

Fall 2010



Community Television Association
of Maine



GREENE-TV HOSTS CTAM'S FALL GET TOGETHER

Sally Ann Hebert, Mike Stephanak and the gang at Greene TV were the gracious hosts for the Fall 2010 CTAM Meeting. After a great sandwich buffet, and a bit of networking, the formal meeting got underway. Sally Ann threw a curveball at the attendees by going around the room and asking everyone to tell something about themselves that no one else in the room knows. The answers were funny, interesting and sometimes revealing however, to find out more about your fellow CTAM members you'll just have to attend the next meeting.

Following the introductions we had a demonstration by Discover Video on their wireless broadcasting equipment. See the separate story to find out more about this interesting technology.

Tony Vigue then led off a discussion of a subject that is of interest to us all: The Future of Public Access Television. It was suggested that sites like PegMedia may be the new wave of delivering Public Access television to our communities via the internet. Cable companies have noticed a drop in the number of cable TV subscribers, see:

http://www.multichannel.com/article/457321-CORD_CUTTERS_IN_THE_CITY.php however, these subscribers (and new ones) are keeping their high speed internet service and using that to get the video programs they want. As a result Franchise Fees may go down and may need to be replaced by some sort of "franchise PEG support" or "franchise resource related cost (FRC)" fee.

The traditional method of delivering television to viewers seems to be waning and if cable TV ceases to exist access stations must be ready. Some members of the audience felt that there was still a meaningful connection between their viewers and the local access station. The stations also can benefit from "channel surfers" who happen across a program that interests them and come back for more. When a viewer has to actively go out and find a channel, the potential for that unexpected discovery from surfing goes away.

It was suggested that access stations must become more than just a tv station – they need to be a media center teaching computer skills and web techniques. Stations may also want to remind their audience that when they watch tv over the web they are taking valuable dollars away from the access station – and perhaps the station should ask them for a donation to make up the difference.



*Greene TV's new home in
the town municipal
building*

MPBN recently held an "UN-conference" which discussed IPTV (TV via the internet), video production for social media, and public access television. Tom Handel, from CTN in Portland, and Tony Vigue offered to hold a breakout session on the future of access TV. Unfortunately only one other person in the audience attended their session, perhaps a commentary of the state of play.

MPBN is also reaching out to access producers to provide programming for the network – this to make up for producer and technical staff cutbacks in various areas. *(Continued on page 2)*

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(continued from page 1) However, in some cases, MPBN demands exclusivity for any show they accept – meaning the show could not be aired on any access stations which defeats the purpose of access in the first place.

Sally Ann Hebert talked about dwindling CTAM membership and how we have to find ways to make the organization relevant and worthwhile to town governments and others. Some stations may simply forget to renew their membership and we talked about ways to remind them and to increase our outreach to keep the members interested and involved. In the Treasurer's report JP Fortier reported that membership is down 50% against budget. There will be more discussion on this topic at future meetings. **IF YOU HAVEN'T RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, PLEASE DO SO NOW! (See attached Invoice)**



Tony Vigue discusses the future of Public Access TV

Bill Severance gave an update on the website. He's working out how to handle banner ads and on ways to limit access to certain sections to only paid members as well as the ability to use credit cards for membership.

We are going to make another effort to update the station contacts on the website.

Members are reminded they are responsible for keeping their information current.

Station Managers, please register on the CTAM web page and update your info!

Finally, Tony Vigue gave an update on the status of discussions with the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) about our affiliate status with the organization. While there may be some benefits to operating under ACM it seems more likely that CTAM will remain on its own and find a way to improve its association with ACM in other ways.

**THE WINTER MEETING WILL BE IN GRAY ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 25TH 2011,
(with a Snow Date of February 22)**

DISCOVER VIDEO DEMONSTRATES WIFI VIDEO STREAMING

Access stations frequently cover town events on videotape and air their coverage days, or weeks, later. At our Fall meeting Discover Video showed stations how they can broadcast these events **LIVE** using existing WiFi, 3G, 4G or wired ethernet connections to a cable modem. Mike and George Savic did a live demonstration sending their signal wirelessly from a camera in the room down to their server in Virginia and back to the receiver in Greene TV's Control Room. The audio and video quality were quite acceptable and the audience was intrigued with the technology peppering Mike and George with a lot of questions. The technology has potential beyond broadcasting live from the field. It can be used for distance learning or instead of hard wired circuits from the town council or school board meeting rooms. The software and hardware are available in a variety of configurations and have a wide variety of settings to give the broadcasters many options to choose the quality, bandwidth and speed to suit their needs. You can get more information about this and other Discover Video products at www.discovervideo.com.



Mike Savic shows wireless broadcasting system



CTAMESSENGER CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS

CAPITOL VIEW: Painting by Charles Codman, Maine State Museum; CTAM MEETING: Photos: Brian Knoblock

BECOME A CTAMESSENGER CONTRIBUTOR

We welcome your story suggestions and ideas

CONTACT US AT: newsletter@ctamaine.org

Editor: Brian Knoblock Newsletter Design: Jen Scholz

Congratulations to New Gloucester TV on the birth of their brand new Public Access Station! It was a long and difficult delivery and they'd like to share the story with you.

According to Bob MacGregor and Richard Erwin it all began in the Spring of 2008 when the station was still a Government and Education facility with no Public Access. Patti Mikkelsen, a town resident, requested that the Board of Selectmen expand the station's programming to include Candidate's Nights for the elections. The Board promptly referred the matter to the Television Committee for consideration. Unfortunately there was no TV Committee so Bob, Richard and Patti, along with one other resident, formed one.

