

GALLERY: Six Posters, No Squirrels

POSTER ART BY JAY RYAN



Fugazi, 1998



Queens of the Stone Age, 2004



Melvins, 2004

“We are the new mainstream.”

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEDIA REFORM WAS HEAVY ON STAR POWER BUT LIGHT ON ACTUAL REFORM

Over the course of three days, in a jarringly swank conference center under the St. Louis Arch, 2500 people from 50 states gathered to discuss and frame the future of the media. Free Press, an organization founded by Robert McChesney [see PP66] to increase public participation in media policy debates, and to generate policies that will produce a public interest-oriented media system, organized the second biannual conference. A rousing success in terms of sheer volume, both of media darlings and of conference attendees,

the conference still left several wondering, “But where does the *reform* part come in?”

A veritable who’s who of left-leaning stars current and still rising, the National Conference on Media Reform presented a diverse array of talent in support of the proposition that our current media system stands in disrepair, including FCC Commissioners Jonathon Adelstein and Michael Copps, Medea Benjamin [See PP66], Dave “Davey D” Cook, Phil Donahue, Patti Smith, Laura Flanders, Al Franken, Amy Goodman, Jim Hightower, Naomi Klein,

Jennifer Pozner [See PP68], and Bill Moyers.

As evidence of the deplorable state of the media, Nichols pointed to Fox News in his closing address, which he claimed had given up the right to be called mainstream. Speaking for the attendees of the conference, Nichols proclaimed: “We are the new mainstream.”

Yet attendees’ reactions to the conference aren’t quite so unanimous. A group that met during the second day of the conference to discuss gender issues in media reform, in a panel called the women’s caucus, expressed concern that women weren’t being granted access to this new, reformed media, as evidenced by the speakers, who were overwhelmingly straight, white, and male. This group held up signs proclaiming, “There Is No Media

Justice Without Women,” and “Where are the Women? *Here!* Listen up!” in support of NOW President Kim Gandy, one of only three women given the stage at the jam-packed Saturday-night plenary.

Martha Allen, Director of the Women’s Institute for Freedom of the Press, notes with frustration that, “Gender justice was not discussed outside of the women’s caucus. There was no mention of the Women and Media conferences, Women’s eNews, or other efforts by women over the years to address the lack of women’s voices. There was no mention of the pioneering and continuing work of women for media democracy and media justice who specifically address women’s issues. Kim Gandy spoke only of her own media challenge efforts but did not mention all the women’s media



Shellac "Skonni Tour", 2000



Nonagon, 2004



TV on the Radio, 2004

Excerpted from the upcoming monograph *100 Posters, 134 Squirrels: the Handcrafted Art of Jay Ryan*, the November release from Punk Planet Books. See more at thebirdmachine.com and punkplanetbooks.com.

and women's media organizations. Nor did she address gender justice."

Breona Gutschmidt, of the youth-oriented Seattle Alliance for Media Education, expresses similar frustrations on behalf of youth participants. "Because I have seen so much amazing work by youth on media reform issues over the past few years, I had high hopes for youth events and networking among young people at NCMR this year," Gutschmidt says. But she was disappointed in the single event for young people: what she describes as the "messy" Youth and Student Caucus.

"I'd like to see hands-on workshops on independent media production and grassroots organizing that are youth-specific and *lead by youth*," Gutschmidt suggests. "I'd like to see workshops on how to make policy work more fun; youth

speakers at speaking events; an equal voice for college-students and non-college students; and a less condescending attitude on the part of presenters so that young people feel welcome, valued, and comfortable asking questions."

Despite frustrations among attending media reformers, all present were united in their demands for grand-scale media regime change. Although few conservatives were in attendance—despite the organization's stated commitment to non-partisan media reform—the conference managed to attract a healthy swath of folks who would never have seen themselves as part of such a movement.

Leaving the plenary session Saturday night, for example, a loud Texas-accented man devoted his time to the assertion of his sonic and

physical rights to the entire sidewalk. He was talking, apparently to his wife. "Honey, remember last year when you accidentally took that flyer from those Free Press people? . . . Well apparently they're not really like that at all.

They're havin' this convention

up here. I just got in the most amazing conversation with two people in the bar, and they totally understood my whole Wal-Mart theory about the TV, you know? . . . Yeah, I think you should come up here." —Anne Elizabeth Moore

Find out more at www.freepress.net.

"I don't see what's weird about it."

ONE-MAN BAND ALMIGHTY DO ME A FAVOR'S
BRADLEY WILLIAMS ISN'T A NOVELTY ACT

He's just a dude who plays a bass drum, high-hat, guitar, harmonica and sings at the same time: He's Almighty Do Me A Favor, and he's Bradley Williams. He's a boy from Alabama who wants nothing more than to beat out songs that make you feel like you're standing in a barren field in a cloud of dirt

an old pick-up truck kicked up. He plays for the memory of Hasil Adkins. He plays so everyone can raise a cheap beer to something. Later this year, Kapow Records will release his debut album.

Why'd you start a one-man band?