

INVITED HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Networking the Counterculture: The 1970 Alternative Media Conference at Goddard College

Liz W. Faber and John L. Hochheimer

In June of 1970, a group of radio station programmers, record company executives, cartoonists, musicians, poets, political activists, and assorted hippie hangers-on gathered at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont for the Alternative Media Conference (AMC). In this article, the authors trace the history of the AMC, from its initial inception in 1970 to the second Alternative Media Conference in 2013, and its role in shaping not only alternative media across the United States but also, more specifically, Free-Form radio. In shedding light on this history, we seek to open previously neglected scholarly discourse on the history of Free-Form FM radio.

We are the other people.
We are the other people.
We are the other people.
You're the other people too.
Found a way to get to you...

- The Mothers of Invention (1968)

The renown of the August, 1969 *Woodstock Music and Art Fair: An Aquarian Exposition* in White Lake, New York (known widely as the "Woodstock Rock Festival") remains to this day. Its audience of 400,000+ music fans, the artists who played for them (Richie Havens, Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Santana, The Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Ten Years After, Crosby Stills & Nash, and Ravi Shankar, among many others), the documentary films, magazine articles, books,

Liz W. Faber (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2013) is an instructor of academic writing and American studies at Manhattanville College. Her research interests include film studies, voice and gender studies, and media and technology history.

John L. Hochheimer (Ph.D., Stanford University, 1986) is professor of communication in the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. His research and writing has focused on community-based media for social change and the spiritual foundations of communication.

albums, and other memorabilia emanating from it may well have marked the high water of the alternative/underground music scene in the United States (Statement on the Historical...2001). In particular, the release of the documentary film *Woodstock* on March 26, 1970 allowed a widespread glimpse into the anti-oppression, anti-normative system of American counter-culture.

And yet, its lasting impact may pale compared with a lesser known gathering that took place three months after the release of *Woodstock*: the Alternative Media Conference (AMC), held at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont, June 17–20, 1970. In bringing together approximately 2,000 radio station programmers, record company executives, cartoonists, musicians, poets, political activists, and assorted hippie hangers-on, the AMC was highly significant to people in the radio and music industries. It was not only the springboard for several media alliances and networking opportunities that exist up to the present day, but also provided a new venue for acting out the philosophy of the counter-culture in relationship to media. Thinking back upon it in 2007, Norm Winer, once an on-air announcer at WBCN Boston and long-time program director of WXRT Chicago, said the Alternative Media Conference was something, “I think about all the time. All roads led to there and all roads came from there” (Goldberg, 2008, p. 43).

To date, however, scholars have largely neglected the rich substance of these “roads.” In this essay, then, the authors begin to map the organization, proceedings, and aftermath of the conference that affected so many in the commercial and non-commercial media industries in order to provide a basis for future research and, ultimately, a greater understanding of the role of such Alternative Media projects in the culture of the past and present alike.

“Alternative” radio had its beginning with the establishment of the Pacifica Foundation and radio station KPFA in Berkeley in the late 1940s (Lasar, 2000; McKinney, 1966; Post, 1974; Walker, 2004). With few exceptions, three Pacifica stations (KPFA, Berkeley; KPFK, Los Angeles; and WBAI, New York) operated in but three major markets well into the 1960s. As FM stations in a time when AM radio predominated, their audiences were limited to the few listeners who had both AM and FM reception.

Yet, a number of factors converged in the early to mid 1960s to scramble radio listenership and program formats. The civil rights movement revealed the lack of media voices mobilizing in opposition to the depredations of Jim Crow racism in the South and discrimination in housing, employment and education in the North. The burgeoning efforts mounted in opposition to the escalating war in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, and the relative lack of coverage of those efforts by predominant radio, television, newspaper, and newsmagazine interests, prompted an increasing demand for places where oppositional voices could speak and could be heard. Also, tastes in popular music in the wake of the folk/folk-rock incursions of the early 1960s and the “British Invasion” of 1964 were demanding more, and more varied, types of music be heard.

In response to demands that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) open up licenses to more ethnic minority control, the FCC mandated that, beginning in 1966, joint AM/FM broadcast programming in the 50 largest broadcasting markets must devote at least 50 per cent of their on-air time to substantially different program services, or they would lose their licenses. Further, the FCC mandated that all radio receivers sold in the United States must be capable of receiving both AM and FM program signals.

