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## MT. BLUE TV HOSTS FALL MEETING

The fall CTAM was graciously hosted by JP Fortier and the team at Mt. Blue TV in Farmington. Attendees who made the drive were rewarded by presentations by two guest speakers – one who traveled from Kansas City and the other who drove from Cape Cod.

Pat Jones, a state legislator from nearby Mt. Vernon, told the audience about how she is using the Access Station to reach out and inform her constituents with her regular program “Issues and News Among the Lakes.” This is a resource that other legislators can, and should, take advantage of. Stations should reach out to local and state politicians and encourage them to start their own shows. In addition to providing new informational programming stations can also make some new political friends – something you can never have too many of.

The key featured speaker was Nancy Richard, Chair of ACM-Northeast. Nancy’s key message was that you are not alone. The ACM, both national and regional, can provide a wealth of information and assistance to members. In addition you can add your voice to the lobbying efforts at all levels. PEG/Public Access is under almost constant threat and the ACM is the only national organization that speaks for you and defends what you do. The more members the group has, the stronger the voice. (See accompanying articles on the CAP ACT).

Members also get discounts to conferences and on fees to submit programs to the national and regional video festivals. Stay connected and join ACM today!



Nancy Richard, Chair ACM-NE, addresses the fall CTAM meeting in Farmington, ME

Wes Dixon of Key West Technology gave a presentation on their Media Zone software. The program takes digital signage to the next level by splitting the screen into four zones – each of which can be custom programmed to suit your needs. In addition the equipment can be used as a server to control all of the elements – internal or external and playback – including bulletin board, slides and programming – in one unified system. Wes said the biggest selling point for his system is the “Wow Factor” which moves the screen beyond static images and into the multi-screen world. Wes provided sample disks of the program to the attendees. More information is available at [www.keywesttechnology.com](http://www.keywesttechnology.com).



Wes Dixon demonstrates the MediaZone system

Following the presentations Tony Vigue gave an update on the status of the Model Franchise Agreement – see accompanying article.

As part of the Treasurer’s report members learned that the videotapes that had been collected as part of a Historical Preservation Project have apparently been lost. CTAM had received a grant for this project and will need to start gathering tapes again as part of the grant requirement.

CTAM has been approached from time to time by third party individuals or organization who are interested in membership, or at least access to our members/ mailing list for commercial or publicity purposes. The attendees discussed several options for handling these requests including an opt in/out system, having the outside interests contact members directly or indirectly and what type of fees might be charged for access. Tony Vigue will be collecting comments about these proposals for presentation/discussion at our next meeting in Gray on Tuesday, January 26, 2010.

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## 'Simple Gourmet' Honored

FARMINGTON -- A cooking show featuring a down-home Farmington chef preparing a simple Mexican-style meal in his own kitchen is what won over judges at this year's festival put on by the major organization of community-access TV stations in New England.

"The Simple Gourmet," featuring Stan Wheeler and produced by JP Fortier at Beeline Cable's community access Mt. Blue TV Channel 11, won second place in the professional instructional and training category.

The station and Fortier also won second place in the "Local Attractions-Professional" category for its show on Chester Greenwood Day events in Farmington that included coverage of the parade and the Polar Bear Dip in Clearwater Lake in Industry.

The Alliance for Community Media represents more than 1,000 public, educational and governmental access organizations and community media centers throughout the country.

Wheeler's monthly show has become popular, not just for the 2,000 Farmington and Wilton cable subscribers, but nationwide. According to PegMedia the two dozen shows the site has available have been downloaded 466 times by public access stations around the country.

Mt. Blue, with an annual budget of \$70,000, was up against larger stations with budgets in excess of \$500,000. Other than Fortier, the station's staff is made up of community volunteers and interns from the University of Maine at Farmington. UMF provides studio and office space for the project in the basement of Merrill Hall. No other community access station in Franklin, Somerset or Kennebec counties was listed as an award winner.

The key to the success of Wheeler's show is simplicity, Fortier said. "It's popular because people see Stan as a regular guy who uses simple recipes and regular ingredients and gets results.

