

Alvin H. Perlmutter

George

The attached report from Jerry Sams up the status and final stage of the board's involvement in CIPB

Thanks for your time and efforts during CIPB's brief life.

Best regards.

Al

TO: Al Perlmutter, CIPB Board Chair
FROM: Jerry Starr, CIPB Executive Director
RE: Final Report
DATE: March 29, 2002

Since this is a final chapter (although there will be an epilog), I would like to preface it with a brief historical review.

Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting was first launched as a project of the Center for Social Studies Education (CSSE). Founded in Pennsylvania in 1984, CSSE is a not-for-profit educational corporation. I am the founder and director and it has its own board of directors. Over the years, CSSE has hosted a variety of projects, including Pittsburgh Educators for Social Responsibility, The Lessons of the Vietnam War, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, and the Save Pittsburgh Public Television Campaign.

CSSE introduced CIPB as a new project in 1996 with press releases, published statements, interviews, and meetings wherever there were such opportunities. For example, CSSE called a special meeting of CIPB at the Media and Democracy Congress I in San Francisco in 1996 and was part of the formal program at the Media and Democracy Congress II in New York in 1997.

Over 1996-98, I helped coordinate a circle of scholars, broadcasters and activists to develop a proposal for public broadcasting reform. In 1998, I received a grant from the Schumann Foundation (courtesy of Bill and John Moyers) to write my book, *Air Wars: The Fight to Reclaim Public Broadcasting*. The book was published by Beacon Press in 2000 and introduced CIPB and the Public Broadcasting Trust proposal to a broader audience.

In 1999, after six months of reflection and negotiation, I agreed to serve as the founding Executive Director of a national CIPB campaign based in Washington, D.C. I recruited a separate CIPB board that summer. The campaign was sponsored by matching grants from the Schumann Foundation and Open Society Institute. These grants were issued in July 1999 and renewed in July 2000. On both occasions, CSSE served as the corporate sponsor. This was acknowledged in the brochures published to promote the campaign: "CIPB is a project of the Center for Social Studies Education." Throughout this period, the CSSE office actively supported the project at no charge.

When I took on this challenge, I expected three years of funding. I had presented a three-year plan, with much of the first year spent putting together a national organization from scratch. I was prepared to commit three years to directing this effort. During the third year, I intended to concentrate on diversifying the funding base and finding a suitable replacement for myself. Unfortunately, this expectation was not fulfilled. One of our two major funders advised me after fifteen months that support would end after two years.

In the face of our acknowledged fiscal problems and to keep the faith with our funders, members, chapters and others, I moved the corporate headquarters to Pittsburgh where we have had a productive third and final year. We issued press releases, launched large mailings to media and political leaders, maintained an active web site, gave public presentations, promoted the "Ready for PBS" films for play on stations, had articles published, did media interviews and gained about 300 new members.

Unfortunately, since I have not been able to raise any new grants, I must shut down the separate CIPB national office. As you know, the CIPB attorney has advised us that Karen Conner was the registered agent for the corporation. (She was the highest-ranking Washington resident among the officers.) To maintain our incorporation, Karen needed to file our prospective two-year corporate report with the reporting fee on or before January 15, 2000, the year after our incorporation (1999). There is no evidence of such in our records. Accordingly, we already have been or shortly will be automatically dissolved. According to our legal counsel, no formal action is necessary. The dissolution of our active corporate status will automatically terminate the current board's responsibilities.

The CSSE board has agreed to assume full responsibility for continuation of the CIPB program. This includes all the activities cited above. At the request of Merrill Lynch, I established CIPB in Pennsylvania as a "fictitious name" for CSSE so that CSSE could do business as ("dba") CIPB.

From the phased out CIPB office, all I will need will be my computer, scanner, printer and desk. Unfortunately, computers, furniture and office equipment depreciate rather quickly and dramatically. The new occupants of the office offered me \$4,000 for pretty much everything but the telephone system and I accepted it. Our fiscal year runs through June 2002. I will use that time to transfer records and organize an expanded CIPB division within CSSE. Thus, the CSSE office will host CIPB again as it did in the beginning.

To avoid the problems of the past, I will hold all final accounting until all bills have cleared. I also will anticipate all future expenses, such as \$7,000 to our accounting firm for IRS reports for 2001 and for 2002, printing new brochures and stationary, web site hosting and management, etc. Just for your information, I will advise you whether and how much is left and how it will be spent, probably in August. Needless to say, we are not talking about much money. As indicated, I will honor my pledge to make certain that all financial obligations are met before taking any final compensation for my own work.

I present this statement, feeling many strong emotions, the greatest of which are sadness and a wariness about any future such commitments. Since I have received no word from any member of the board since we have been here, I assume this is pretty much a dead issue for them as well. Nevertheless, please share this statement with them and get back to me with any questions or concerns.

Al, please thank members of the board for the efforts they did make on behalf of our larger goals. I really do think we made a difference and I am hopeful that some of the seeds we planted will bear fruit here and there in the years ahead.