This presented FM station managers with a quandary. They were now responsible for filling, essentially, new programming services or endanger their licenses. In many cases, they chose to automate the new FM programming, providing music without disk jockeys or commercials (since they had not yet found their audiences). Such stations as WOR-FM New York, WBZ-FM Boston and WRKO-FM Boston (called "AR-KO, the shy but friendly robot") were the result. They had a lot of time to fill, and needed new programming to fill it up. Many opted for the new music coming from San Francisco, New York, Boston, and Los Angeles, formatted with cuts longer than the three minutes which were standard fare for AM Top 40 radio.

Albums, not singles, would provide the basis for the music played on the air. Cuts running four or more minutes were becoming more prominent, especially after the U.S. release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* in June 1967. Artists such as the Grateful Dead, Bob Dylan, the Doors, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Jefferson Airplane, Cream, and many others provided the material to be played. Given that there were so few commercials, songs could be grouped into sets of three or more pieces. These sets could also be used to tie together music based on a common theme, musical style, harmonic structure, or subject (Hochheimer, 2006). Programmers/announcers such as Tom Donahue at KMPX, KPPC-FM, and KSAN in southern and northern California, Tom "Uncle T" Gamache at WTBS, WBUR, and WBCN in Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts, Scott Muni at WNEW-FM New York, Steve Post and Bob Fass at WBAI New York provided the creative vision for putting such formats together.

Further, news and information would be provided not from network news feeds, but from locally based reporters who were interested in providing news and public affairs programming that reflected the interests and the lifestyles of their new listeners. Two of the most prominent of these were Wes "Skoop" Nisker at KSAN San Francisco and Danny Schechter (aka "*the News Dissector*") on WBCN Boston. Nisker, whose signature phrase, "If you don't like the news you hear, go out and make some of your own," developed a style of creative person-on-the-street news reportage focusing on issues of interest to his listeners. Schechter did in-depth public affairs programming decidedly different from what was then available on AM radio stations (Hochheimer, 2004).

As the format, variously called "underground," "freeform," "alternative," and "counter-culture" gained audience acceptance, more station managers and announcers began to provide similar program services in cities and towns around the

United States and Canada. While Pacifica Radio was then a loosely connected group of three semi-independent stations, many of the people responsible for creating these newer program formats were known to each other only by reputations. In the days before digital production and programming, as well as Internet connectivity, there were few means for programmers to hear, and to share, audio ideas with each other. As the movement to bring new ideas and new formats to the air grew, there was an increasing need to find a means to begin to provide connections between people who were interested in civil rights, environmental, anti-war, “anti-Establishment,” anti-Mainstream media.

It was within this milieu that the idea for a conference to bring together people involved in various forms of alternative/underground/counter-culture media was born. Its chief architect was Larry Yurdin, a graduate of Goddard College who had worked at WBAI with Bob Fass in 1963, traveled to California in 1967 in time to join the KMPX strike line, and, in 1968, had worked briefly as a DJ for WFMU in New Jersey (Walker, 2004; Yurdin interview, 2009). By the end of 1969, having made contacts in underground and commercial radio across the country, he decided to return to Goddard for graduate school.

By the spring of 1970 Goddard College had already established itself as an alternative educational institution. Founded in 1932 in Plainfield, Vermont—a small, rural town whose main industry was gravestones and farming (Aronowitz, 1970)—the school had no “grades, exams, a ranked faculty, or required courses” (Alternative Media Project, 1970c). Students simply paid tuition, lived in the dorms, and, in the tradition of John Dewey, learned for the sake of knowledge through concrete experience, rather than abstract reading (Alternative Media Project, 1970c; Yurdin interview, 2009).

