



Director Report March 2019

Production, Programming, & Training

- Over the past month (Feb. 17 – March 18), we televised 216 different programs on our channels, 92 of which were “first run” (non repeated programs). Coincidentally, that is nearly the same exact number of “first run” programs during the previous one month period, when we had 91. Of the 92 first-run shows this past month, 42 were “local” productions, and 10 were “regional” (from within our region or provided directly by an organization serving our region). The majority of the remaining programs were from State government, statewide organizations, and the daily news show “Democracy Now!”
- The shows that play the most frequently tend to be the shorter ones: the March edition of FOLA Presents played 69 times during this one month period; other frequently played shows included the BRACC update (62), & a short promo from Stafford Tech Center on VT Entrepreneurship Week (34), and an episode of Trailer Trash Talk (the movie & game trailer review show from RVTC students). Longer shows that played the most: Chamber Update- 2019 Guidebook (32 times), followed by The Wellness Series (from Springfield Medical Care), Senior Solutions, FOLA Honors Ralph Pace, BRHS Boys’ Basketball vs Blue Mountain, Innkeepers’ Ski Race, “Snowboarding in VT” author talk, & the Cavendish Fire Dept. Annual Meeting.
- In terms of most popular shows on our website during this period, Senior Solutions led the way with 32 views, followed by the December 17th Plymouth Selectboard meeting (25), Ludlow Town Meeting (24), “Pat & Penny’s Winter in VT” (23), “Coolidge & Lincoln” Presidents’ Day presentation (23), & Cavendish Town Meeting (21).
- You Tube: I’ve been giving more attention to our You Tube channel in recent months. Most, if not all, shorter shows are being uploaded there. The most popular from the last month was “Transformational Yoga #5” (138 views). The most popular of all-time are mostly John Specker fiddling videos (2 of which have over 2,000 views each), and an episode of The Wellness Series from last year, on lifestyle medicine (788 views).
- Fra & I will be recording the brief interview with Weston Playhouse’s new E.D., Susanna Gellert this Wednesday.
- I met up with the Mount Holly School winter sports program at Okemo recently – I shot some footage of the kids downhill skiing, snowboarding, & XC skiing. I went to the school last week to record interviews and will be shooting an interview with Bonnie MacPherson from Okemo this week. I will be
- We are working with the Ludlow Fire Department to edit their new membership recruitment video this week & next week. They have put a lot of work into it; Eric & I have provided some hands-on production support
- We have been working with 2 groups of students on National History Day videos. The annual tradition continues! Our history runs deep with History Day (Did you know that LPCTV was originally founded BECAUSE of History Day?) Eric has been closely working with the students this year.
- The after school program in Cavendish is up & running – we are making a claymation video. The Mount Holly after school program continues. They are producing their own variation / mash-up of fairy tales.
- Town Meeting Day went well – we covered 5 meetings, with 4 of them happening simultaneously, on Monday evening before Town Meeting Day. (Andover’s was that Saturday). Thanks to Fra for volunteering to cover Mount Holly.
- While our facility is under construction (from March 25 until approx. April 19), our production offerings will

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be limited to on-location. Editing can take place during evenings & weekends. Those with regular studio shows have been notified (actually, the studio has been inoperable since late last week, when I started moving items in there for storage). We will be recording all studio shows in other locations, primarily Ludlow Town Hall. We start with FOLA Presents this Thursday.

Fundraising

- In addition to recording the Mount Holly Town Meeting, Fra also spoke up on our behalf, relating to the \$50 increase we were requesting as a Town Appropriation, It passed as an Australian ballot item on Tuesday, w/ approx. 55% of the vote. Our requests in all the other Towns passed respectively- Ludlow (\$1750), Cavendish (\$600), & Plymouth (\$600)
- We need to re-ignite the discussion from a couple months ago about annual fundraising campaigns. Specifically, we need to look at underwriting
- We also need to move forward with a new plan for events. Over the last several months, we have discussed different possibilities. Fra was following up with Carol Lighthall about the idea of partnering on events. John has an idea for a bicycle fun ride.
- Due to limited human resources & time, we had to make the decision to forgo the Derby Gala this year. As a reminder, we did budget for \$5000 in revenue from events, but, as we round the corner towards the 4th and final quarter of the fiscal year, this target is looking unlikely.
- Now perhaps more than ever, we need to develop viable & dependable revenue streams. Strengthening our underwriting campaign is a good start. Live streaming will create some new possibilities.

Equipment & Building

- "Phase 3A" – Wright Construction was awarded the contract, with a bid of \$51,879. The work includes all of the rooms we discussed minus the doors and the flooring. If we can raise the funds to do the doors & flooring while they are still on site, it would be considerably less expensive, both in terms of time in money, than if we did it under a future phase.
- The work will begin on Monday, March 25 and is expected to last approximately 4 weeks. During this time, we will maintain some regular, albeit limited, open hours, during evenings (after 4PM) and on a couple of Saturdays (including this coming Saturday).
- Melissa Pierce, Comcast's Government & Regulatory Affairs Manager for Vermont, is coordinating with the local techs on the scheduling & details for the new cable runs. I have submitted a follow-up request to have the new cable runs installed during the week of April 22nd, which is when I anticipate putting all of the equipment back together again.
- VTel: the HD encoding equipment has been in place since late last month and is being monitored – the HD channels are not live yet. (Read: "this is only a test"). I checked again about this today – the Network Engineer told me he has "run into speed bumps" which he expects to resolve this week and that he has been dedicating every Friday towards this project "in an attempt to further it without cutting into VTel's other deadlines". It is unclear to me why the "project" has been this complex, considering that they have HD capability in place for the other access stations on their system. The solution to our problem could have – and should have - been much simpler. Moreover, our request was submitted over 2 years ago.

Outreach & Marketing

- VAN Legislative Day: this was a productive day in the State House on Feb. 20th. VAN was recognized on the House Floor, and VAN members provided testimony in front of various Senate & House committees. I participated in a Senate Finance Committee hearing. A request was made to both the Senate & the House for a Summer study session on PEG Access funding issues. We (VAN) are now working with a lobby firm, Action Circles on Montpelier, to help move this work forward.

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Administrative / Organizational

- FY2020 Budget: 2020 may sound distant & futuristic, but it's not. FY2020 starts this July 1st. April 1 marks the 4th quarter of FY2019, which means we have some work to do, with budgeting and other year-end preparation. Fra & I met to do some very preliminary budget work. As we look at the various threats we face in regard to operational funding ("GAPP" accounting changes by Comcast, the ongoing trend of "cord cutting", & the FCC's proposed rule changes), couple with the actuals from this year (FY2019), one thing is clear: our budget for FY2020 must be reduced
- The Public Utility Commission (PUC) will be holding its workshop on PEG funding issues on Thursday, March 28. VAN will be representing the membership. This is in response to Comcast's new "GAPP" accounting procedures for franchise fee calculations
- We need a Nominations & Elections committee. I do not have any record of one being established. With just a few months before the Annual Meeting & election, it's important to be doing the groundwork. The committee should evaluate what we need from the Board in the coming year and start soliciting candidates. Three members' terms are up this June: Lou, Julie, & Noah. We have a Board of 7 members, and can have anywhere from 5 – 15. The Nominating & Elections committee should be any 2-3 members who aren't running for re-election.