

WAMC Hosts Teacher Conference on Media & the News



As part of its *Youth Media Project: Student Town Meetings*, WAMC Northeast Public Radio hosted its first-ever Youth Media Project: Teacher Conference on Thursday, November 3rd, 2005 at the WAMC Performing Arts Studio/Linda Norris Auditorium. Entitled “The Media & the News: How much do we really get?,” the conference was open to educators in urban and rural public school districts in the Capital Region. Participants included twenty-six teachers and administrators from Granville, Lake George, Hoosick Falls, Rensselaer, Duanesburg, Mohonasen, Waterford-Halfmoon, Albany, Schenectady, Catskill, Coxsackie-Athens, Greenville and Berne-Knox-Westerlo.

The educators were part of the audience during the taping of *The Media Project*, featuring NewsChannel 13 Anchor Lydia Kulbida, Times-Union Editor Rex Smith and WAMC’s own Dr. Alan Chartock. After the taping of the show, educators engaged in a Q&A session with the Anchor, the Editor and the Professor. Alan Chartock and Clarence Fanto, WAMC’s Vice President for News and Cultural Affairs, later spent an hour with the conference attendees discussing what constitutes news and how it gets “spun” during the delivery.

During lunch, participants watched “Weapons of Mass Deception,” a film that dissects the media’s role in how Americans receive information on the war in Iraq. Throughout the day, the educators learned more about the *Youth Media Project: Student Town Meetings* and worked with WAMC Education Director Maryanne Malecki in preparation for conducting a “Teacher Town Meeting” on media literacy in the afternoon. Moderated by Alan Chartock, the panel included David Galletly, WAMC Senior Vice President for Operations; Clarence Fanto, and Mark McGuire, media critic from the Times-Union. This very special “Teacher Town Meeting” was taped for later broadcast on WAMC’s popular afternoon program, *The Speakers’ Corner*; the audio is available on-line as well.

The participants declared the day to be “outstanding!” They particularly enjoyed having one-on-one time with Alan, and most if not all are interested in bringing the Student Town Meetings into their classrooms. As one educator wrote, “. . .the authentic modeling done here, . . .to participate actively in a discussion, is exactly what students need in schools today. Participation creates true motivation to think, organize and define positions. This is critical in education today.” Another wrote, “Bringing educators together to think about this topic in itself was important enough!” And yet another comment: “You guys did a great job at having a mixed and diverse panel that addressed important issues. I feel that as we continue to work together as educators, we can fill some of the loopholes in our school systems.”

The downside of the day? Not enough time – to network, process information and share instructional strategies and techniques. In response to this, WAMC will continue its partnership with public educators with a four-day Teacher Institute June 26 - 29, 2006. Information and details will be available from WAMC in the next few months.

Funding for this project is provided by the Educational Foundation of America and Carl E. Touhey; additional support for the Teacher Conference came from Clarion Hotel Catering and Pie in the Sky Bakery.

If you would like to participate in WAMC’s professional development opportunities for public school teachers and administrators, contact WAMC Education Director Maryanne Malecki at (518) 465-5233 ext. 135, or visit the Web site, www.wamcstudenttownmeetings.org.