

Media Literacy Northwest News

Issue 2 Spring 2005



NW Center for Excellence in Media Literacy

University of Washington

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Hello, Friends and Colleagues!

Welcome to the Spring Edition of **Media Literacy Northwest News**! It's been a very busy year for the NW Center for Excellence in Media Literacy. Among our many activities and projects, we were very happy to have the opportunity to present three *Teens, Tobacco & Media* Institutes across the region.

Teens, Tobacco & Media is the NW Center's highly successful research-based, teen-driven program made possible with funding from the Washington State Department of Health. For the past four years, the NW Center has been working with teens across Washington to develop and refine this program. In 2005, the Department of Health made it possible for the NW Center to hold institutes at three different sites across the state to share the newly updated and revised CD-ROM version of the program.

The institutes were held in Spokane at Gonzaga University, University of Washington in Seattle, and in Yakima at Educational Service District (ESD) 105. Participants learned how to use media literacy as an important strategy in the fight against Big Tobacco. Each participant also received the updated CD-ROM package.

Institute participants were especially interested to learn more about the research that had been conducted on this program and were pleased to discover that there was a strong body of evidence documenting its success. The teachers in the group were also happy to learn that *Teens, Tobacco & Media* was designed with Washington State EALRs clearly in mind.

Although designed for an adult audience, each of the three institutes included a small group of youth participants. Since *Teens, Tobacco & Media* is a peer-to-peer project, participants generally agreed that the institutes would not have been complete without some opportunity to observe youth as they were receiving training to become presenters.

We were especially pleased to have had Frank Baker as a featured speaker for the Spokane institute and KC Lynch as our special guest at the Seattle and Yakima sites. We extend our thanks to these two guests for helping to make the institutes a success! A special note of appreciation to John Caputo, NW Alliance for Responsible Media, Gonzaga University and Anna Marie DuFault, Tobacco Prevention Coordinator, ESD 105 for all of their help. Also, our particular thanks to the many participants across the state who made us feel welcome, and to Gonzaga University and ESD 105 for all of their support in making these institutes possible.

On behalf of all of us here at the NW Center for Excellence in Media Literacy, we hope you are having a wonderful spring!

All the best,

Marilyn Cohen

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Marilyn Cohen, Ph.D.
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***"It has been an exciting
year for media literacy
programs here in
Washington State."***

Media Literacy Institutes

To share the newly updated *Teens, Tobacco and Media* project materials, the NW Center held institutes in Spokane at Gonzaga University, University of Washington in Seattle, and Yakima at ESD 105. Here are some highlights, along with information about two of our guest speakers.



Clockwise from top left: Frank Baker speaks at Gonzaga University; Tim Kha and Sarah Yamin of the NW Center explore media resources with youth attendees; KC Lynch speaks at ESD 105; updated *Teens, Tobacco and Media* CD-ROM package.



Frank Baker

A graduate of the University of Georgia's school of Journalism, Frank Baker has over 10 years experience in television news and has worked in Florida's Public School System as an administrator in the areas of Instructional TV and Distance Education. Since 1997, he has taught media literacy for educators and has produced a nationally recognized media literacy resource website, *Media Literacy Clearinghouse* (<http://medialit.med.sc.edu>). Formerly a president of the Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA) and a vice-president of the National Telemedia Council (NTC), he now works as an educational consultant and presenter.

Media Literacy Institutes ...Continued



KC Lynch

After receiving an Art History degree from the University of Washington, KC Lynch studied Modern and Contemporary Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, focusing on television and mass media aesthetics. With 10 years experience as a critic of both pop culture and the arts, she is a college lecturer, writer and media literacy consultant. Recent projects include the Teen Aware website for the Teen Futures Media Network (www.teenawareresources.org).

Pilot Site News

With funding from the Washington State Department of Health, many exciting developments have taken place at each of the pilot sites. Among the most recent developments are:



This spring the **Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media** offered Opportunity Fund Grants to individuals and organizations in the Inland Northwest area to develop and implement media literacy related projects. The two grant recipients are Dr. Barbara Brock from Eastern Washington University and Mary Stamp, editor of *The Fig Tree* newspaper.

"30 Days Live," Dr. Barbara Brock.

