



## CTAM SPRING 2018

The expanded Spring 2018 was held at Mount Blue Community Access TV in Farmington. 25 CTAM Members heard two presentations and had a lot of good discussion about issues that affect all CTAM members. Thanks to JP Fortier and his team for making us feel welcome.



## CHARTER / SPECTRUM CHANNEL REALIGNMENT

One of the biggest challenges facing Maine PEG stations is the plan for Charter / Spectrum to move the channel assignments for our stations from their current locations – generally in the Channel 2-12 range – to the 1300 channel block. In addition, Charter / Spectrum intends to encrypt the signals so that either a cable box or a DTA box will be required to receive PEG stations – even if you have a cable-ready digital TV.

Tony Vigue has been leading the effort to prevent these changes from being made – although some Maine towns have already been shifted – and he talked about what has been done so far and what needs to be done to block these changes.

Following are the major points from Tony's discussion.

### WATCH TONY'S presentation at:

<https://vimeo.com/269618046>



*Tony Vigue at CTAM meeting.*

➤ *Charter maintains that the channel relocation is to “standardize” the PEG Access channels in Maine - and across the country, since it is being done in other states as well. Their position is that this is a “business decision” and that there is no specific regulation preventing the moves in most states, which is true.*

- Charter also plans to encrypt the channels to prevent signal theft in apartment buildings and other locations. This has nothing to do with the discriminatory moving of PEG channels but they mention both in the same notice to the Towns in an attempt to make channel move appear necessary.
- Lower channels are financially lucrative to cable operators, who can lease them for high prices, thus generating new revenue. Commercial network channels are not being moved, therefore our position is that it is clearly discriminatory.
- Some towns have a specific channel assignment in their Franchise Agreement but Charter is ignoring this provision and moving their channels anyway. It is then up to the town to take the issue to court and towns may not have the resources or inclination to do that. Charter knows this.
- Relocation of the PEG stations to the 1300 block will make them less visible and the public will be less aware of the stations. Franchise fees may decrease and stations may no longer get capital money during a Franchise renewal because towns won't ask for these benefits if the channels are not being used. Another win-win for Charter.
- PEG channels will be harder to find and, with digital encryption, all channels will require a box that some customers will not want to pay for. The boxes are supposed to be free but, as we saw with DTA boxes a few years ago, the cable companies may start charging for the boxes after a year or so.
- A PEG Non-Discrimination bill was introduced late in the 2017 Maine state legislative session. The bill would have had to have been accepted by the Legislative Council as "emergency legislation" but that effort failed due to last minute lobbying by cable operators.
- The bill will be reintroduced in November for the next session. The bill is being presented as a Non-Discriminatory law –that PEG stations should not be discriminated against compared to other cable stations. It will also include additional municipal and consumer protections and the requirement that cable operators transmit a PEG station in HD if that station is sending the operator an HD signal. Transmitting PEG stations in HD while all other channels are HD is also discriminatory.
- In addition to the legislative efforts, Tony Vigue is also working with the Maine Attorney General's office, asking them to investigate several possible violations of Maine State law concerning Franchise agreements – specifically the failure to post new Franchise Agreements on Charter's website as required by State law.. The Office of the Public Advocate has also been notified about this issue.
- Other states - California & Illinois - have passed legislation blocking channel moves. MA, CT and other states are working on similar legislation. Hawaii's Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs has ruled against Charter's channel slamming initiatives. Other cable operators are watching to see if Charter is successful in moving the channels and will follow suit if they are.

#### NEXT STEPS

- Maine PEG Stations must alert their municipal officials, state and local legislators to the channel moves by Charter. This can be done by requesting your municipal officials to issue a letter of protest on Town letterhead similar to the one attached from the Town of Bristol and copying the State Representatives and Senators from their district. If it has not yet happened in your Towns, re-word the letter to protest the POSSIBLE PEG station relocation because it will happen in your town eventually. **DO IT NOW, DON'T PUT THIS OFF, THIS IS YOUR FUTURE AT RISK! DO NOT ASSUME THAT OTHERS WILL DO THIS FOR YOU!** Please send a note to [info@ctamaine.org](mailto:info@ctamaine.org) to let us know you have begun the process in your town.

