addition to, using documentary style to show storytelling happening and helping in community, the home, the school, the hospital, etc. If this does not fit with the NSA mission, begin to find other ways of making it happen.

Get storytelling on "Teacher TV", on the Learning Channel would be a good start.

Last but not least:

Develop and promote a TV program with family and ethnic stories. Every 6-8 minutes insert a completely unrelated 60 second sequence of sex and violence

Larry Johnson