In this setting, Yurdin’s proposal to teach a hands-on course centered on the rising alternative/underground media was well accepted. The course, titled “Mass Culture—Its Implications for a Society in Transition” was approved by Goddard’s new president, Jerry Witherspoon, to be taught in the Spring of 1970. Yurdin’s academic goal for the course was to examine “Media’s potential to awaken rather than anesthetize. The counter-culture...the changing nature of comics—from 1941 Captain Marvel to 1970 Zap; American music—from Rudy Vallee to The Band; radio from Amos and Andy to Radio Unnameable; TV from Milton Berle to Sesame Street” (Yurdin, 1970). However, his practical goal was to have his students arrange some sort of permanent alternative media program through Goddard that would allow for a free exchange of resources, ideas, and business contacts (Yurdin, 1970). When put to a vote, his students decided on two means of carrying out this goal: 1) start a community radio station at Goddard; and 2) organize a permanent Alternative Media Project (AMP) and a national tape library, beginning with the First Gathering of the AMP, or, as it became known, the Alternative Media Conference, to be held at Goddard College June 17–20 (Alternative Media Project, 1970e; Hodges, 1970; Yurdin interview, 2009).

This idea of “media’s potential to awaken rather than anesthetize,” echoing the ideas of Pacifica Radio’s founder Lew Hill (McKinney, 1966), would become the driving mantra of the AMP and a concept that appears in nearly every flier, news article, and interview related to the conference. Significantly, one of the only written documents in which this phrase was not used was the AMP budget proposal submitted to Goddard once outside funds had been secured for the conference. Rather, the AMP was here described as “communication and co-ordination among those involved in radical and alternative uses of the mass media” and a means for the Plainfield community to financially and culturally benefit from the presence of alternative media. Such careful wording in the preamble to a request for \$32,000 to set up a community FM radio station, in addition to \$7,700 to house and employ Larry Yurdin and his staff and maintain a permanent Alternative Media Project (Alternative Media Project, 1970e) indicates two vital aspects of the project. First, Yurdin needed a major financial commitment from the unendowed college, a fact that eventually led to conflict between Goddard’s administrators and the AMP. And second, Yurdin himself had to serve dual roles as conservative administrator and hip, egalitarian thinker. This latter point served as the foundation for the successful organization of the conference.

Having set the conference dates just one year after Woodstock and three months after the release of the *Woodstock* documentary, Yurdin and his students were set on holding a *conference*, not a *festival*, as the former would maintain a more serious awareness of the *production*—not consumption—of alternative media than the latter. To maintain the primary focus of the AMP—an exchange of ideas among people working with alternative media, rather than a concert-like demonstration of media—they decided to establish the Alternative Media Conference as, in reputation if not in practice, an invitation-only event (Yurdin interview, 2009). Using Yurdin’s contacts in the radio business as a jumping-off point, the AMP sent formal invitations to alternative radio stations, record companies, underground newspapers, etc. In addition to this formality, two of Yurdin’s students, John Cronin and Mike Bradford, traveled to various radio stations and newspaper presses in the United States and Canada in order to spread the word (Landa, 1970; Yurdin interview, 2009). And despite the fact that Yurdin has recently stated that no news articles were written prior to the conference, the AMP did release a press statement that incorporated a more polished version of their mantra: “It is hoped that this multi-media conference will draw people from all over the United States and Canada who are actively committed to a vision of the media, particularly radio, as an effective catalyst for awareness, rather than to its traditional role as an anesthetic” (Alternative Media Project, 1970a). Information about the upcoming conference was published in at least one newspaper, based on this press release and a direct interview with Yurdin (“Media Conference Starts at Goddard Next Week,” 1970).

As word spread, record companies interested in promoting their artists began contacting the AMP. John Hochheimer, then an all-night DJ at WBUR Boston, contacted record company promotion people he knew to encourage them to assist

in underwriting the conference. Two of these were Augie Blume and Mario Medious. Blume, then the national promotions director for RCA Records, gave \$1,000 from the company to fund the AMC. Over at Atlantic Records, Mario “The Big M” Medious, Director of Album Promotion & Special Projects, not only attended the conference and helped organize the musical acts, but he also offered either a \$10,000 donation from the company or a performance by Crosby Stills & Nash. However, since Crosby Stills & Nash were, in 1970, synonymous with the folk rock from their performances at festivals like Woodstock, Yurdin negotiated with Medious for \$5,000 and performances by Gene McDaniels¹ and three then relatively unknown bands—Dr. John,² The J. Geils Band,³ and Cactus⁴ (Yurdin interview, 2009). The performance by The J. Geils Band coincided with the release of their first album (Wolf, 2010).