Station managers must also reach out to their friends, producers and viewers, letting them know of this impending crisis and urging them to be prepared to support the PEG Non-Discrimination bill that is forthcoming this fall.

- Contact your municipal officials and check to see if they are considering franchise renewal at this time. If they are, suggest they use the Maine Model Franchise as a starting point. <http://www.maine.gov/connectme/communities-resources/resources>. Tell them NOT to use the terrible contract Charter provides, it has NO municipal benefits, minimal consumer protections, and it allows Charter to put the PEG channels on ANY TIER, making them impossible for many people to find!
- CTAM will work with the Legislative Policy Committee of the Maine Municipal Association to enlist the MMA's support for the bill. Efforts are underway to have Tony Vigue invited to make a presentation to the Committee to inform them of the issue.
- CTAM has set up a Task Force – Sally Hebert, John Goran, Randy Visser, Twinkle Marie Manning and Chris Hall – to work on this issue and make recommendations about other support CTAM can provide.
- IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH THE TASK FORCE, PLEASE CONTACT SALLY HEBERT AT: [sajhebert@gmail.com](mailto:sajhebert@gmail.com)

- Here is the Bristol letter of protest:

*Municipal Office, Town of Bristol, Maine*

P. O. Box 830 • Bristol, Maine 04539  
Tel: (207) 563-5270 • Fax: (207) 563-8103 • www.bristolmaine.org



Shelley Winchenbach  
Director, Government Affairs – New England  
Charter Communications  
400 Old County Road  
Rockland, ME 04841

October 24, 2017

Dear Ms. Winchenbach,

Thank you for your letter to Municipal Officials of October 13<sup>th</sup>, outlining the changes to Charter Communications' cable television service in this community.

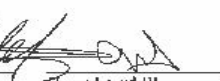
As a Town that relies heavily on Public Access Channel 7 to reach out to our citizens, and in particular to the elderly and housebound, we the Selectmen of Bristol wish to protest in the strongest possible terms to the change of Channel 7 to Channel 1301. This high number makes it effectively impossible to find the station by running through channels. Keeping the channel in the vicinity of our local broadcast channels allows easy access for all viewers.

We understand that you may consider channel numbering to be a technical matter between you and Channel 7, but we feel that this is a betrayal of the principles behind our new franchise award to Charter Communications for service to the Town of Bristol. We believe that such action would have been unthinkable by the former Time Warner cable prior to its acquisition by Charter, and that it reflects poorly on your management's stewardship of the public monopoly you have been granted. We urge you to reconsider this decision.

Yours sincerely,

  
Chad Hanna  
Chairman

  
Paul Yates  
Selectman

  
Harry Lownd III  
Selectman

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## CTAM LIST SERVE

A good way to keep in touch with other CTAM members is to join the CTAM ListServ. Once you subscribe you can ask a question, post information or make a comment to other members and exchange information. We've had the ListServe in operation for a couple of years but there are few subscribers. This is a FREE service provided by CTAM and we hope that you'll take advantage of it. Here's how:

### To Subscribe to the CTAM Listserv

1. Browse to <http://www.freelists.org/list/ctam>
2. Enter your email address
3. Select "Subscribe" in the drop-down box
4. Click "GO!" button

**-OR-**

Send an email to [ctam-request@freelists.org](mailto:ctam-request@freelists.org) with the word "subscribe" in the Subject field.

In either case you will receive an email confirming your desire to subscribe. Click on the link contained in the email to confirm and activate your subscription. Subscription to the Listserv does not require approval by a list administrator but the list administrator will receive an email advising of the new subscription after which the list administrator may cancel any subscriptions received from non-CTAM affiliated users.

