



CTAM *ESSENGER*

CTAM

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of CTAM is to advance democratic ideals by ensuring that people in Maine have access to electronic media. In order for democracy to flourish, people must be active participants in their government, educated to think critically and free to express themselves.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of the **CTAM***ESSENGER*, the newly revived newsletter for the Community Television Association of Maine. We hope that the *MESSENGER* will bring you up to date on happenings within the PEG community here in Maine and also to alert you to events and issues from elsewhere that may have an impact on your station's operation. The *MESSENGER* will be published quarterly. We will distribute it to the CTAM mailing list and it will also be available on the website.

The *MESSENGER* is very much a work in progress and we hope it will grow into a collaborative effort for CTAM members. If you have a suggestion for an article – or would like to write one – all submissions will be gratefully accepted.

Let us know about awards you've won or exciting improvements at your station. Access community kudos are generally few and far between so we welcome the chance to publicize your accomplishments to your peers.

I welcome your feedback, suggestions and input. You can reach me at newsletter@ctamaine.org.

Brian Knoblock
Editor

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www.ctamaine.org

CTAM WEBSITE UPDATE

The CTAM website is undergoing some updating and redesign. The changes will allow the staff to keep information on the site current. We are also making a serious effort to update the contact information for the Access Centers. We've been going through the list station by station in an attempt to verify or correct the directory data. You can help by registering for a password and updating your Access Center information on the "Centers" page. Registration is easy, just follow the directions and a password will be sent to you. Please let us know whenever there are contact changes at your station. We are considering adding a Blog to the web-

site. It could either be done by one or two members or be more of an open exchange of information, requests for assistance and opinion. We'd like your thoughts on whether you think that would be worthwhile.

Finally, CTAM is in search of a new Logo. If you have graphic design experience and want help, let us know. Contact us at to info@ctamaine.org.



SRC-TV HOSTS CTAM

Saco River Community Television in Hollis were the gracious hosts for the CTAM winter meeting. The event was well-attended with over 20 members and other interested parties making the trip. Owing to some personal situations, there were not enough board members present to hold an official meeting. However, the meeting was turned into a workshop session with a great exchange of information.

During the Round Robin member stations brought the group up to date on the trials, tribulations, successes and problems they encounter on a daily basis. Suggestions and offers of assistance came from all quarters – one of the benefits of CTAM membership, *and attending the meetings!*

Tony Vigue briefed members on the status of the Model Franchise Agreement – see accompanying article.

The centerpiece presentation was an update on servers, encoders, video-on-demand and streaming video. Ray Tiley of CTN in Portland and Moe Amaral of South Portland TV helped the group navigate the confusing and complex waters of Flash, Quicktime, MPEG-2 and embeddable players. There was also a discussion of the new PEG MEDIA server – see accompanying article – which will help stations exchange programming at no cost.

There is no one solution to the video on server issue. As is often the case there is a trade off between cost, operational ease and resources. Some stations opt for a turnkey solution – plug ‘n’ play – at a higher cost. Those stations with available IT talent may opt for a lower cost system that requires more up front programming and daily care and feeding. A workshop meeting on this topic was scheduled for March 25, 2009 at CTN.



PEG SERVER PROMOTES PROGRAM EXCHANGE

It started pretty simply. The Maine show “Second Act” was being produced, but had lost the sponsor for distributing the DVD’s, so an alternative was needed. Other Maine shows needed distribution as well. Soon the “Rockport Distribution Initiative”, began duping and mailing DVDs for a number of Maine shows.

That got to be lots of work, and lots of expense, so electronic distribution was given a try. The time seemed to be right. Lots of content was available and download speeds had increased. Very quickly the DVDs were outmoded and electronic distribution via an FTP site took over completely. Soon most of the stations in Maine that showed outside content were taking advantage of the new distribution stream.

Not surprisingly there were stations and producers outside of Maine who also wanted to participate. To automate the process, and to make it more useful, a web site www.pegmedia.org was created on top of the original FTP site to serve as

the entry portal.

The PegMedia.org site was not intended to be the ultimate site for PEG distribution. It’s a simple way to connect community TV stations who want to share programs. While we all know that local content is our first priority, it can be both useful and interesting to supplement our local programs with content from other states, regions, or even countries. Our survival depends on our ability to deliver unique and exciting material to our viewers.

Stations, and individual producers, can up/download material quickly and easily – and for free. The program list can be browsed state, type of show and other parameters. The postings include show and episode descriptions and are required to be broadcast quality. Registered posters can even get reports on the number and type of downloads as well as other information.

There are several other sites around the country under development and the *PegMedia* site might be consolidated into one or more of those down the road. But for now, it’s working, it’s growing, and it seems to be pretty effective.

If you are a community station, we welcome you to take a look www.pegmedia.org and join if you’d like. It’s free to stations and producers. And if you know of other stations in Maine or elsewhere who might be interested, please help get the word out.



