



Alliance for
Community Media

Central States Region

KEYLIGHT



Autumn 2005

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**The Central
States region
thanks
the sponsors
of our
fall conference!**

Dave Leighton of Leightronix
~photo by Steve Sobel

Leightronix, Inc. - Silver Sponsor

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**Spring conference
2006
in
Midland, Michigan!**

see page 10 for more
information



Coming out of the Public Policy Update workshop at the Fall '06 CS-ACM regional conference in Louisville, KY, I was concerned that many of the attendees seemed unaware of the seriousness of our legislative battle with Congress. The discussion in the workshop was direct and to-the-point, with no "sugar coating" of the potential outcome. People were visibly rattled by the conversation.

For a few days I wondered if maybe the information we provided to conference attendees was a little heavy-handed. Then, an invitation to provide testimony on House Energy & Commerce Committee telecommunication legislation lifted the fog and made me realize we may in fact be underestimating the gravity of the situation. Sitting in the House Energy & Commerce Committee meeting chambers, I was surrounded by the lobbyist "armies" from Verizon, SBC, and Microsoft. These are the real players in this game, and it is clear to me that they'll end up getting most of what they want, very likely at the expense of local government and PEG.

As daunting as this seems, we need to make a concerted effort to preserve present PEG resources, much less seek new or additional opportunities. If we don't act quickly and effectively, the SBC+Microsoft/Verizon bus will roll right over us. So, what to do?

First: Keep (or start) communicating directly to your House and Senate representatives (fax, email, phone call, personal visits to the local offices). Use your Board of Directors if you can. Your message is simple – "despite the PEG channel capacity and franchise fee funding language in the bills, deeper analysis indicates that PEG resources will actually move backwards under the proposed legislation. Please don't let this happen – it will affect some number of community producers."

Second: Get a hand-picked selection of your community producers to communicate a similar message – preferably directly to the local office of your congressional representatives. Just do it.

Third: If you rely on PEG capital or operating funding that is not part of franchise fees, make it clear to your representative that this funding is not addressed at all in the draft legislation and its elimination would be a devastating financial blow to your community organization.

Fourth: Start thinking of operational changes and funding innovations for 2006. You may never need to implement them, but you should be prepared.

I really believe we are looking at a threshold moment in the PEG movement and the "face" of community media will change. Already shoestring budgets will shrink, new community partners will be needed, and new business plans will need to be adopted. There is no need (or time) for despair. As ACM Executive Director Tony Riddle commented in Louisville – "hope lies within you and it is hope that provides you with the energy and courage to face life's challenges." Remain hopeful, but get engaged in the game.

See you on the field.



Hap Haasch Chair, CS-ACM Board of Directors



CS Board Chair, Hap Haasch

I'd like to publicly thank the wonderful people who pitched in to develop the written and oral testimony presented in Washington, D.C. on November 9, 2005. Jim Horwood and Tim Lay of Spiegel & McDiarmid, Barbara Popovic from Chicago Access Network, Alan Bushong, Carl Kucharski, Sue Buske, Tom Bishop, Tony Riddle, and any others I may have missed. These folks are amazing.

~ Hap Haasch

~ photo by Mark Monk

Greetings from Grassroots

From the (former) grassroots chair:

Well, they say the grass is always greener on the other side. Not wanting to take anyone's word for this, I'm going to check it out for myself: I'm moving to New Jersey. OK, so maybe green is not the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the Garden State, but besides the staggering number of toxic dump sites and the fact that their road system apparently was designed by 3-year olds on a crayon rampage, it's not all that bad.

I want to take this opportunity (as my last soap-box before I'm no longer a member of the region) to thank you, fellow Central Stater, for being there and being involved in making PEG in our *I'M OK* region so very strong. I enjoyed meeting all of you and serving, albeit for such a brief period of time, on the CS Region Board. And yes, the grassroots jug was just a perk, really – Karma in a jar, so to speak.

Thank you for your support and friendship.

Felicia Jamieson

Speaking out for PEG Access

Read Central States Regional Chair Hap Haasch's testimony to the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee on November 9, on the release of the revised staff draft (BITS II) of the Broadband Internet Transmission "BITS" bill:

http://www.natoa.org/public/articles/Alliance_Testimony.pdf

and the testimony of Marilyn Praisner on the case for fair competition on behalf of NATOA and other sister organizations:

http://www.natoa.org/public/articles/Natl_Assoc_Written_Testimony.pdf

more on the BITS bill, page 11

2005 Philo T. Farnsworth Awards

by Rod Swartz

The Philo Awards were presented during the Friday luncheon at the fall conference in Louisville, Kentucky on November 4. Over two-thirds of the winners or their representatives were on hand to receive their awards during the ceremonies, which ran about 72 minutes. The ceremony was hosted by Rod Swartz, Philo Chair for the region, and members of the Central States board presented the Philo plaques to the winning producers at their dinner tables. The Philos had over 340 entries this year, and will net the region approximately \$5,000 after duplicate plaque and certificate orders are received and distributed.