With funding becoming available and interest rising in underground media circles, the AMP needed to figure out how to get people from the west coast and Canada to Vermont. Dick Rosenblatt of Button Sound in San Francisco had heard about the conference via the underground press and offered to charter a plane to bring participants from the west coast. Initially, Yurdin was trepidacious about trusting Rosenblatt, whom he had never met; but, as it turned out, Rosenblatt had been a student of the Goddard president Witherspoon, who personally vouched for Rosenblatt. When the plane arrived in Vermont, however, not only were the flight attendant and the half-dozen passengers from KSAN and the Hog Farm “turned on” by LSD, but also, since Rosenblatt had decided not to collect money from anyone, Goddard was left with the bill (Alternative Media Project, 1970g; Goldberg, 2008; Yurdin interview, 2009).

This incident, captured in a Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers comic panel drawn at the conference by Gilbert Shelton (Shelton, 1970), quickly became the first indicator of the overall tone of the AMC. In order to talk about alternative media and counter-culture, the conference organizers felt they absolutely had to accommodate and even encourage attendees to explore the limits of media and social norms.

Despite this early financial problem, the AMP’s “invitation only” process worked quite successfully. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people arrived in Plainfield, including at least 143 radio personnel from 69 stations, 72 members of the press from 52 newspapers, magazines, etc., and 50 music industry executives from 41 record companies.⁵ Among these were such notable people as radio’s Bob Fass, Lorenzo Milam, and Jeremy Lansman, *Rolling Stone* photographer Robert Altman, *Mad* magazine creator Harvey Kurtzman, underground journalist and Yippie co-founder Paul Krassner, and Baba Ram Das, to name a few (Goldberg, 2008; Goodman, 1997; Todd, 1970; Walker, 2004; Yurdin interview, 2009). Coincidentally, the national *Billboard* Magazine Record conference for commercial radio executives and broadcasters was scheduled for the same weekend on the east coast, and the AMC drew several people from there as well (Yurdin interview, 2009).

When attendees arrived, they paid a \$10 registration fee and received an identification card and a guidebook to the conference containing the history of Goddard,

the general goals of the conference and Project, a few guidelines such as parking and avoiding overcrowding, a map of the area, a description of local attractions, and a detailed schedule of workshops, concerts, and film screenings (Alternative Media Project, 1970c). In keeping with the spirit of counter-culture, the conference physically repositioned attendees outside the typical boardroom business space of commercial media; instead, everyone slept in tents or dorm rooms, gathered around a campfire at night, swam in the campus pond, and met for workshops in the library, or wherever space was available. Despite the meticulous planning the schedule indicates, administrative flexibility quickly became necessary as daily revisions were issued, new workshops were added, and speakers arrived late or not at all.

Furthermore, the range of topics reveals the breadth of the very definitions of "alternative," "underground," and "counter-culture." There were, of course, several media-related workshops that might have been held at a more traditional, commercial, or academic conference such as "Classical Music Production and Programming," "Public Affairs," and "Interviewing Techniques." However, these were peppered in among workshops more clearly focused on alternative media: "Pirate and Guerrilla Radio," "Drugs and the Media," or "Low Budget Films" (Alternative Media Project, 1970c).

Interestingly, there was a third type of workshop that centered around what is now considered 1960s counter-culture: "Holding Together What's Happening to Tim Leary," "Breaking Down Societal Resistance to Change." The AMC also marked among the first media-related explorations of the ongoing issues of civil rights ("Black Oriented Radio"), gender equality and militant feminism ("Women in the Media," "Women & Media"), and politics ("Media's responsibility to political prisoners"). New countercultural movements were also represented. Just a year earlier, the Stonewall riots in New York City had jumpstarted the gay rights movement; although gay rights was not originally a part of the conference schedule, a "Gay Liberation Front Workshop" was added to Thursday's events at the last minute. And two months earlier, the first Earth Day had been held, bringing ecological issues to the forefront and leading to AMC workshops such as "Ecology Entertainment Slides, etc." (Alternative Media Project, 1970c; 1970e; 1970f).