What would happen if a group of elementary school children were issued a challenge to give up all their recreational screen time (we're not just talking TV!) for one month? Based on Dr. Brock's early successes, this project addresses the tremendous rise in obesity among our nation's children, and is designed to promote healthy, active alternatives to sedentary recreation. From April 18 to May 18, 2005, fifth grade students in both Cheney and Nine Mile Falls School Districts kept journals recording their nutritional and physical activity choices. One of Dr. Brock's primary goals is to raise awareness about what really happens when the television and other screens are turned off for purposes of solitary forms of recreation. Will so-called "withdrawal" symptoms actually occur? Will students learn to "take back" their recreational time, as earlier projects have shown? Dr. Brock's results will be available soon.

"Education, Service Learning and Modeling," Mary Stamp

As part of an ongoing effort to educate both media and public, this project models responsible media coverage through a collaboration with *The Fig Tree*, a monthly faith-based newspaper that reaches over 21,000 readers. Using articles on current events, Mary Stamp will investigate how emotionally charged language and quotes taken out of context can influence understanding of information presented by "non-biased" media.



The Southwest Washington Media Literacy Partnership awarded funds for media literacy outreach in Southwest Washington and Portland, Oregon to groups engaged in promoting media literacy in local communities, schools, churches or other agencies. The following is a list of fund recipients, along with brief descriptions of their projects.

Northwest Media Literacy Center, Portland, Oregon - Project Coordinator, Nick Rothenberg

The Center received funding that enabled the purchase of materials to help expand their resource library, allowing members to continue their work in raising awareness about media literacy and providing presentations to a wide range of audiences.

Mt View High School Prevention Club, Vancouver, WA - Project Coordinator, Carol Newman

The Mt. View Prevention Club plans to create a presentation focusing on the impact of the media and the "tricks" that they use to engage targeted audiences. The high school students in the club are working to present to groups of middle school students.

Evergreen High School, Vancouver, WA - Project Coordinator, Leilani Russell

This project involved students in the STAR class and was designed to increase awareness of the media's impact on individuals, on peers, and family members. The students involved will develop two formal presentations; one for peers enrolled in Evergreen High School health classes and the other for sixth grade students.

Wy'east Middle School and YWCA, Vancouver, WA - Project Coordinator, Gabrielle Ross

Project Coordinator Gabriele Ross, Drug and Alcohol Intervention Specialist Diversity Trainer, is responsible for Wy'east's *Media Literacy Project: the Portrayal of Women and Girls in the Media*. Designed to examine media's impact and influence on girls' sense of self, the project encourages middle school participants to develop their own presentations to educate their peers.



18 students spent an entire school day exploring how the media portray women and girls, using the exercises from Jean Kilbourne's curriculum that accompany her video *Killing Us Softly*. Students paired up to examine magazines targeting women and girls, cutting out examples of advertising for each of Kilbourne's categories: ads that objectify, dismember, bind, or sexually exploit women; infantilize women or sexualize children; advertise extreme thinness; "sell" violence, alcohol or tobacco; stereotype women of color; or show women as less than equal. The students then put their examples on poster boards, labeled them, and shared their findings.



Students at Wy'east discuss how ads impact the self-image of teen girls.

In their evaluations, students reported an average of two hours of watching TV per day. Out of 18 participants, 14 regularly read an average of 3.2 girls' or women's magazines. None of the students had any previous media literacy training. Initially, some felt that Kilbourne was "taking it too seriously," but then found Kilbourne's assertions confirmed by the magazine ads they gathered. Post-evaluations indicated an increase in students' ability to recognize connections between media portrayals and consumer eating habits, violence against women, girls' self esteem and youth tobacco and alcohol use.

ESD 112, Henkle Middle School, White Salmon, WA - Project Coordinator, Michael Kane

Materials from the New Mexico Media Literacy Project will be used to introduce a group of teens to media literacy. Students will be given the opportunity to create their own PSAs, to be broadcast within the local school districts. These PSAs are intended to raise awareness and engage students' attention on important issues, and to provide a vehicle for showcasing local talent in and around their community.

