

## CTAM ARCHIVE PROJECT

In approximately 2000, the Community Television Association of Maine applied for two grants for a video archive project. After review, the Maine Humanities Council awarded CTAM \$2,000 and the Maine State Archive awarded \$3,036. (The current amounts are somewhat higher due to accrued interest from the Escrow Accounts in which the funds have been held). The intent of the two grants was to preserve the local and regional life that is captured on a daily basis by Public Access stations in Maine.

The original idea was to create a DVD archive - a somewhat modest "snapshot" - of 40 events that had been captured on videotape by our stations. Northeast Historic Film in Bucksport was going to hold a Master and Research copy in its archives and make additional copies available to key libraries across the state - The Maine State Library, Portland, Bangor and two others to be named later. While the goal of the project was laudable, a mere 40 events was a drop in the ocean of material that access stations had created and continue to create every day. Although there was hope that the project could be continued there was no guarantee funds would be found to actually make that happen.

While DVD copies were relatively state-of-the-art in 2000, in today's world of cheap data servers and broadband connections, re-creating the DVD archiving solution proposed 11 years ago is really a non-starter. Today, sites like Archive.org can provide a much simpler, cheaper, faster and easier way of accessing Maine's video history than any physical storage medium could hope to do. Material can be uploaded to and downloaded from the site for free by anyone from anywhere in the world. The material can be easily searched, the quality is high and the file for each item can contain a wealth of metadata, as well as copyright restrictions.

We will bundle together the money from the two grants to identify, collect and archive video, and perhaps audio, material created by Maine's community television stations. We will create a separate CTAM Archive site within Archive.org that will hold the material and make it available to anyone, anywhere at any time.

We have identified a person who has been working at Belfast Community Television for the past 18 months in the SCSEP program and we will hire her to work on the project, under the direction of Ned Lightner of BCTV. "SCSEP" stands for Senior Community Service Employment Program, which is designed to train seniors and help them transition to paying employment.

Belfast Community Television will provide in-kind office space and support, internet access, network video storage and communications facilities for the project. I have included short biographies of the two people who will be working on this project.

We will solicit video on an ongoing basis from our stations and collect it either as a standard DVD or as an MPEG-2 FTP transfer to BCTV. Contributing stations will submit a data form containing as much metadata about the video as possible. BCTV will review that information and go back to the station, as required, to clarify and supplement the

initial data to ensure we provide as much information as possible to Archive.org. They will also determine the correct copyright designation for the video. The video will then be uploaded to a CTAM Archive area on Archive.org.

We would provide a link to the material on the CTAM website and encourage all of our member stations to do the same on their websites. We would also send out press releases to newspapers, museums and libraries around the state advising them of the resource. We would hope to be able to tap into distribution lists and other contacts of both the Maine Humanities Council and the Maine State Archive to ensure we reach as wide an audience as possible. We are reserving some of the grant money to pay for this publicity/notification process.

We recognize that our track record regarding this project is not stellar. However, we believe that there are fundamental differences between our revived effort and the original project in 2000 and we'd like to address some potential concerns about our ability to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner.

- The original project was being done on a strictly informal and volunteer basis. Those involved had planned on working on the project as time allowed. While some access station facilities were to be used there was no single location or formal structure in place. As time went on responsibility for the project was passed from one person to another - a game of video "telephone" - until the original purpose, enthusiasm, along with the original material, was lost.

In 2012, we have a dedicated host station at Belfast Community Television along with an identified video production assistant to work on the project. She has been doing similar work at BCTV for the past 18 months and is familiar with the requirements and procedures to get the project on track and completed. In addition the CTAM Board of Directors has fully committed to this project and there is renewed enthusiasm for the project among our members. A letter from BCTV is attached.

- The primary benefit of the CTAM Archive Project will be to make this material available to anyone, anywhere. Public Access television is true local media. It serves as a public record of the life of small towns and large cities across the state. Events from the Memorial Day Parade to election night to the Town Council meetings are all recorded by these stations. This material can serve as a rich historical record for researchers as well as for other Access stations that may want to broadcast it to their own audience.

The original proposal would have produced a few DVD copies that would have sat on a shelf, waiting for someone to discover them, request a copy, get the copy and – finally – look at them. By using Archive.org the video can instantly be viewed by anyone with a computer connection. If they want to use the material it can be downloaded immediately, at high quality, and used right away.

In addition, CTAM intends to use the procedures developed for the Archive Project as a basis for developing a media archive site on Archive.org for all Maine Access stations to use as a way to exchange programs on an ongoing basis.

- In terms of a timeline for completion, we would continue to archive material until all of the grant funds are depleted. We estimate that will be approximately 390-400 hours of work over approximately 9 months.

- Bios of the CTAM Archive project staff:

Ned Lightner will oversee the day to day operation of the archive project and provide planning and technical support to the project. Ned is the Executive director of Belfast Community Media, which operates Belfast Community TV, the public access channel serving Belfast, Maine. Lightner has been active in community television for 35 years and has won numerous awards both as a TV producer and program director. He is the owner of Insight Productions, a video production company that produces video content for business, individuals and institutions. Lightner brings a broad range of assets to this project, including, project management, technical expertise, and an extensive list on contacts within the community media community.

Anne Allee will be responsible for implementing the project on a daily basis. Anne has been the administrative assistant at Belfast Community Television for the past 18 months. She is responsible for written correspondence, organization of donor lists and communication. She has created excel spreadsheets, and been responsible for various record keeping projects. Anne is responsible for writing press releases, postings to Facebook and answering inquiries from the public. Anne successfully applied and received 501 (c) (3) status for Belfast Community media and single handedly completed and compiled telephone viewer surveys. Anne is responsible for downloading media files off the internet and extracting files from DVDs and converting them to the appropriate format to run on the station server. Anne is familiar with Creative Commons license policies and has used Archive.org to upload content.

I believe this project will move forward quickly and be a huge benefit, not only to Access stations but to anyone who is interested in the life of Maine's towns, and its people.

I hope we have answered all of your questions and I am available at any time to provide any additional information or clarification you may require.

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