



## Director's Report

May 2007

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### Annual Meeting Preparations & Board Update

- Lisha Klaiber officially resigned from the LPCTV Board since the last meeting - the Board accepted her resignation at the March meeting
  - Lisha's seat was to expire this year
- Other seats expiring this year are those held by Norm, Jay, & Mark - do each of you wish to serve again? If so, we will put your names on the ballot
- The LPCTV Board is due to hold an election at the Annual Meeting, which will be held Thursday, June 29 at 7 PM
  - how many seats does the Board want for FY 07-08?
    - \* Currently there are 9 on the Board
    - \* If the Board wishes to keep the number of seats at 9, voting will be held for 4 seats - as we have in the past, we will create a ballot with the names of all candidates, along with a brief biographical statement from each candidate
  - all registered LPCTV members will receive a ballot - we will also make ballots available to any cable subscriber and/or resident of Ludlow, Plymouth, Cavendish, and Mount Holly.
  - Ballots to be counted & results announced at the beginning of Annual meeting
- A nominating committee from the Board should meet to come up with a list of names of potential BOD candidates - will prepare & distribute ballots thereafter
- I would like to do a small reception & Awards ceremony prior to the Annual meeting - it is nice to take that opportunity to recognize volunteers & producers

### Production & Programming

- Production assistance needed for Black River HS graduation - we will be performing a 3 camera shoot, switched live (also to be broadcast live)
  - this will require 4 people (3 camera people, and 1 technical director (who will switch and run graphics)
  - we will have at least 2 staff available, and it would be helpful to have 2 volunteers
    - \* anyone interested should let me know ASAP
- The studio is being used more & more - there are currently 4 regular weekly studio shows (1 is live) and several other ongoing monthly programs
  - we are holding studio production workshops for anyone interested
    - \* learn everything from behind the camera, on camera, lighting, graphics, audio, and switching
- The "in-house" studio show "Black River Spotlight" (a staff production) has already brought over ten area non-profits into the studio
  - the intent is to encourage local non profits & community groups to participate

### Vermont Access Network Update

- I attended the VAN annual meeting in early May - it was productive
  - attended by Chris Campbell from the Dept. of Public Service, who gave a talk on the changing media landscape, as a result of new telecommunications infrastructure, and the need for exploring new funding opportunities
    - \* while he did not actually say the words "PEG funding is in jeopardy and you all should be looking for new ways to fund what you do", it seemed to be the underlying theme
  - meeting was also attended by Comcast Director of Regulatory Affairs Lisa Birmingham and Manager Christina Degraff-Murphy, who gave a presentation on Comcast's role as it relates to PEG Access - goals for 2007, courtesy accounts, and support of the statewide network
- The Statewide Network committee has moved ahead towards implementation of the digital video file sharing network among access stations - a check for \$59K from Comcast was received, as part of their obligation in the revised Rule 8 for supporting a VAN network
  - I served in the interim governing cmte. of this statewide network - and it looks like I will be serving for 1 more year on the official governing cmte.
  - the network now has an official name - "Vermont Media Exchange" or "VMX"

### **Website Update**

- We are ready to launch our revised website, which is now managed by Drupal, a content management system, through which such web content as images, videos, forms, forums, blogs, & syndicated news feeds will be automated
- Will perform demo for the board at the upcoming meeting
- More content will be added to the site as we move forward, but for now the time & effort has been spent on setting up the content management part of the site
  - much of this work has been performed by Emily Frazier

### **Comcast Update**

- Christina Degraff-Murphy will be invited to our Annual Meeting
- I participated in a phone conference with Christina and several other Vermont Access Network people a couple of weeks ago to discuss the complaint procedures for reporting complaints to Comcast, and courtesy accounts
- We need to discuss the importance of re-negotiating our contract to include Annual capital funding from Comcast when we meet with Christina. As a reminder, our contract requires amending anyway, since Mount Holly is not yet included in our contract. Lisa Birmingham is aware of this and has said we can begin work on this - to date, no work has been done.

### **Space**

- The Ludlow Elementary School board discussed our lease at a recent meeting, which was videotaped
  - I watched the taping and found that some of the info was misrepresented
  - 1 board member in particular made a case that we should be paying more for rent since we make "about a dollar-fifty from every cable subscriber" , which was rebutted by the Principal (Karen Trimboli), who does not wish to raise our rent
  - Ms. Trimboli told the board that the video coverage of their meetings and various school events are in-kind contributions LPCTV makes for the school, to which the board member rebutted that LPCTV is "federally mandated" to provide those services
  - The board seemed to be convinced enough by this argument, and as such, raised our rent to \$300 / month, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>
    - \* I will present the lease to the board at the upcoming meeting
  - I am planning to attend the next LES meeting, on June 6<sup>th</sup>, to clarify what was discussed
- I have met with Kermit Upton and Kate from Strictly Rentals about renting possibilities - both are interested, but both spaces would cost us enough in rent & utilities to be a significant impact on our budget - the draft of the FY 07-08 budget uses the most expensive of these scenarios (\$1500 / mo. Plus utilities)
  - Kermit is working on a plan to modify his building to meet our specs and to come up with some construction costs
    - \* he estimates rent would be approx. \$8 per square foot (\$1333 / mo for approx. 2000 sq feet), plus utilities
  - Kate is looking to sublease some of her current space - her business rents in the Okemo Marketplace and has a 2-year lease for approx. 3000 sq. feet, most of which she does not use
    - \* rent would be \$10 per sq. foot (about \$1500 / month for approx. 1750 square feet), plus utilities
- I went on the tour of the Cavendish Historical Society bldg shortly after our March meeting - the space is very large, has lots of possibilities, but would require some construction / renovation, new heating system, insulation, extensive electrical work
  - there is 1 big problem with this space (aside from the unknown exact cost of renovation) - 1 is the timing (at this point, we don't know when the Historical Society will vacate the space)
  - we would essentially be taking over a 99 year lease with the Town for, I think, \$1 / year, and would be free to make any modifications to meet our needs

### **Equipment / Capital Expenses**

- At the March meeting, the Board approved \$5000 to be spent on a new character generator for the studio - I have since found an "all-in-one" solution for both a character generator & production switcher
  - the character generator was to be the first of 2 purchases for a studio production upgrade, as we enter the last of 3 phases of our full-on studio equipment upgrade (the first of which was the syc (black curtain & track), back in 2003; then, in 2004, we upgraded our cameras; the last phase was to be the control room equipment (namely the switcher & character generator)
  - I give you this background info. to demonstrate that there has been a method, in order of priority, for making our studio more professional in look and use
  - over the course of the last few years, there have been major changes in such studio equipment as

- switchers and character generators, as manufacturers make more use of technological advancements, and there have been more manufacturers entering the mix
- At the end of April, I attended the Alliance for Community Media - Northeast region conference in Bedford, NH, where I had the chance to try out one such "all-in-one" unit, manufactured by Broadcast Pix - there is another similar hybrid solution offered through Echolab & Compix Media, both well-respected names in broadcast video
    - I am no longer thinking in terms of separating the character generator from production switcher - rather, they should be purchased together in the same solution
    - I would like to make this the priority purchase for FY 07-08 and, if we do it soon, we can still use the \$5000 the board authorized from this fiscal year by making the purchase in 2 payments
    - the total cost of such a system (a combined solution with character generator, production switcher, a still store, & a server for digital video clip storage) would not exceed \$20,000
    - I recommend we purchase either the Broadcast Pix system or a comparable system from Echolab / Compix for no more than \$20,000, in 2 installments, with the first installment being during the month of June in the amount of \$5,000