Wheeler's shows cover entire meals with entrees that have included pan-seared salmon, grilled food, Asian and Greek cuisine, ginger shrimp and pizza. A limited selection can be viewed at [www.mtbluetv.org](http://www.mtbluetv.org) by clicking on the Video Gallery.

Wheeler, a minister, a Farmington Fire Department chaplain, and a full-time dispatcher for the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, is an unpretentious chef. The shows are filmed in his family's kitchen in Farmington, he wears regular clothes and as he talks viewers through the recipes, he offers tidbits of information about food, techniques, serving suggestions and affordable ingredient alternatives.

He says people like the pace because they can easily follow along. "I try to prepare food that is not ordinarily eaten but is not beyond the reach of ordinary cooks and uses ingredients that are readily available," he said.

He and Fortier are planning on taking the show "on the road" to area restaurants to film chefs preparing their signature dishes. "It's a lot fun," he said.

Fortier, who has worked in video production for 17 years, said he is constantly picking up new ideas by studying other broadcast and cable shows like the Food Network, attending conferences and talking to fellow professionals.

"The flow is very important. The taping can take an hour and it takes hours to cut it down to about half," he said.

The second-place award for the 2008 Chester Greenwood Day events in December featured UMF intern Laura Jennings' play-by-play of the parade through downtown Farmington. She then interviewed people before and after they took the plunge into frigid Clearwater Lake during the afternoon Polar Bear Dip. UMF student Sam Mullen did the camera work.

According to Fortier, the production included a slow-motion segment of the crowd of men, women and children jumping into the frigid water put to heroic music, along with Jennings' bubbly enthusiasm turned an ordinary event into an entertaining show.

"Laura did a fantastic job. And it was pretty impressive to get a second-place award for something as mundane as a parade."



*Mt. Blue TV tapes a segment for The Simple Gourmet*

*"The flow is very important. The taping can take an hour and it takes hours to cut it down to about half,"*

*~ JP Fortier, Producer*



## **CAPITOL VIEW**

In Maine, the Office of Information Technology Committee that was appointed by the Utilities and Energy Committee last year to develop a model franchise agreement has recently finished its work and has submitted the Model Franchise to the Utilities and Energy Committee for their review and approval. A summary of the agreement provisions follows.

The model is for use by towns, if they choose to do so. The model was hammered out in over 40 meetings between cable operators, municipal representatives and the Community Television Association of Maine. A letter from NECTA (the New England Cable and Telecommunications Association) points out that although they endorse the model as a resource, they do not automatically agree to all its provisions, leaving that up to individual negotiations with the towns.

Some towns, including Portland, have found that the terms of their expired franchises offer more of what they want than they are able to negotiate in a new franchise, so they have elected to "toll" or continue under the terms of their old franchise.

It is also important to note that prior to the availability of this model, most Maine towns relied on the Franchise Agreement initially provided by the cable operators. Now they have a choice without needing to hire expensive legal counsel and engage in lengthy negotiations over issues that should be common to all Franchises.

Nationally, as a result of recent rulings by the FCC and the adoption of Statewide Franchises in several states which have compromised the signal quality, financial support and availability of PEG channels, Congressional Representative Tammy Baldwin (WI-D), introduced HR 3745 "To amend the Communications Act of 1934" "to provide for carriage and display of public, educational, and government channels in a manner consistent with commercial channels, and for other purposes".

Copies of this bill, the Model Franchise Agreement and other documents can be found on the CTAM website – [www.ctamaine.org](http://www.ctamaine.org). More info about this important legislation and how you can participate if you wish to contact your congressional representative to voice your support (or not)

can be found at <http://www.alliancecm.org/cap>. See accompanying article on the ACM.

### **Summary of the Community Access Preservation (CAP) Act**

Public, educational and government ("PEG") channels permit schools, governments, individuals and groups to provide and receive information about local events, emergencies, and issues. The channels encourage creation of local programming by civic groups and non-profits, cover government and school meetings, and promote localism and civic engagement.. The CAP Act responds to four immediate threats to PEG and these critical local communications.

#### **1. Unnecessary Limits on the Use of PEG funds.**

*Issue:* Under federal law, a cable operator and a local community may negotiate for support for PEG use in addition to the franchise fee payments for use of public rights of way. The FCC recently ruled, subject to some important exceptions, that this PEG support may only be used for facilities and equipment, and not for PEG operating expenses.