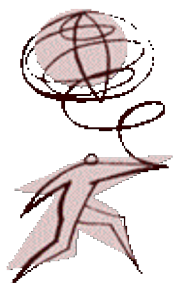
La Center Middle School Prevention Club and ESD 112, La Center, WA - Project Coordinator, Cathy den Boer

Prevention Club officers received training focused on tobacco use and media, using materials from *The New Mexico Media Literacy Project*. After holding a contest for artwork portraying tobacco advertising in a negative light, the Prevention Club voted for their favorite pieces to be placed on T-shirts and postcards. Club members will distribute the postcards to local restaurants and businesses, thanking establishments with smoke-free environments and encouraging others to make the change. Club members will write messages on the blank side of the cards.

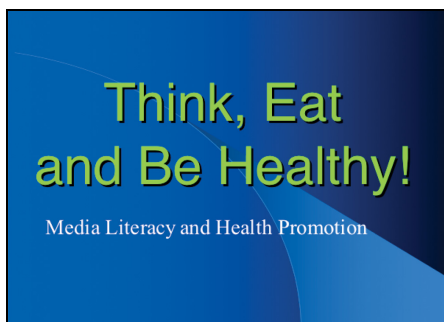


Bringing his legendary "Barfboro Van," Erik Vidstrand, Oregon Doctors Ought to Care (DOC), gave a presentation showing how media influences youth to use tobacco products. He worked with the Prevention Club during several class periods, giving them ideas for activities, encouraging them to keep up the good work, and distributing "barf bags" and trading cards.

Left: Students of La Center with the infamous "Barfboro Van."



Kitsap County Regional Center for Excellence in Media Literacy and the Kitsap County Health District (KCHD) are continuing work on their obesity prevention project. Last year the group developed its *Think, Eat, and Be Healthy* video working with youth from Kitsap County Consolidated Housing Authority. Youth participated in every stage of the production process for the video, from behind the scenes preparation to on-camera work as spokespeople and actors.



Think, Eat, and Be Healthy PowerPoint

Under the leadership of KCHD, Kitsap County Regional Center will incorporate the video into a set of presentation materials designed specifically for teachers of elementary and middle school age children. Throughout the year, Pat Degracia and Roberta Kowald have been editing the video, as well as developing an accompanying teachers' guide and PowerPoint to aid presenters.

KCHD plans to print the guide, and coordinate the promotion, marketing, and distribution of the presentation package (i.e. video, teacher's guide, and PowerPoint) to Kitsap County schools and agencies. Pat Degracia, MPH, KCHD Health Educator, will be taking the lead in the overall coordination and implementation of this project.

NW Center Sponsors Speaker Jeff Cohen



On May 23, noted media critic Jeff Cohen (no relationship to Marilyn Cohen) spoke at University of Washington's Kane Hall. His presentation was entitled *Overcoming Mainstream Media Spin: Exploring the Role of Independent Media*. Cohen is the founder of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a national media watch group based in New York.

In the current climate, mainstream news outlets increasingly find themselves at the center of controversy and debate, rather than reporting them. This is a good thing, says Cohen: "People need to be skeptical of the news they get from the press, TV, radio and the Internet...We live in the most media-dominated culture in the world with a shrinking number of giant corporations wielding unprecedented power over the public mind."

Cohen also stressed democracy's reliance on free press, adding that a fair marketplace cannot function without ethical media dispensing accurate and uncensored information.

"Today news has become just another entertainment format where even war gets its own theme music," says Cohen. "Cable 'news' networks might be better described as 'reality-based entertainment' networks. The problem for ethical journalists is that they often work at outlets more beholden to ratings, advertisers and owners' interests than to the public interest."

Cohen is widely published in news publications, and has authored four books, including *The Wizards of Media Oz*, with Norman Solomon. He has lectured at over 150 college campuses, and appears as a commentator on MSNBC, CNN's Crossfire, and the FOX News Channel. For more on Cohen, go to www.jeffcohen.org, or www.fair.org.

The event was presented by Reclaim the Media, and co-sponsored by NW Center for Excellence in Media Literacy and its affiliate group, Seattle Alliance for Media Education; Center for Communication and Civic Engagement; Newground Social Investment, Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild, Seattle Veterans for Peace, and KBCS.