LCTV GETS A NEW HOME



LCTV's new building in Newcastle

Midcoast PEG station LCTV in Newcastle spent its first fifteen years working out of a single-wide trailer in a parking lot on Sheepscot Road. The roof leaked, the floors were spongy and there was barely enough room for the equipment – let alone a studio.

When they found about a mobile classroom the local school district no longer needed the station snapped it up, for \$100. With help from a bequest from Sam Pennington, a former Board president, the staff and volunteers set about turning a classroom into a

television station. The new building - moved to that same parking lot - needed electrical and plumbing work along with a new roof and lots of paint.

By early January enough work had been completed to allow LCTV to make the move. The new studio and control room are each about 27' square. The control room now has plenty of room for the technical equipment but the best part is the new studio. The station is now able to have a live audience to watch their programs in person. The former classroom now allows them to run training classes for volunteers. The public access station is now, for the first time, accessible to the public.

In these days of tight budgets the generous gift LCTV received provoked an interesting discussion:

Should the money be used for operating expenses or capital improvements? Although operating money keeps the station on the air it was felt that more people would be served by upgrading the overall facility. It seems to be money well spent.

There is still work to be done. Sets have to be built, along with an area for a green screen. However, the LCTV team is up to the challenge.



Volunteers move equipment into the new building



CAPITOL VIEW: Model Cable Franchise Deadline Extended

Municipalities that are in the process of negotiating cable franchises may be interested to know that under a law passed last session (known as LD 2133), the Maine Office of Information Technology was charged with facilitating the development of a Model Franchise Agreement that could be used by towns during their negotiation process with the cable operators.

Since the cable and telephone industry has also been participating in the development of the model, over 80% of the standard cable franchise language will already have been “blessed” by representatives of the industry, Maine Municipal Association and the Community Television Association of Maine. The remaining 20% would be subject to negotiation to meet the needs of the individual communities. Last month at a Utilities and Energy Committee hearing, an Interim Report was presented and it was agreed that a deadline of June 1st would be put in place.

The legislation provided that at a minimum, the committee should consider franchise fees, build out requirements, PEG access channels and reasonable facility support for each channel, customer service standards, the disparate needs of the diverse municipalities and the policy goal of promoting competition in the delivery of cable television service.

“We have made significant progress in standardizing the language in a format that is recognizable and acceptable to all stakeholders” said Tony Vigue of the Community Television Association of Maine. “Ultimately, our success will be evidenced by a reduction in the time and money that it takes a town to negotiate their cable franchise while maintaining an equitable agreement for both parties.

If a station uses the model Agreement in its negotiations with their cable operator it is imperative that stations examine their local ordinances to ensure that the language in the ordinance matches that of the Agreement and to make changes in the ordinance if it does not.

GRAY COMMUNITY TV - "Organization of the Year"

The Gray town government has recognized GCTV2 as "Organization of the year for 2007-2008. The station's team was praised for their "commitment of time and valued insight" along with their dedication to "make it possible for the town to move forward, providing a place to live, learn, work and play which allows the quality of life we all strive for."

At the ceremony the Town Manager, Deborah Cabana, spoke about how GCTV is always available to help, whether it is updating the town website or making sure that all meetings and events are set up and ready to be videotaped. Station Manager Brian Meehan noted that while the award was for entire station it recognizes the special efforts of volunteers Brad Fogg and Mike StClair, who provide advice on programming and technical issues – filling the gap that he, as a part time employee – could never cover on his own.

In an interview with the *MESSENGER*, Tracy Scheckel, Vice Chair of the Gray Town Council, summed up GCTV's contribution by saying:

"Gray Community Television is integral to the fabric of our community."

The organization provides one of the most consistent delivery conduits for community news and information. Its volunteer members never say 'no', and are to be commended for their hard work and dedication. We were honored to recognize GCTV as the 2008 Gray Volunteer Organization of the Year."

Congratulations to the staff and volunteers at GCTV for their outstanding efforts.



Pictured: Mike StClair, Brad Fogg, Brian Meehan, Councilor Margaret Hutchins

ACM UPDATE **ALLIANCE JOINS SUIT AGAINST** **AT&T**

The ACM national and regional groups along with several individual stations joined with a nationwide coalition of municipalities in January to file a Petition for Declaratory Ruling with the FCC charging that telecom giant AT&T discriminates against local public channels with its U-verse cable TV system.

"Relegating local, non-profit media channels to second-class status is a disservice to the public and violates both the spirit and letter of the law," said Helen Soule, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Media (ACM), which represents local Public, Educational and Government (PEG) channels nationwide.

"AT&T's treatment of PEG channels

is inferior in virtually every way that matters to a viewer, preventing the public's ability to easily access safety alerts, health information, town hall meetings, educational and other local programming," added Soule.

In states from California to Connecticut, wherever AT&T is providing video programming, its U-Verse system removes local PEG channels from the standard lineup, dumping dozens of channels into a generic "Channel 99" – stripping away individual channel identities and depriving those channels of basic functions viewers have come to expect. AT&T subscribers cannot simply tune in the village board meeting or homework help program. Viewers can't switch between commercial and PEG channels, set a DVR to record a PEG program, or depend on getting timely local emergency alerts or closed captioned programming.

