



## Director Report February 2020

### Production, Programming, & Training

- New local programs over the last 31 days (since last report): 50 total shows, including many government meetings, & Black River basketball games. Other shows have included 2 Chamber Updates (on Okemo Valley TV & snowmobiling), a Spotlight (Ludlow Town Budget), a show on the school district budgets, a Recycling Update from the Solid Waste District, a series of short videos from 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at LES, a couple of short promotional videos with Proctorsville Fire Dept., & several church services (St. James United Methodist, Ludlow Baptist, & Calvary Baptist in Cavendish).
- You Tube: during this same 31-day period since the last report, we had over 1,800 views of videos (again, many of those, over a third, are a 2014 video from John Specker playing the song "Bonapartes Retreat" in the studio; 248 views were of his updated version of that same song, which he recorded in the studio just last month). For the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive month, after John Specker, the next biggest hit over this recent period of time has been the "Paleoindians at Jackson Gore" video (106 views in. last 31 days). Notably, we have only gained 2 new subscribers to our You Tube channel over the past month, bringing our total subscribers to 80. We could stand to use many more than this. We need to be promoting this in every possible way
- Video on Demand (website): The top 2 videos viewed on our website over the last month were the Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> Cavendish Selectboard meeting (26 views) and the Cavendish Fire District Annual Meeting (14 views). In total, our website was visited 3,620 times over this period - a portion of which were spambots, which don't count. One data set that is promising is the "Schedules" page was visited 100 times by 66 users. These are most likely legitimate users, and while it's not a staggering number of visits, it does tell us that some people at least are looking to find out when programs are on TV. (And up until this point, when we are about to finally get our program schedules on the cable TV program guide, this has been the most effective way for people to learn what's on when).
- After School: Eric has completed the most recent film project with the Mt. Holly after school program, marking 6 sessions in a row for us there, spanning the last 3 years. He is now finishing up a short after school session at Chester-Andover Elementary School, our first there. We are planning to continue sessions at both schools.
- LES project: We recently completed another project with Ludlow Elementary School. The latest project was with Ms. Cille Meberg's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class. It was part of a science section they were doing on weather. We worked with them in the studio, using the green screen. Back in December, we worked with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class, who made short environmental PSAs, also using the green screen.
- Program Guide: In the very near future, we will have access to the electronic / interactive program guide on BOTH Comcast and VTel. Because VTel uses the same service as Comcast for their program guide, we will be able to get our program schedules on both systems.
- VTel: After repeated requests over the last 3 years, our channels are finally in HD on VTel. The company's lead tech installed new equipment that is under as trail period - he is monitoring its

performance during this period. The hope is that this equipment is up for the task, to be used long-term. Once that is confirmed, we will want to publicize the news. The improvement is noticeable

## **Building & Grounds**

- Painting: We are close to being done. Thanks again to George for coming in to help put on some finishing touches.
- Cleaning Service: We finally have a new cleaner: Mike McNamara, who has cleaned the schools in Ludlow for many years. In addition, he also does some side work, and was happy to take us on

## **Equipment**

- Switcher: The new production switcher is installed. It's a bit of an adjustment, but so far, so good.
- Items for Sale: I have not had much success with the listings on eBay so far. A couple of items sold months ago, but the other items that are up there are not garnering much interest. I need to seek alternative options, and welcome any thoughts on this.

## **Outreach & Fundraising**

- Town Meeting Coverage & Appropriation Requests: We will be covering 5 Town Meetings – in Andover, Ludlow, Cavendish, Plymouth, and Mt. Holly. Andover's is on Sat. Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>; the other 4 are all on Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. As we discussed at last month's meeting, we need to have someone at both the Mt. Holly and Plymouth meetings, speaking up on behalf of our request for an increase from \$650 to \$750. These would ideally be residents. We also need some production help on Monday night. Is anyone available to help out by running a camera and/or with sound?
- Comcast Channel Re-Assignment: Our new Comcast channels, 1076 & 1086, should be live sometime over the next couple of weeks. Our existing channels will remain live for 3 months, to allow for time for us to prepare for the switchover – to include all of the publicity & marketing. Sharon & Wendy were gathering some pricing for a bulk mailing. When we do this marketing, we also want to promote 3 things: 1) the new channel numbers on Comcast, 2) the program guide on BOTH Comcast & VTel, and 3) VTel in HD.
- Shaw's Bag Give Back Program: We have been named as the beneficiary of Shaw's Bag Give Back Program for the month of March. This means that for every reusable bag that Shaw's sells at the Ludlow store, we will receive \$1. We need each Board member to help spread this word, among your contacts. Thanks to George for getting the process going by sending out an email and social media posts. I will send you what he wrote to you to use as a template or guideline.

## **Administrative / Financial**

- Legislative Work: The "PEG Study" Bill, H.744, is moving through the House Energy & Tech Committee and Senate Finance. I met with some of the members of the House committee recently, to give them some background info. & help fill in some blanks. There was also a good turnout last week at the State budget public hearings, where several people attended to speak up in favor of the bill. At each site (7 in total) across the State, an access station was there recording & live streaming the event. The House & Senate Appropriations Committees, who hosted the hearings, appreciated this. This is one example of the value that we collectively provide.
- Comcast contract: We were presented with a draft of a proposed contract from Comcast last month, but VAN then presented a proposed template to Comcast, to use for all stations. The two parties are negotiating on that template, and we have deferred to that process.
- Collaboration Discussion: As the next step in the ongoing conversations about collaborating with our neighboring colleagues, before I get further along in that process, we should have an internal

conversation, as a Board. We should come up with a list of questions that we want to have answered as we explore different scenarios (to include either pooling resources, collaborating, or merging, or some combination of those things)