### To post to the CTAM Listserv

Simply send an email to [ctam@freelists.org](mailto:ctam@freelists.org)

Your post will be sent immediately to all who have subscribed to the list. Posting to the list is not being moderated at this time.

However, the list administrator will receive a copy of all posts to the list and will delete archived posts that are off topic or unsubscribe any user who 'spams' the list. At this time, attachments and html markup code are not permitted in email posts to the list.

To REPLY to a CTAM Listserv message just hit "reply" and your reply message will be distributed to all subscribers. If you want to send an off-line reply to the original poster you can copy/paste the original poster's e-mail which appears in the listserv mail.

If you want individual replies to a message you send out you can also include your e-mail address in your original posting.

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**TELVIEW**

## CTAM MEMBERSHIPS 2017 EXPIRE IN JUNE

CTAM 2017 Memberships expire at the end of June. You should have received your Membership Invoice for the 2018 year via E-Mail and we request that you join or renew your Membership as soon as possible. A copy of the invoice is below.

If you need an invoice via e-mail send a request to: [info@ctamaine.org](mailto:info@ctamaine.org)



## REGIONALIZATION VS LOCAL – COOPERATION OR COMPETITION?

JP Fortier and Twinkle Marie Manning have been working to create the Central Maine Media Alliance. This group, including Mt. Blue TV, Fairfield, Madison, Sebasticook and Mexico/Rumford, would explore ways in which they could cooperate and share information, resources and programming.

They might also find ways to reduce costs and break down barriers between the towns.

The proposed Alliance raises some interesting issues about regional vs local stations and programming – similar in a way to the discussion about regional school boards.

- A PEG station's focus used to be on making TV. With Franchise fees dropping the focus is often more about finding enough money to stay on the air than program production.
- How can you connect with your community?
- If you share programs and resources with other towns do you lose your individual identity?
- Will town government feel that its money is being spent to support another town's station?
- The recent FCC ruling that commercial stations no longer need to maintain a local presence means that one station could serve an entire state. Should PEG stations adopt that model – OR – should they capitalize on their LOCAL presence to increase their audience?
- Can new technology – Roku etc. – be used to bring PEG stations to towns that don't have one? If so, where will the money come from to support that expansion?
- CTAM encourages stations to meet with other stations in their region to talk about these issues and solutions that might work for you in your area.

There was a lot of good discussion at the meeting on this issue and CTAM hopes to have a larger Workshop on the subject at the Fall meeting.



Lunch for the CTAM meeting was graciously provided by Charlie Paige of TelVue. Thanks to TelVue for providing us with the energy for the second half of our meeting.

The meeting's Door Prize – an Apple TV streamer – was provided by Tightrope Media Systems. Randy Visser of Tightrope and JP Fortier presented the prize to Mike Davis of Kennebunkport TV



*Mike Davis – JP Fortier – Randy Visser*



Illustration by Chris Gash

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer JP Fortier gave the Treasurer's report and introduced the proposed budget for 2018. Following discussion it was decided to include \$2,000 for ACM conference scholarships and the budget was approved unanimously.



### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Elections were held for the 2018 CTAM Board of Directors. Elected by unanimous vote were:

Sally Hebert – President  
JP Fortier – Treasurer and Temporary Secretary  
Twinkle Marie Manning – Meetings and Conferences  
Henry Guiod - Membership



**CTAM Membership  
Invoice  
2018-2019**  
(Expires June 30, 2019)

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

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

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

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

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/Alt Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Contact E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check Appropriate Membership Category:

Voting Membership (Town/Station) .....50.00

Person designated to cast vote on behalf of your organization:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

EM: \_\_\_\_\_ PH: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Non-Voting Membership (Vendor) .....\$50.00

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

> STATIONS: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION ON THE CTAM WEBSITE <

**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  
516 Congress Street  
Portland, Maine 04101  
EM: [info@ctamaine.org](mailto:info@ctamaine.org)

Questions? Call (207) 775-2900 x210  
Thank you for your support!