*Effect:* Some communities are closing PEG facilities because there are no funds to operate them.

*Solution:* The bill amends the Cable Act to ensure that PEG fees can be used for any PEG purpose.

#### **2. Discriminatory Treatment of PEG channels.**

*Issue:* The Cable Act provides that PEG channels should be free from cable operator interference and generally available to all cable subscribers. Accordingly, operators historically have provided local commercial television signals and PEG in the same manner, to all subscribers, and without additional charges. Some operators are now providing PEG channels that are less accessible, lower quality, missing basic functionality and more costly. These complaints about mistreatment of PEG are before the FCC, but PEG is suffering in the meantime.

*Effect:* PEG is less accessible to all subscribers, and the most vulnerable viewers may lose access to basic local information altogether.

*Solution:* The bill reaffirms that operators must deliver PEG channels to subscribers without additional charges, and via channels whose quality, accessibility, functionality, and placement is equivalent to local commercial television stations.

#### **3. Preservation of PEG Support and Localism.**

*Issue:* Federal law envisioned that PEG requirements would be established on a community-by-community basis. Several States, while intending to preserve PEG, adopted statewide video franchising standards without regard to local needs and interests.

(cont.)



(cont.)

*Effect:* Statewide standards are resulting in widespread elimination of PEG.

*Solution:* Immediate action is needed to preserve PEG to permit Congress to review the impact of these changes on local programming. The FCC is directed to investigate and to report to Congress on the impact of State video service franchising laws since 2005 on PEG. To ensure PEG is preserved, each cable operator must provide the channels and critical facilities it had been providing historically. Operators must make ongoing PEG support payments equal to the greater of the cash payment required under State law, or the value of the PEG support it historically provided.

#### 4. Definition of Cable System.

*Issue:* Entities that provide video services via wired facilities in the rights of way are intended to be subject to Cable Act rules, regardless of the transmission protocol used to deliver service, but some claim that the law is unclear, creating doubt as to where the rules apply.

*Solution:* The Act is amended to ensure it is technologically neutral. Providers using wired facilities in the rights of way are treated similarly and are subject to similar PEG requirements.



## BERWICK TO FORM COMMUNITY TV STATION

In the November election, residents of Berwick, Maine decided to begin the process to create a town television station. In a 57 / 43% vote the townspeople approved setting aside up to \$10,000 a year in a non-lapsing account to fund the project.

According to Keith Trefethen, Berwick's Town Manager, the money, to be drawn from the Comcast cable franchise fee, will be set aside beginning with the 2010/2011 fiscal year. At the start of 2010 the town leaders will ask for volunteers to establish a Community TV Committee who will then work out the details of programming and all other logistics that have to do with the operation of a station.

Trefethen says the Board of Selectmen feels that activities such as meetings and local public events will be the primary focus of the station but will leave that up to the committee to review, propose and provide direction to the town.

## A DIFFERENT TAKE ON LOCAL ORIGINATION PROGRAMMING

It's been 30 years since Chip Carey hired Nadine McLeod to supervise the newly formed WSKI-TV, a commercial local origination channel appearing channel 17 on the Time Warner system. Through several years of adversity it gained support from a wide array of local businesses in the Carrabassett Valley and moved ahead as a private venture.

"I'm very proud of where we have come considering we started tourist TV when nobody had ever done it before," said McLeod. "The technology at that time was very cumbersome, we had half-of-a-shoe-string budget and North Franklin County is not by all means Vail, Colo., but in spite of all these challenges, we grow and we continue to grow," she added.

The company and its supporters believe that the local resort broadcast contributes to the local economy in a positive way.

In 2008 WSKI formed a partnership with Time Warner Cable to continue providing the region's visitors with information they need while vacationing in the area. Whether providing guests with weather and trail conditions, where to go to eat or shop or to participate in the many outdoors activities available in the western mountains of Maine, WSKI-TV has been a mainstay of the area since 1979. The channel serves over 9300 cable subscribers from Kingfield to Stratton.