Fast Facts

- Youth aged 8 to 18 spend an average of 6.5 hours daily with media, but due to multitasking, they are actually exposed to over 8 hours of media content per day.
- Among the 76% of all 15 to 17 year olds who have sought health information online, nearly half (46%) say they have been blocked from non-pornographic sites by filtering technology.
- Nielsen reports that in January '05, the most popular television show with kids aged 9-12 was ABC's *Desperate Housewives*.
- In 2003, Viacom partnered with the Kaiser Family Foundation to air 31 PSAs, 21 special programs, and 9 episodes of popular shows to educate the African American community about HIV/AIDS. 75% of African Americans aged 18-24 report having seen the ads or shows—and of them, 82% report having learned something significant about both the disease and its effect on the African American community.

**Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation, Wired Magazine, Parents Television Council.

Upcoming Events



National Media Education Conference

Alliance for a Media Literate America presents *Giving Voice to a Diverse Nation*, to be held in San Francisco, June 25 –28. AMLA conferences are held only once every two years, so this is a major media education event!

Featured speakers include:

- ❑ David Buckingham, Professor of Education, University of London. As Director of the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media, Buckingham will receive the National Telemedia Council's annual award given to those individuals who have made major contributions to the evolution of media education throughout the world.
- ❑ Alan November, internationally renowned leader in educational technology. He has guided schools, government organizations and industry towards technological improvement. November was named one of the original five national Christa McAuliffe Educators, and declared one of the nation's fifteen most influential thinkers of the decade in K-12 technology by *Classroom Computer Learning Magazine*.
- ❑ Carlos Cortes, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Riverside. Cortes currently teaches for the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education. His recent books include *The Children Are Watching: How the Media Teach about Diversity* (2000), and *The Making and Remaking of a Multiculturalist* (2002).
- ❑ Ronald Takaki, Professor of Ethnic Studies at UC-Berkeley. One of the nation's preeminent scholars of multicultural studies, Takaki is the author of eleven books and is currently working to produce a television mini-series history documentary, *America in a Different Mirror*.

Take advantage of this great opportunity to:

- Meet and exchange views with some of the top media education experts from the U.S., Canada and around the world
- Obtain professional development credentials
- Network with professionals from the fields of education, health, research and production, and
- Explore the vital role of media education in enabling all individuals in our increasingly diverse society to participate fully in our information- and media-saturated culture

For more information on *Giving Voice to a Diverse Nation*, or to register online, go to AMLA's website at www.AMLAinfo.org.

Contact Us

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Check our websites for regular updates, news, and information!

www.nwmedialiteracy.org

www.teenhealthandthemedialiteracy.org

Meet the Board

NW Center for Excellence is very fortunate in having an excellent advisory board. Board members are the following:

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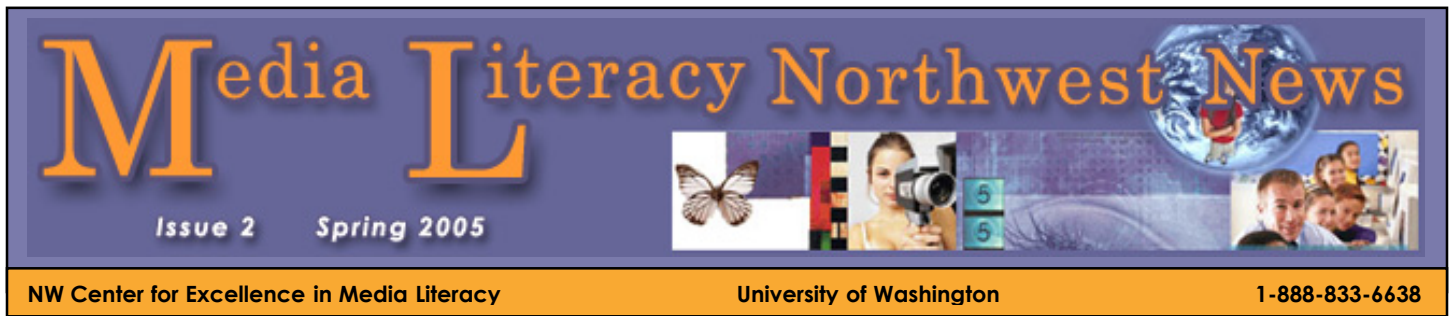
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Program Supervisor
Health/Fitness Education and HIV/STD Prevention
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction



"When people talk to me about the digital divide, I think of it not being so much about who has access to what technology as about who knows how to create and express themselves in the new language of the screen. If students aren't taught the language of sound and images, shouldn't they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read and write?"

George Lucas, Filmmaker

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