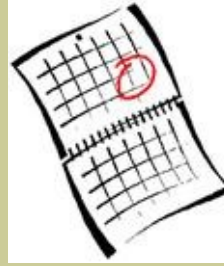
## **CTAMESSENGER** CONTRIBUTORS & CREDITS

PHOTOS: Brian Knoblock,  
Twinkle Marie Manning

**BECOME A**  
**CTAMESSENGER**  
**CONTRIBUTOR**

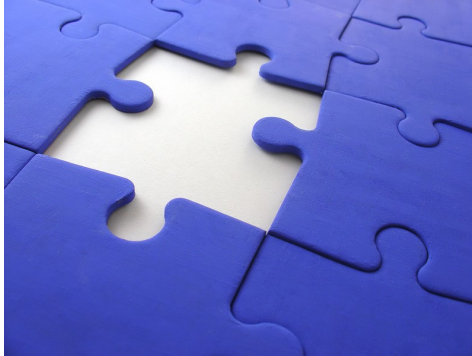
We welcome your story suggestions and ideas  
**CONTACT US AT:** [newsletter@ctamaine.org](mailto:newsletter@ctamaine.org)

Editor: Brian Knoblock  
Newsletter Design: Jen Scholz



### **CTAM FALL MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 20th in South Portland



### **OPEN BOARD SEAT**

JP Fortier has agreed to temporarily take on the duties of Board Secretary. However, the Board is still seeking a permanent candidate for the position. CTAM is a volunteer-run organization and cannot function effectively without a full Board. It is vital that individual CTAM members do their part so that all CTAM members can benefit.

Please consider joining the Board. Contact Sally Hebert for more information

### **LIVE REMOTE EQUIPMENT**

JP Fortier shared his experience with a couple of options for live remote video streaming.



BoxCast is a complete, simple, easy-to-use live streaming video solution. All you need to stream live is power, an internet connection and a video camera. You can schedule your broadcast ahead of time. Your viewers will get a perfectly-sized picture on any device - smartphone, tablet or computer. Plus, there's no buffering and no annoying ads to distract from your streamed content. You can stream content to TelVue and Tightrope.

For more information go to [www.boxcast.com](http://www.boxcast.com)



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For more information go to [www.myslingstudio.com](http://www.myslingstudio.com)





## Who we are:

**CTAM** is a broad-based, community television support organization that was incorporated in Maine in 1992 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to be a coordinated voice for the interests of non-profit community television organizations in Maine on a local, state, and national level.

**CTAM** supports their efforts to produce and disseminate non-commercial access programming and serves as an information source and educational advocacy group for the 72 public, educational and governmental (PEG) channels in Maine. CTAM is also an affiliate member of the Maine Municipal Association.

**CTAM** recognizes that the utility corridors in the public right of way belong to the towns. Access to these corridors by unregulated\* commercial entities who provide non-essential entertainment services for profit, may require just compensation for the use of the public right of way in the form of rent to the towns. This is known in the law as a “franchise fee”.

<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-5th-circuit/1297394.html>

**CTAM** recognizes that democracy is the foundation of our society and in order for democracy to flourish, people must be able to communicate ideas, share opinions and have access to information.

**CTAM** recognizes that a healthy, democratic society is founded on open government with engaged, informed and included citizenry.

**CTAM** recognizes that the primary means of information delivery and exchange today is through electronic media.

**CTAM** encourages the establishment and growth of Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) media centers to provide people with access to electronic communications training, equipment, facilities and delivery systems to encourage civic dialogue and participation; teach media literacy and serve their communities’ needs in promoting media democracy for all people regardless of their life circumstances, their political or religious beliefs or their ability to pay.

\*Not regulated by the Maine Public Utilities Commission