In a recent release, McLeod said it's her ultimate objective to increase the number and duration of visitors staying in the region, and contribute to the growth of tourism through effective information dissemination. "The whole region needs more visitors; WSKI-TV can help."

The Quadcam on the company's Web site shows the congregations at Sugarloaf's most popular lift most times. Also new are new RSN programs which will feature some affiliate programs and some of their broadcasts. Likewise, WSKI-TV broadcasts may contribute to nation-wide resort programming called RSN Buzz.

For the third straight year, WSKI-TV was on the air during homecoming weekend with feature stories and guests from the area featuring a speech by Sugarloaf president John Diller.

Also new this year, after a summer of digitizing old three-quarter-inch footage, is extended coverage of "From the Archives," episode, McLeod said. This is expected to bring tons of laughter and remembrance from past broadcasts.

While WSKI is not an access station in the traditional sense, it does provide a wealth of locally originated programming designed to provide news, information and local events to their audience. So, in many ways, their mission and objective is similar to ours and may provide us with some programming ideas for our own stations.



Alliance For  
Community  
Media

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## ACM UPDATE

### CALL TO ACTION! Preserve Community Access Now!

On October 8 Wisconsin Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin filed the Community Access Preservation Act, which, if enacted, would preserve and protect PEG access channels in four ways. This bill:

- Allows PEG fees to be used for any PEG-related purposes;
- Ends operators' discriminatory treatment of PEG channels;
- Directs the FCC to study and report on the effects recent states' video franchising legislation have had on PEG access; and
- Defines all video services delivered to the home over wire as "cable" for the purposes of the act, regardless of the transmission protocol used.

The Alliance for Community Media worked with Congresswoman Baldwin to craft this bill (HR 3745). The goal of our **Preserve Community Access Now** campaign is to get co-sponsors for the bill in the House, get a version filed in the Senate, get the bill passed by Congress next year, and signed by the President - before the summer recess.

There are several steps community media advocates can take to help campaign:

**Fax your Representatives and Senators today!** Use our free and simple online fax tool - <http://bit.ly/Gve5U>. Ask them to support HR 3745 - we need co-sponsors in the House, and a companion bill in the Senate. Please personalize these letters as best you can - speak to the value PEG access channels play in your own community, and the loss your community would suffer without them. When they take positive action, we will let you know, so you may thank them.

**Your faxed letters won't be enough! Meet your Congressional representatives face-to-face as soon as possible!** Meet them in both their home district offices and in Washington. Give them the bill, explain how it will benefit you and their local area, and ask them to support the bill.

**Your own voice won't be enough! Mount a local support campaign!** Ask your board, your staff, your constituents, your partner organizations to call/email/fax/write a letter to your Senators and Representatives asking them to support the bill.

Visit our website! <http://alliancecm.org/CAP>. There you'll find more info for mounting your local campaigns, such as a 1-page summary of the bill, a 2-page summary of the harm PEG access has recently suffered, the 4-page bill itself, and more! We will be adding more to this website as the campaign proceeds.

Volunteer or donate to help! Call or email us ([volunteer@alliancecm.org](mailto:volunteer@alliancecm.org)) to find more ways you can engage to help get this bill passed.

Thank you all for lending your voice to this important campaign to protect your communities' voice!

In Alliance,

Helen Soulé

Executive Director  
Alliance for Community Media

### **CTAM**ESSENGER CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS

SIMPLE GOURMET: Article: Betty Jespersen, Kennebec Journal/  
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We welcome your story suggestions and ideas

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Community Television Association  
of Maine



# 2009-2010 CTAM Membership Invoice

(Expires June 30, 2010)

Name of Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Municipality or Access Center IF VOTING MEMBERSHIP or Individual's Name if NON-VOTING)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Check Appropriate Membership Category:**

\_\_\_\_ Voting Membership (Organization) \$50.00

Person designated to cast vote on behalf of your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Their Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Non-Voting Membership (Individual) \$37.50

How did you learn about CTAM? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Make Check Payable To: The Community Television Association of Maine**  
**Print out this form , fill it out and mail with the check to:**

The Community Television Association of Maine  
P.O. Box 2124  
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Questions? Call (207) 767-7615  
Thank you for your support !