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To: cem@libertynet.org
From: channon@ou.edu (C.J. Hannon)
Subject: letters for conv

Vicki...when writing to Wasko (and others who are not keynote, but "speaker" material) mail same letter as keynote speakers but leave out "keynote" in first and next to last paragraph...perhaps Sandy could handle...

Did the "Chairs and Co-Chairs of Working Groups" letter you mailed me a copy of go out from GG this year? Or was it last years?...if it has gone out from GG this time it looks fine...I'd like to see last convention letter to panel leaders before I write...do you have copy to send me tomorrow...otherwise just wait until I arrive in PA...

The Founding Convention invitation letter, itself, did not contain any fee info or info @ scholarships, etc...all that was done in the brochure which accompanied this letter...

SUGGESTED INVITATION LETTER (Please make corrections and comments)

CEM and OHIO UNIVERSITY invite you to the Solidarity Convention
of the Cultural Environment Movement
MARCH 25-28, 1999, in Athens, Ohio

This personal invitation is addressed to a priority list of members, friends and supporters. It is extended on behalf of Ohio University and CEM to the person whose name appears on the Registration Form, and to one guest.

CEM is a nonprofit international grassroots coalition of over 250 independent organizations in every state of the U.S. and 60 other countries on six continents. It represents a wide range of social and cultural concerns united in working for freedom, fairness, diversity and democracy in

media.

While supporting and cooperating with other similar initiatives, CEM's Solidarity Convention plays a distinctive national and international role. It is an invitational working assembly of delegates prepared to consider further recommendations for a People's Communication Charter, a Viewers' Declaration of Independence, and to solidify the areas, targets, and priorities for action which were begun at the Founding Convention in St. Louis, March 1996.

Recommendations will be prepared by key Panel members on fourteen topics of great interest, paving the way for participation in Working Groups as well as for deliberation and ratification of results. Distinguished keynote speakers and cultural events will, again, highlight diverse areas of interest, concern, and action.

Limitations of space and funding, and the demands of an intensive work schedule, make it necessary to limit invitations at this time to those on this priority list. Requests for additional invitations must be attached to the completed Registration Form and will be considered after those on the priority list have responded. Available spaces will be filled in the order of the date of response.

While you are considering your participation in the Solidarity Convention, let me reiterate our message. Scottish patriot, Andrew Fletcher, once said: "If one were premitted to make all the ballads, one need not care who should make the laws of a nation." That was at a time when "Ballads"--the myths and stories of a culture--were still hand-crafted, home-made, community-inspired. Today, stories are the products of a complex mass-production and marketing process.

Who tells most of the stories today? No longer home and community. No longer parents, schools, or church. In many parts of the world not even the native country. Our children are born into a cultural environment whose dominant storytellers are a small group of global conglomerates who have little to tell but a great deal to sell.

This has far-reaching implications for human socialization and governance.

Channels multiply but communication technologies converge and media merge.

Cross-media conglomeration reduces competition and denies entry to newcomers. Fewer sources fill more outlets more of the time with ever more standardized fare. Alternative perspectives vanish from the mainstream. Media coalesce into a seamless, pervasive, stereotyped and increasingly homogenized and globalized cultural mainstream that has drifted out of democratic reach.

Other distortions of the democratic process include the promotion of practices that pollute, drug, hurt, poison, and kill thousands every day; portrayals that dehumanize and stigmatize; cults of media violence that desensitize, terrorize, and brutalize; stories that polarize and spur the growing siege mentality of our cities but ignore the drift toward ecological suicide, the silent crumbling of our infrastructure and the widening gaps in the richest country which already has the most glaring inequalities in the industrial world.

The Cultural Environment Movement was born in 1996 to meet this crucial challenge of our time: to create mechanisms of independent citizen initiative and participation in cultural decision-making. We shall no longer beg for favors in an area where we have constitutional rights, human rights, and civil rights. We must continue to mobilize as citizens as effectively as commercials mobilize us to act as consumers. That means:

- * Building an even broader coalition of organizations and individuals working for a liberating alternative to the repressive directions the "culture wars" are taking us

- * Opposing concentration and censorship, public or private, and working for diversity of ownership, access, representation, and perspectives

- * Strengthening the cooperation with cultural liberation forces in other countries, working for the integrity and independence of their own decision-making and against global cultural domination

- * Supporting journalists, artists, writers, actors, directors, and other creative workers struggling for more freedom from the constraints and

formulas imposed on them

- * Promoting critical media awareness as a fresh approach to a liberal education

- * Organizing an international DAY OF ACTION in September 1999 to further solidify and gain more grassroots support

The Solidarity Convention will take up where the Founding Convention left off. Together, we will continue to progress toward a time when all children will be born into a cultural environment that is reasonably free, fair, diverse, and non-damaging. What better 1999 New Year's gift than to register now for this second historic occasion?