



Director Report August 2019

Production, Programming, & Training

- August field productions handled by staff so far have included an archaeological presentation from Mt. Holly Community Historical Museum, a Ludlow Youth Library / TRSU summer camp "Animal Tales" presentation from So. VT Nature Museum, video coverage of the Chamber's "Chrome & Craft" festival, Cavendish Library promo, artist profile video (w/ Susan Leader), 2 projects with Pieter Van Schaik (see more below) & 8 local gov't meetings
- Field productions handled by volunteers / community producers over the past month: BRAT's BioBlitz, a presentation on climate change from Mt. Holly Conservation Trust, & a presentation on aquatic plants from Farm & Wilderness / Ninevah Foundation
- Studio productions during the past month: BRISC Update, music sessions with Bunty Station (band with Mt. Holly ties), FOLA Presents, & music session / interview with John Specker (as part of our artist profile series)
- Production Service for Hire- we have been hired by Peter Van Schaik to help him with 2 different projects: 1) documenting the construction of an ADA nature trail on his property and 2) a video documenting an ant infestation
- Volunteer production opportunities: as you've noticed, I am trying to send out regular notices of opportunities of events to cover. The lists I have sent so far are mainly from news releases & calendar announcements that we receive. Often, we receive such announcements a couple of weeks in advance, sometimes less than that. If you happen to know of an event coming up that we should know about and/or that you might be interested in covering, even if it's far in advance, let me know. We will add it onto our calendar (we maintain a separate calendar for "Volunteer Opportunities"). We do need to deepen our volunteer pool, but that's another story (and yet something else to be working on).

Building & Grounds / Equipment

- Painting party- George, Wendy, Sharon, & myself held a painting & pizza "party" last Monday. We got a lot done. There is more to be done – let's schedule another date. 4 is a great number, we learned.
- Equipment needs – after fighting with a couple of pieces of equipment in our studio control rack for the last 2 years, it is time to move on. The new studio cameras that we purchased are designed to work with the manufacturer's own production switcher. Since we already had a switcher that worked perfectly well (and on which we had spent a lot of money), I looked for different alternatives. I found a company that made "go between" hardware, that is engineered to fix the compatibility issues between the cameras and other switchers, such as ours. Its function would be to give us remote control over the cameras (from the control room), and tally lights on the cameras. The problem is that hardware has never worked as it should, and I have spent far too many hours troubleshooting the issue. So we will be selling (or possibly re-purposing) the old switcher, and buying a new switcher (one made by the manufacturer of the cameras, and designed to work with them). The money is in the budget. This will solve a lot of headaches. The result will be that we will have tally lights on our

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cameras, talkback capability with camera operators, & full remote control over each camera's exposure and color grading.

- Inventory – Eric & I started our work on inventory a couple of weeks ago but other work has gotten in the way. This could be a long process, but we will get there. I am blocking out time once per week to help move this along. As we go through and update the inventory, some of the older equipment is being retired. We are setting it all aside and will be putting it up for sale on eBay. I was surprised to hear some stories from colleagues who have had recent success with this, so I think it is worth a try, especially in light of the fact that we need to generate more revenue, from a variety of areas. This can be one additional, albeit small, option.

Outreach & Fundraising

- Membership Drive- We are trying to push memberships right now – so far, the response has been light. But thanks to Wendy & George for signing up! Board members can help, not just by signing up, but also by helping promote membership. This is a key goal of the Outreach & Fundraising Committee.
- Outreach & Fundraising Committee- the committee met late last month. We discussed memberships vs underwriting revenue, and the needs for each. We also discussed the cost vs benefit of participating in public events. Specifically, the Chamber's "Chrome & Craft" festival, which is this past weekend – they had invited us to have a booth at the event. We decided it would be a better use of time to record video of the event, which is what we ended up doing. We also discussed our program schedules and how people find out what's on and when. This led to the idea that we should have a viewer survey, and now would be a good time, since we are cutting back on the hours that we spend creating program scheduling.
- Survey- we have a very basic 10-question survey out right now. So far, we have had very few responses. We are promoting it on TV, through social media, & our website. We are also promoting it at our display at People's United Bank. I incorporated Wendy's idea that we would hold a raffle to entice people. If people leave their contact info on the survey, they will be entered into a raffle to win a personalized video / photo shoot. Please, take a moment to fill out the survey and tell your friends (the link & details are on the homepage of the web site. You can also go directly to the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/87GKJKS>)
- People's United Bank display- we are a "business member of the month" at the People's United bank Ludlow branch. Promoting community announcements, program schedules, the survey, & memberships.
- With school starting back up soon, I would like to focus on furthering the outreach we did last year, particularly with GMUHS, RVTC, & Stafford Tech Center, & Chester-Andover Elementary. We need to start making some inroads at Mill River HS, and I would like to revisit past discussions with Castleton State and CCV.
- In addition to school outreach, another focus need to be on the "non profit roadshow". I'd like to get that off of the ground this Fall as well.

Administrative / Organizational

- FCC Ruling- if you have not heard, the FCC voted, as expected 3-2, to adopt the proposed franchise fee amendments, which will allow cable companies to apply an in-kind value to many of the services they provide to PEG Access organizations. We do expect the local companies, Comcast & VTel in our area, to take advantage of this new ruling. However, we will not know the impact it will have on our funding until the next franchise fee payment cycle, in early November. And even then, it may not tell the full story. The ruling is expected to be appealed, but my understanding is that it is the new "law

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of the land” until when and if any appeal is successful.

- In response to our own budget cuts this year, I have been evaluating where & how we can cut back. As I’ve previously reported, we are eliminating the part-time “Field Producer” position, and combining its responsibilities with the program scheduling responsibilities handled by Fred. The agreement we have in place is that starting within the next month, Fred’s position will be 50% program scheduling and 50% production. This will mean approximately 15 fewer hours spent each week doing program scheduling. This will likely mean cutting back on some of the “imported” program offerings (shows we received from other VT access stations & other sources).
- Also, beginning after Labor Day, we will be reducing our hours of operation by 1-2 hours per day. Instead of opening at 9, we will open at 10 Monday – Friday. We will also close at 5PM 3 days per week, keeping the late days on Tuesdays & Thursdays, when we close at 7.
- PEG Access Study Committee- the 3rd of the 6 meetings will be held on Thursday, August 22 in Montpelier. I will be attending this meeting. I have not made it to the other two. VAN is trying to get supporters in attendance for each of the meetings. VAN’s representative on the committee is Lauren-Glenn Davitian. The work to date has involved identifying that PEG Access is a vital resource, tied to cable companies’ compensation of using public rights-of-way through “franchise fees”. And as cable franchise fee diminish, through the variety of threats being faced now & in the future, we are asking the State to help us establish alternative revenue streams. My personal feeling is that any new revenue stream, whether it’s a tax or fee-based, is that it should better reflect the changing technology.
- I will be on vacation from Weds. 8/28 through the day after Labor Day, returning to the office Weds. 9/4
- We will be closed on Labor Day, 9/3
- I will be meeting with John Cama, our new Treasurer, to go over bookkeeping workflow in the near future. For now, I have a budget report to share with you, reflecting actual vs budget to date (since July 1).

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