With so many different social, political, and media-related stances rising from 1960s counter-culture interacting in one small space, there were bound to be non-work related happenings. The Hog Farm, a collection of individuals from a New Mexico commune, rented the campus campsite and doled out free meals of soup and rice, along with "electric lemonade in gallon jugs" (Todd, 1970). LSD was not the only drug readily available at the AMC; a controversial article in the *Boston Globe* describes a man swimming to the center of the campus pond with a "joint in his mouth" (Donham, 1970). Meanwhile, in the woods by the pond, a group of militant feminists verbally attacked several male cameramen for arranging and filming an orgy. However, police authorities only became involved after the midnight concert on Thursday, featuring Cactus, disturbed local residents. Yurdin

managed to move the concert inside, but not before local farmers reported that the noise disturbed their cows so much they ceased giving milk (Aronowitz, 1970; Donham, 1970).

There was, in the words of participant Justin O'Brien (2009), "the inevitable clash of a thousand progressive agendas." Baba Ram Das led a workshop on stress reduction and conflict resolution. While his words helped to dissipate many of the tensions that had arisen at the conference, and his guiding chant/meditation worked for a while to bring conflicting world views into greater harmony, the comity he sought to engender failed to take hold for long.

The most infamous incident, however, occurred during the last workshop of the AMC—"Comics and Mass Consciousness," featuring Stan Lee of Marvel Comics, Harvey Kurtzman, and Gilbert Shelton. Those attending the workshop sat or stood in a circle around Kurtzman as he defended his *Playboy* comic, "Little Annie Fanny" (Donham, 1970) and explained his views on Woodstock (Todd, 1970). This precipitated a lot of yelling of charges and counter-charges of male sexual exploitation. In the midst of this discussion, there occurred what has been variously described as a "f***-in" (Yurdin interview, 2009), "ceremonial copulation" (Todd, 1970), a "public intercourse session" (Donham, 1970), or a "demonstrations of savagery" ("The Underground Press," 1970) in which two or three couples (reports vary) strode into the center of the circle, undressed, and began copulating to the rhythm of the audience's applause. Several feminists in the crowd, disgusted with the display, began yelling at the couples; the women in the couples responded with smiles. When the couples had finished, the discussion apparently continued (Todd, 1970).

Although this seems like a radical display that, presumably, caused a considerable amount of tension among the varying counter-cultural groups, this was, as Yurdin has since pointed out, less a confrontational moment than a moment of conflict that never overshadowed the fact that everyone had something to give to and take from the conference.⁶ It was simply "a different universe" (Yurdin interview, 2009). Indeed, such incidents, while shocking to the mainstream culture of the time, were indicative of an overwhelming urgency in American counter-culture and alternative media to step outside what many participants saw as the oppressively normative boundaries of mainstream life. Thus, in keeping with the creative critique of dominant culture inspired by the Dada artists of the 1920s and Goddard College's own philosophy of learning by doing, the conference provided an outlet for anyone truly searching to find ways that media—and life in general—can "awaken rather than anesthetize."

Despite Yurdin's positive outlook on what was essentially his project, can the AMC be considered a success? In Plainfield, the aftermath of the conference cast serious doubt on the validity of alternative media. Several news articles from the Vermont-based *Barre-Montpelier Times-Argus* expressed disgust with the reports of the conference published in the *Boston Globe* and *Atlantic Monthly*. In one article, the author sarcastically remarks that the *Globe* "story should increase *Globe* circulation in Washington County, especially in Plainfield" ("Conference at Goddard,"

1970). Another article more blatantly attacked the conference proceedings: "That's alternative communication? The breach of accepted custom will have negated any other messages that might have been intended for outsiders. What can such a rude program accomplish?" (*The Underground Press*, 1970).

Such a condemnation of the AMC directly reflected on Goddard College's reputation and, subsequently, the future of the Alternative Media Project. Immediately following the conference, the AMP again requested permanent space and funding in addition to one-time funding to set up a community radio station (Alternative Media Project, 1970g). Although the radio station would, by 1973, be established as WGDR ("About WGDR," n.d.), and the Project received generous donations from record companies, musicians, and media executives, the AMP still owed the college's business office more than \$7,000 for the chartered airplane, long distance phone calls (Alternative Media Project, 1970g), and missing linens (Alternative Media Project, 1970b). On top of this, in the Fall of 1970, Yurdin left Goddard to work for ABC-FM (Keith, 1997). Although archival records are unclear as to whether this was a result of Goddard's unwillingness to provide funding, it is evident that the Project did not continue after the conference.