Subsequently, the Committee met regularly, reviewed the existing Ordinance, prepared a proposed Ordinance revision which included clear guidelines with some restrictions on candidates' use of the station. The Selectmen voted it down. The TV Committee went back to the drawing board and came up

with a new proposal that was even more restrictive concerning political use of the station. In January of 2009 the Board of Selectmen voted it down again.

The TV Committee met and tried a third time to write an ordinance that would be acceptable to the Selectmen. The next version contained even more prohibitions on political programming and this version was approved by the Selectmen in March 2009.

During this period, as each – more restrictive – version of the ordinance was being considered, a movement was growing in New Gloucester to make the station a true Public Access facility. The group became more active with each rejection of the ordinance concerning political activity. After the rejection in March of 2009 the group circulated a petition to have the station change into a Public Access station. That petition failed that year due to a clerical error. The Access group continued to grow and a new petition – overturning the existing Ordinance -

- was finally approved a year later at the annual town meeting in May 2010.

The TV Committee got right to work and developed a Policy and Procedures Manual and Bylaws, which were submitted and approved. New Gloucester TV became a full-fledged Public Access station on September 1, 2010. None of this would have happened without the support of the residents of New Gloucester who organized themselves to get it done. They wanted their voices to be heard and rejected the restrictions on free speech that the town government imposed on programming for the original Government Access channel. That's what Access is all about!



CAPITOL VIEW

Tony Vigue reported that there has not been much movement on HR3745 – the CAP Act - this session. The ACM and NATOA have been holding conference calls on the subject and the next step is to get some Senators to write a companion bill. CTAM has been charged with enlisting the support of Senators Snowe and Collins. There are some issues to be resolved but it is hoped that by January a Senate bill will be ready. At the moment CTAM is not asking all members to contact Collins and Snow directly but that may become necessary should problems arise. On the House side Congresswoman Pingree is a co-sponsor of the bill, Congressman Michaud has yet to endorse it.

The ACM and NATOA are also petitioning the FCC to crack down on the cable companies' policy of "slamming" access stations by placing them high up in the digital tier. In some cases the cable company says they are just using the access station to "test" their digital system – and then they don't return the station to its usual channel slot. Stations can ask the cable company to map the digital channel back to a basic cable tier, but unless it specifically states in the franchise agreement that the PEG channels must be carried on the basic tier, the cable operator is allowed to put them wherever they want.



FCC Issues Long-Awaited Ruling On White Space/Wireless Mics

On September 23 the Federal Communications Commission ruled to protect wireless microphone users from interference from TV Band/"white space devices." The Memorandum Opinion and Order also reserves two TV channels nationwide for wireless microphone use. The reserved channels are off-limits to UHF Band Devices that operate in the "white spaces" between assigned TV stations, thus preventing them from interfering with wireless microphone signals on those channels. Large-scale users, such as theatrical or music venues, would be able to achieve extended protection for specific events through the geo-location database prescribed by the FCC in 2008.

According to the FCC, the opening of these bands for unlicensed use, which represents the first significant increase in unlicensed spectrum below 5 GHz in over 20 years, will have significant benefits for both businesses and consumers and will promote more efficient spectrum use.

Some of the highlights of the ruling are:

- Modifying the protection criteria for low power auxiliary stations such as wireless microphones to reduce the required separation between such devices and unlicensed personal/portable devices operating in Mode II.
- Modifying the definition of the receive sites entitled to protection outside of a television station's service area to include all multi-channel video programming distributors as defined by our (FCC) rules.
- Reserving two vacant UHF channels for wireless microphones and other low power auxiliary service devices in all areas of the country.
- Allowing operators of event and production/show venues that use large numbers of wireless microphones on an unlicensed basis that cannot be accommodated in the two reserved channels and any others available at that location to register the sites of those venues on TV bands databases to receive the same geographic spacing protections afforded licensed wireless microphones.
- Eliminating the requirement that TV band devices (TVBD's) that incorporate geo-location and database access must also listen (sense) to detect the signals of TV stations and low power auxiliary service stations (wireless micro phones). As part of that change we are also revising and amending the rules in several aspects to reflect use of that method as the only means for determining channel availability. While we are eliminating the sensing requirement for TVBDs, we are encouraging continued development of this capability because we believe it holds promise to further improvements in spectrum efficiency in the TV spectrum in the future and will be a vital tool for providing opportunistic access to other spectrum bands.
- Modifying the rules governing measurement of adjacent channel emissions.
- Restricting fixed TV bands devices from operating at locations where the height above average terrain of the ground level is greater than 76 meters.

You can see the FCC ruling by searching: fcc.gov daily releases 9/23



Mainers Take Home ACM-NE Awards

Three Maine stations have won awards in the 2010 Alliance For Community Media Northeast Video Festival.

Phil Jellen, Patrick Bonsant and Matthew Fletcher of Rippling Waters Farm in Standish shared third prize in the "Community Impact" category for their program "Rippling Waters Summer: A New Generation of Farmers". The Third prize was shared with Dianne Senechal, Donna Sawyer and Patrick Bonsant of Saco River Community TV for their show "Garden Thyme: Brackett's Orchard."

In the News & Magazine category "The Second Act", hosted by Bill Gregory and Lesley MacVane and produced by Brian Knoblock, shared second prize with another station in Foxboro, MA.

Congratulations to all our Maine winners!

2010-2011 CTAM Membership Invoice

(Expires June 30, 2011)

Today's Date: _____

Name of Member: _____
(Name of Municipality or Access Center IF VOTING MEMBERSHIP or Individual's Name if NON-VOTING)

Address: _____

City: _____ 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

Non-Voting Membership (Vendor) \$50.00

Non-Voting Membership (Non-Profit Organization) \$50.00

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 to:

The Community Television Association of Maine

P.O. Box 2124

South Portland, Maine 04116

Thank you for your support !