The filing follows a sternly worded

bi-partisan letter from Congress to the FCC in September saying that changes in the cable TV industry should not lead to second-class status for PEG channels.

The Petition asks the FCC to rule that AT&T's PEG product unlawfully discriminates against PEG programming in violation of the 1984 Cable Act and Commission rulings and policies.

ACM-Northeast Conference
May 21-22
Burlington, VT
www.acm-ne.org

ACM-National Conference
July 15-18
Portland, OR

Early Bird Booking Deadline
April 17, 2009
www.ourchannels.org

CTAMESSSENGER **CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS**

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.CTAMAINE.ORG

CTN PORTLAND SEEKS INTEREST & ADVICE

A Health Program for Maine

The Community Television Network (CTN) in Portland has started meeting with health care providers throughout the state to develop a health program specifically for the people of Maine. For 22 years, CTN worked with MaineHealth and Maine Medical Center to produce Healthviews, a health program focused on MaineHealth's community of providers.

Healthviews started as a studio based interview program and evolved into a health magazine shot in the field, usually focusing on one particular area, such as diabetes, heart disease, depression, tobacco dependence and self-managed care. In the fall, CTN began talking with the City of Portland's Public Health Division about developing a series that focuses more on health than medicine and addresses issues of particular importance to people in Maine

Toward that end, CTN and the City of Portland hosted a breakfast in January for Maine health providers to discuss what they would like to see in a health series for Maine. There was a consensus that the show should appeal to all ages and be as dynamic as possible. The providers also brought up the importance of addressing the health priorities established by the State of Maine. There was interest among these providers in knowing what other health programs have been produced in Maine.

For this reason, CTN is interested in hearing from other access stations and access producers in Maine about health programs they have produced or are currently producing. We're interested in hearing from you about what worked, what didn't work and your interest in participating in a statewide program. We'd also like to know what access stations in Maine would like to air this type of program, or at least be kept apprised of its development. You can contact Tom Handel at CTN at tom@ctn4maine.org.

Students gain confidence on camera

LAKES REGION (Feb 19): Like many teenagers, being in front of a video camera makes Tiana Carter nervous. She looked down while reading a story to the camera last week and stumbled slightly over a few of her words.

"I get really self-conscious," said Carter, 13, adding that talking in front of a camera for the first time made her very nervous. "I was hoping this would get me out of it."

Carter, who is hoping the experience will give her more confidence, is one of 16 students reporting for a new weekly program on Lake Region TV on news at Lake Region Middle School.



Maria Kolofsky tapes her segment for the Lake Region Middle School news as Tiana Carter operates the camera and Lake Region TV Manager John Likshis directs

On Feb. 12, Carter and four other seventh-graders were writing stories in preparation to record them for the second weekly news program. A different group of students recorded the first show, which premiered Feb. 6.

Principal Peter Mortenson and Manager of Lake Region TV John Likshis coach students after school on Thursdays in writing, reading and recording their stories.

"It's great for personal self-confidence," said Likshis, who used to manage the cable channel for Portland Public Schools. "You can never get enough public speaking experience."

Taylor Kwaak and Aly Kepler, both 13, practiced reading an interview. Kwaak was interviewing Kepler about sicknesses going around the school, with Kepler using information from a previous interview with the school nurse. Mortenson helped the girls write an introduction.

"Read it to me," Mortenson said, kneeling on the floor around 10 feet back from where the girls sat at desks. "Let's go through it once. Remember, I'm the camera. You need to project."

After practicing again, Kwaak and Kepler crossed the hall to a room where the video camera was set up. They sat in front of a backdrop that read LRMS news and, with Carter running the camera, presented their interview.

"I thought it might be fun to be on TV," Kepler said. Kwaak, of Sebago, agreed. She got involved to spend time with friends and because she thought it might be fun.

Next time the two girls plan to write a story about the pep rally, which they will participate in. At the rally, everyone dresses up, and each class presents a dance, they said enthusiastically.

"This is a blast," Mortenson said about the project. "It's a fabulously engaging, relevant activity, and they love it."

Likshis said some students at Lake Region High School have taken a video class with Lake Region TV and are taping local events for airing. The TV station is available to local residents to produce programming.

The station, which is starting its 17th year, focuses mainly on municipal meetings, though other types of programming and a community calendar are aired as well. It's a well-used and well-viewed station, Likshis said, given that the primary news stations often don't cover much as far away from Portland as Bridgton.

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Join CTAM! Please have your access center consider joining CTAM as a voting member (\$50/yr) or join as an individual non-voting member (37.50/yr). Your memberships help support CTAM's activities on behalf of community television in Maine.

2008-2009 CTAM Membership Invoice

(Expires June 30, 2009)

Name of Member: _____

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

Address: _____ Date: _____

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

How did you learn about CTAM? _____

Please Make Check Payable To: The Community Television Association of Maine

Print out form, fill it out and mail to: The Community Television Association of Maine, P.O. Box, 2124, South Portland, ME 04116