The conference's negative financial impact on Goddard, however, continued throughout 1970. Shortly after Richard Todd published his expose of the conference in the November 1970 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, a potential contributor threatened to withhold an "unrestricted" donation to the college (Fay, 1970). In response, Witherspoon pointed out that, not only was the conference "certainly not something [he] would wish Goddard to have been associated with," but also that the news accounts were "wildly distorted." He added that "considerable damage" was done to Goddard's campus and the conference was "indeed something of a disaster." Furthermore, he revised Goddard's philosophy and switched the school to a trimester system in which students would attend classes year-round, thereby leaving no room for future conferences in the summer (Witherspoon, n.d.).

Evidently, then, the conference was a financial and reputational disaster for both the college and the Project. However, its impact on commercial and alternative media alike has been profoundly positive, as "the radio stations picked up the energy stirred by the conference" (Yurdin interview, 2009). In a letter dated June 26, 1970, Lawrence Gahagan, then President of KZAP in Sacramento, personally thanked Witherspoon for the conference.

Not only was the conference very good, but also it was interesting to learn about Goddard College. Because of the conference, Goddard has become more significant in my life than Princeton, from which I graduated just three years ago. Several people were able to attend the conference from KZAP, and we all returned with new ideas and enthusiasm. (Gahagan, 1970)

From a business standpoint, the AMC allowed for a meeting of many of the top counter-cultural minds in the music, radio, broadcast news, and television industries, broadening the reach of such networked projects as the KRAB nebula, which was established in part by conference participants Jeremy Lansman of KDNA St. Louis, Missouri and Lorenzo Milam of KTAO Los Gatos, California (Jonathan, 2006).

Even now, more than 45 years later, the contacts and ideas of the conference continue. Because media remain such vital parts of dominant and counter-culture, the collective innovations and ideas that stemmed from the conference have, in turn, created changes that many participants believe extend beyond even the impact of Woodstock (Yurdin interview, 2009). Free form radio programs can still be heard around the country, though many are now moving to HD2 or HD3 stations and internet-based streaming formats (e.g. Free Form BCN, multiple Pacifica network stations). Further, a video collective started at the AMC. A number of self-proclaimed "video freaks" pooled their equipment and their expertise, opening up what they called a "Data Bank." This allowed for the sharing of videotape, collaboration of different video production units, and the means for anyone who needed the information to draw upon (Silver, 1970).⁷ This, along with the newly available, and relatively inexpensive Sony Portapak video camera, provided the foundation from which the video guerilla movement sprang (see Shamberg, 1971), presaging the growth of social media in the modern age.

In 2009, a (now defunct) Facebook group with over 700 members, called "1970 Alternative Media Conference" (Yurdin interview, 2009), reinitiated a large number of business and personal connections made at the conference. Although not all of them attended the conference in 1970, many did, and have commented at length about their experiences. Charles Lacquadera, long-time radio personality on WBCN Boston, wrote, "This little gathering changed my life and that of so many others—strongly influencing the course of WBCN; and I can't begin to guess the effects it had on the future of hundreds of thousands of others—directly and indirectly" (2010). Likewise, Trish Robbins, former executive producer at KGO and KSFO, San Francisco, recalls, "This was a game changer for me...[I] have never forgotten this...perhaps most importantly met KSAN people from San Francisco and not long after moved there and started working at KSAN...learned a lot about 'going with your gut' and remember Dr. John the Nighttripper playing" (2009).

