



## The Center for Media and Democracy strengthens participatory democracy by investigating and exposing public relations spin and propaganda, and by promoting media literacy and citizen journalism.

CMD provides in-depth reporting on PRWatch.org about corporate spin, government propaganda and the role of PR firms in polluting our information environment. On our SourceWatch.org site, we provide a platform for collaborative research and reporting on the individuals, organizations, and issues shaping the public agenda. Following are highlights from recent months.

### *The Pentagon Pundits from Several Angles*

Several CMD staffers, including Executive Director John Stauber, Research Director Sheldon Rampton, and Senior Researcher Diane Farsetta, wrote at length about the Pentagon pundits scandal. John was a guest on PBS's NewsHour. You can see a clip of him debating Bob Zelnick at [www.prwatch.org/node/7256](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7256). For Diane's look at the intersection with the corporate lobbying industry, go to [www.prwatch.org/node/7282](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7282). For Sheldon and Diane's assessment of why the pundit program was in fact illegal, visit [www.prwatch.org/node/7261](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7261).

### *Don't Fall for Pinkwashing*

TobaccoWiki Editor Anne Landman addressed the common practice of adding pink highlights to an item — whether cosmetics, a car, or the iPod case pictured here — in order to encourage people to buy it and support breast cancer research at the same time. But how much does cause-related marketing help the issue, and how much is it intended to help the bottom line of the corporation? Read more at

[www.prwatch.org/node/7436](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7436).

### *Your "Right" to Get Junk Mail*

Anne Landman took on the junk mail industry, and their spin around making sure that no one "loses the right" to receive unwanted mail. She also assessed their claims that the billions of pieces of unwanted mail are not a problem for the environment. People on both sides of the issue feel strongly — her articles drew more comments on our sites than any in recent years. Read them at [www.prwatch.org/node/7192](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7192) and [www.prwatch.org/node/7224](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7224).

### *Deja Vu All Over Again: Iraq & Iran*

John Stauber wrote an article analyzing how the Bush administration's efforts to rally support for action against Iran is eerily similar to the now-discredited drumbeat to attack Iraq. In some cases, the same journalists who carried water for the Administration are now writing misleading reports about Iran. How can this happen again when so much is known about the lies that led us into Iraq? Read more at [www.prwatch.org/node/7294](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7294).

### *New Word for the Day: Slacktivism*

Anne Landman spent some time perusing the Urban Dictionary and found Slacktivism, a fusion of the words "slacker" and "activism." It's defined as "the act of participating in obviously pointless activities as an expedient alternative to actually expending effort to fix a problem."

It's closely related to pinkwashing, discussed at left. Go to [www.prwatch.org/node/7403](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7403) and see if you've fallen prey to corporate feel-good, but ultimately meaningless, displays.



### *Who's Afraid of CMD? Bill O'Reilly!*

The National Conference on Media Reform (NCMR) was held June 6-8, 2008. Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly didn't attend, but railed anyway about the "left-wing loonies" who participated. To prove his point, he used a video clip from the previous year's NCMR in Memphis. The video, filmed by Matt Thompson, asked people to sum up the spirit of the conference in five words. CMD's own Sari Williams was shown saying "Bill O'Reilly, kiss my ass," and then laughing. Evidently O'Reilly didn't appreciate the joke. He used the clip to show how "hate-filled" the left is. For more on the conference, check out CMD intern Daniel Haack's article on page 2. To see Sari saying her now-famous five words, go to [www.prwatch.org/node/7429](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7429).

### *Dissecting Condi's Brain*

CMD guest blogger John H. Brown wrote an insightful and illuminating article about how Condoleezza Rice has gotten more credit than she deserves for her foreign policy prowess. Often touted as the intellectual member of the Bush team, she herself proclaims that "policy-making is 90 percent blocking and tackling and 10 percent intellectual." In addition, while her academic background is Soviet studies, she doesn't seem to have really mastered the important lessons from that period. And the Middle East? Not her forte. Read more about how she has accumulated so many accolades, and how her real abilities have not served the U.S. — or the world. Read the entire article at [www.prwatch.org/node/7327](http://www.prwatch.org/node/7327).