On May 18, 2013, Goddard College hosted a second Alternative Media Conference, in part to celebrate the rich history of alternative and countercultural media developed out of the original AMC, but also, as Goddard President Barbara Vacarr stated in a 2013 press release, to "discuss the future of media and journalism in a rapidly changing landscape," and, "to ensure that we have a vibrant media that engages and furthers the democratic process" ("Thom Hartmann and Ellen Ratner to Headline," 2013). This new conference featured a speech by Larry Yurdin and a video compilation of photographs taken at the 1970 AMC, with narration Yurdin, titled "History of the 1970 Alternative Media Conference at Goddard College" (Yurdin & Byerly, 2013). In addition, progressive radio talk show host Thom

Hartmann gave the keynote speech and held a live broadcast of his show with special guest Senator Bernie Sanders at Goddard's WGDR; White House Correspondent and Bureau Chief for Talk New Radio Ellen Ratner led a plenary session; there were panels featuring Maxie C. Jackson III (former president and chief executive officer of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters), Andi Zeisler (co-founder and editorial/creative director of *Bitch Magazine*), and John Harris (former senior writer at *The Onion* and current head writer at AdultSwim.com); and there were performances by the experimental theater troupe Combustible Cabaret/Digital Vaudeville ("Thom Hartmann and Ellen Ratner to Headline," 2013).

Today, some of the "old modes of communication" may indeed have become obsolete, and the widespread use of portable media equipment and data banks may have come into being, and, as with the 1970 AMC, the 2013 conference was not without its critics (see Jones, 2013). But with approximately 170 attendees, many of whom had attended the original conference, and topics ranging from the corporatization of media to the potential interactivity of today's alternative radio, the conference may be seen as adhering to the original goal of achieving an alternative media that "awakens, rather than anesthetizes."

Notes

1. Medious, 2010. McDaniels had had hits with *Tower of Strength* and *A Hundred Pounds of Clay* in the early 1960s. He later wrote the jazz/soul protest classic *Compared to What*, which he performed at the Conference. The song would later become a hit for Les McCann and Eddie Harris and Roberta Flack later covered it. Flack also had a hit with McDaniels' *Feel Like Makin' Love* in 1974. (Kilgour, 2007).
2. Born Malcolm John "Mac" Rebbeck, Jr., Dr. John is a New Orleans piano player and singer. At the time of the AMC, he had recorded three albums, including *Gris-Gris*, which has been named one of the Top 500 LPs by *Rolling Stone Magazine* (Rebbeck & Rummel, 1995).
3. The J. Geils Band comprised guitarist Geils, vocalist Peter Wolf, bassist Danny Klein, blues harmonica player Magic Dick, keyboardist Seth Justman, and Stephen Bladd on drums. They recorded more than a dozen albums. Among other tunes, they performed *Cruisin' for a Love* and the Otis Redding song *Homework* (J. Geils Band History, 1999).
4. Cactus was/is a band from Long Island, New York. Members included Carmine Appice, Jim McCarty, Tim Bogert, and Rusty Day. Called "The American Led Zeppelin," Cactus had just released their first LP on Atco Records at the time of the AMC (CactUsRocks.net, 2010).
5. <http://wgdr.net/wgdrsite/archive/AMP/index.html>, re: "Alternative Media Conference List."
6. Conference participant Ernie Medeiros (2010) recalls that one of the organizers of this moment, John Boyd, and the others who participated were doing so on behalf of what they claimed to be a "real agenda." They were many in attendance who, they said, were "turned off" by what they perceived to be "militant, humorless feminism." Boyd organized the F***-In to try and "loosen everybody up, spread some erotic joy" at a conference that had seen moments of great tension and discord.
7. As David Silver, writing shortly after the conference in the weekly newspaper *Boston After Dark* foresaw,

People should acquire the portable equipment by any means they can and start taping—then send it to the data bank, perhaps swapping for other stuff taped thousands of miles

away. Camera units must be given to ghetto dwellers, factory workers, freaks, artists, mental institutions, jails, travelling neo-Kesey bands of bus dwellers... Then we have not only television creating the vitally important free flow of information, but acting as mind-blowers, electronic therapists for anyone who perhaps would benefit from digging him or herself on a monitor. Self awareness via TV could be one of the most important functions of the medium in the seventies...the medium could be put to use immediately to help the underprivileged, the unhealthy, the oppressed in general get back into their selves. As the video bank grows, so will its usefulness in ways that are not now even possible to imagine right now... Those interested in the word "alternative," some of whom were at Goddard, want to see the media opened up to everyone's eyes ... as the technology advances, old modes of communication channeling become obsolete. (1970, p. 18)

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