## CMD In the News

- CMD Senior Researcher Diane Farsetta wrote a lengthy article on the nuclear industry's lobbying efforts to secure federal subsidies for new plants. The piece was published in the June 2008 issue of *The Progressive* magazine.
- Executive Director John Stauber presented at the United States Holocaust Museum on June 20, 2008, as part of their "Roundtable with Journalists: Journalism Under the Third Reich." The event was a precursor to an extensive exhibit, "State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda." Opening in November 2008, this special exhibition examining state propaganda and the role of Nazi propaganda in the rise and fall of the Third Reich and inciting genocide.
- TobaccoWiki Editor Anne Landman wrote an article for *Style Weekly* in Richmond, VA. Published June 4, 2008, "Tobacco U," outlines tobacco industry funding of universities, and pays particular attention to the case of Virginia Commonwealth University and Philip Morris USA. "Those who follow the tobacco industry know that currying favor and maintaining relationships with major medical and research universities is key to the industry's ability to maintain credibility, and thus power, with legislators and regulators. The university is certainly helping Philip Morris out on that count."

"The Center's work of exposing government and corporate propaganda is absolutely essential to our democracy."

— Amy Goodman of  
*Democracy Now!*

## Feeling Minnesota

By Daniel Haack

A few weeks have passed since 3,500 journalists, bloggers, scholars, activists, policymakers, and media professionals descended upon Minneapolis for the June 6-8 2008 National Conference for Media Reform, but the noise the event generated is still echoing on the Web and elsewhere. The three-day event—which aimed to open the dialogue of media reform and provide a venue for mobilization—was hosted by Free Press, a national nonprofit and nonpartisan organization promoting diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications.

Legendary newsman Dan Rather, whose presence at the event was the source of some contention, slammed corporate media on Saturday night, telling his audience that "America's biggest, most important news organizations have, over the past 25 years, fallen prey to merger after merger, acquisition after acquisition, to the point where they are now tiny parts of immeasurably larger corporate entities—entities whose primary business often has nothing to do with news. . . . In the current model of corporate news ownership, the incentive to produce good and valuable news is simply not there."

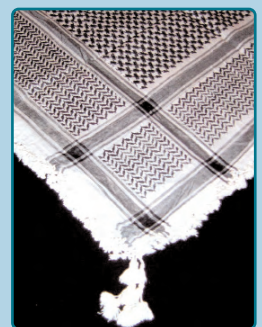
Most of the panels, speeches and workshops focused on one or more of the core tenets of modern media reform: media consolidation, public media, quality and fair journalism, civil and human rights, and net neutrality. The latter took center stage at this year's conference, with FCC Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein warning, "We cannot let what happened to our media happen to the Internet. We cannot allow a few gatekeepers to control the Internet so they can maximize profits in the service of advertisers. We need to keep the Internet of the people, by the people, and for the people." Adelstein also promised a thorough investigation of the Department of Defense's military analyst propaganda operation, a covert strategy recently exposed by the *New York Times*.

Elsewhere, attendees listened to panelists debating such topics as the media's coverage of race and gender in the 2008 election, privacy rights in a world of pervasive communication technologies, the ever-increasing blogosphere and online news sector, and the upcoming 2009 digital television transition. Several documentaries were also screened through-

## Open Mouth, Insert Foot . . .



Dunkin' Donuts pulled an online ad for frozen lattes featuring domestic maven Rachael Ray after receiving complaints from right-wing bloggers, including FOX News commentator Michelle Malkin. Their gripe? That a black-and-white paisley scarf Ray wore in the ad too closely resembled a traditional Arab headdress called a kaffiyeh. Malkin wrote that the scarf resembled "a regular adornment of Muslim terrorists appearing in beheading and hostage-taking videos." But as Amahl Bishara, a lecturer at the University of Chicago who specializes in media matters about the Middle East said, "Kaffiyehs are worn every day on the street by Palestinians and other people in the Middle East — by people going to work, going to school, taking care of their families, and just trying to keep warm ... To reduce their meaning to support for terrorism has a tacit racist tone to it."



out the weekend, including “Body of War,” a compelling look at Tomas Young, a young American soldier paralyzed from a bullet to his spine while serving in Iraq, who takes an impassioned and unapologetic stance against the war. Producer and talk show host Phil Donahue was on hand to present and discuss the film.

Besides Donahue, Rather and Adelstein, the conference featured other such luminaries as Bill Moyers, Arianna Huffington, Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, and Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman. However, while these marquee names lent the event some gravitas, it was the passion of the thousands of diverse and invested attendees for media reform that set the conference’s critical yet optimistic tone. The entire gathering constituted an electrifying plea for change in the increasingly problematic corporate media landscape of infotainment and questionable journalism ethics.

Bill O’Reilly, armed with two pundits—neither of whom attended the conference—criticized the conference on his show Monday, June 9th, attacking it as a “stridently un-American” gathering of the “lunatic left.” Jabs at Fox News’ documented history of troublesome journalism were frequent and many at the conference. Moyers, whose videotaped ambush by one of O’Reilly’s reporters has been widely circulated on the Internet and on television, countered the Fox News host’s assessment in his speech at the conference Saturday morning, calling the media reform movement “the most significant citizens’ movement to emerge in this new century,” and maintained that journalism is in “profound crisis.”

*This piece was first published on [www.Fightingbob.com](http://www.Fightingbob.com). Daniel Haack is an Ithaca College student interning with CMD for the summer.*

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520 University Avenue, Suite 227  
Madison, WI 53703 USA  
Phone: 608-260-9713  
Fax: 608-260-9714  
Email: [editor@prwatch.org](mailto:editor@prwatch.org)  
Web site: <http://www.prwatch.org>

### CMD Staff

- Patricia Barden, IT Director
- Bob Burton, SourceWatch Editor
- Diane Farsetta, Senior Researcher
- Blake Hall, Senior Web Developer
- Conor Kenny, Congresspedia Managing Editor
- Anne Landman, TobaccoWiki Editor
- Sheldon Rampton, Research Director
- Judith Siers-Poisson, Associate Director
- John Stauber, Executive Director
- Sari Williams, Office and Outreach Manager

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## Stimulate the Economy and Democracy

If you don’t already have plans for all of your stimulus check, please consider a gift to CMD today. **Support especially for our work to uncover government propaganda seems like a fitting use for this Bush administration shell game.**

Go to [www.PRWatch.org/donate](http://www.PRWatch.org/donate) to donate on-line over our secure server, or use the enclosed envelope to send a check made out to “CMD.”  
**Thank you!**

TobaccoWiki editor Anne Landman joined CMD in October 2006 thanks to generous funding from the American Legacy Foundation. Anne



has extensive experience working in the tobacco control field. While working for the American Lung Association of Colorado, she gathered evidence describing a little-known merchandising arrangement between cigarette companies and retailers. Anne discovered that tobacco companies were paying generous placement fees to retailers in exchange for strategic placement of self-service cigarette displays out of the line of sight of clerks and near the doors of the establishment. The arrangement resulted in tremendous amounts of cigarettes being shoplifted, primarily by youth, all across the country. Her efforts to bring the arrangement to the public’s attention culminated in CBS Evening News flying to western Colorado to film an “Eye on America” segment on the issue.

As a result of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, millions of previously secret tobacco industry documents were posted on the Internet. With her background as a respiratory therapist and degrees in both Environmental Restoration/Waste Management Technology and Communications, Anne was poised to take advantage of the information. She is, quite simply, one of the foremost experts on this trove of documents.

In 2006 Anne completed a research fellowship at the University of California-San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education with Stanton Glantz, Ph.D. Stan is a long-time friend of CMD and was instrumental in the Legacy funding and Anne coming to CMD.

Anne lives in western Colorado with her husband Steve and best canine buddy Crew. They live in an energy-efficient solar home made of over 4,000 used automobile tires and 900 pounds of aluminum cans.

# The Center for Media and Democracy and SpinWatch Launch the Nuclear Portal

The Center for Media and Democracy is pleased to be partnering with its European partner, the UK-based SpinWatch, on a new online resource to help reporters, researchers and concerned citizens better understand who's spinning nuclear power and weapons issues.

The Nuclear Portal on SourceWatch — CMD's collaborative online encyclopedia of the people, groups and issues shaping the public agenda — contains profiles on nuclear companies, industry front groups, public relations firms and lobbyists. You can find the portal by going to [www.SourceWatch.org](http://www.SourceWatch.org) and clicking on "Nuclear Issues" in the list



of SourceWatch Portals towards the top of the page, or by clicking the Portals link in the left navigation bar box titled "SourceWatch."

"World governments are making major decisions on energy and environmental issues," explained CMD Senior Researcher Diane Farsetta. "We need and deserve the best reporting on

these complex issues. Instead, all too often, we get features like Newsweek's April 21 interview with Patrick Moore. Reporter Fareed Zakaria called Moore a 'renegade' and an 'unlikely . . . critic of the environmental movement.' He failed to tell readers that Moore is paid by the Nuclear Energy Institute, and has served as a PR consultant to the logging, biotech and mining industries for more than 15 years."

"The nuclear industry's PR push to expand nuclear power worldwide uses many of the same tactics in different countries," said SpinWatch co-founder and investigative reporter Andy Rowell. "The new Nuclear Portal aims to be a resource, uniquely suited for tracking industry players and their actions across the globe."

"It's fitting that the Nuclear Portal is being launched [in April]," said SourceWatch managing editor Bob Burton. "This week not only marks Earth Day, but also the 22nd anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster and the second anniversary of the 'Clean and Safe Energy Coalition,' an industry front group headed by Patrick Moore and former EPA head Christine Todd Whitman."

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Madison, WI 53703  
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