Don't forget the ACM Hometown festival deadline of February 25, 2006, and next year's Philo deadline of late June, 2006.

Any questions or suggestions to make next year's Philo's even better, please contact Rod Swartz on the website:

[http://www.csregionacm.org/
video_comp.php](http://www.csregionacm.org/video_comp.php)

A complete list of winners and finalists are available on the website, as well as order forms for duplicate plaques and certificates. The early bird deadline for 2005 duplicates is November 30, and the final deadline is December 15.

Central States Region Board members

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Frank Clark, Equal Opportunity Chair

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Norm Compton, Treasurer, Finance Chair

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Mark F. Monk, Michigan Chapter Chair

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Jen Otten, Secretary

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Suzanne Patzer, Information Services Chair, OK Chapter Chair

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Johanna Perrino, Conference Planning Chair, At-Large

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Matt Schuster, Vice Chair, Public Policy Chair

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Tom Shubert, Organizational Development Chair

Solon Community Television
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440-349-6262 solontv@en.com

Rod Swartz, Education Committee Chair

Princeton Institutional TV Network
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“On the Threshold of Discovery” Central States Region Fall Conference and Trade Show

by Matt Schuster

Over 95 conference attendees, speakers, vendors and guests gathered in Louisville, Kentucky from November 3 - 5 for the ACM Central States Region's Fall Conference and Trade Show. The conference kicked off on Thursday afternoon with an engaging presentation by Allison Brzenchek titled “Reel TV: Who Controls Your Reality.” Participants were challenged to examine the way reality television bends and shapes our perceptions of reality. Later that afternoon, participants also learned about the use of Youth Channels and programs at media centers, and grassroots sustainable journalism. After a quick dinner break, conference attendees joined the Louisville Media Reform Group for a Preview Forum on “What We Know About You: Privacy Security and Community Concern.”

Friday opened with the Trade Show and Breakfast. Seven vendors demonstrated equipment and software available to community media providers. Vendors at trade show included: Leightronix, Inc., Princeton Server Group, Crispin Corporation, RUSHWORKS, MagicBox, Inc., Video Services of America (VSA), and Driver Alliant Insurance Services.



Matt Schuster wins a Philo award

~ photos by Matt Schuster



Allison Brzenchek on “Who Controls Your Reality?”

Conference attendees participated in three tracks of workshops on Friday. One track, coordinated by Sarah Mahle with Media Bridges in Cincinnati, concentrated on Media Literacy and ways in which you can incorporate media literacy into your training and operations. Another track focused on marketing and branding. The third track focused on public policy, effective lobbying and technology.

Friday's luncheon recognized community media producers with the annual Philo T. Farnsworth Video Awards Ceremony. Ninety-seven people gathered to accept awards and congratulate the winners.

On Friday night, people hit the streets of Louisville for the downtown First Friday Gallery Hop.

Saturday morning the Central States Region held a general membership meeting followed by Allison Brzenchek's media literacy presentation “Disney's World, Not Ours.” The conference concluded with the grassroots door prize raffle.

Special thanks to the conference sponsors: Leightronix, Inc (Silver Sponsor), RUSHWORKS (Friday Morning Snack Break Sponsor), Princeton Server Group (Trade Show Sponsor), and Crispin Corporation (Trade Show Sponsor).

See next page for conference photos

*Images from
Central States Region
Fall Conference 2005
Louisville, Kentucky*



Clockwise from top: Matt Schuster and raffle winner Barbara Clarke; conference participants Sara Mahle, Tyler Meyer, Jeff Weinkam, Sean Callahan and Keith Gilbert; Erik Mollberg and National ACM ED Tony Riddle; conference presenter Wilma King, Western KY Univ.; Andy Valeri and Philo award winner Pierrette Steele.



*We thank our
vendors for all their
support!*



Clockwise from top: RUSH WORKS; Video Services of America; Leightronix; Princeton Server Group speaking with MetroTV; MagicBox; Leightronix



~ photos by Mark Monk,
Matt Schuster and Steve Sobel

State Chapter Reports

Michigan Chapter Report

by Mark Monk, Chair

MI Chapter Meeting

There was a Michigan chapter meeting held in Battle Creek, MI on September 9, 2005. The topics had were iMovie presented by GRTV and an integrated "Studio-in-a-Box" presented by Rushworks.

At the chapter meeting nominations were accepted for office elections to the MI-ACM board. Elections were held and the results are as follows:

President: Mark Monk

Vice-President: Ron Beacom

Secretary: Lorry Jayne Hess

Treasurer: Jon Koeze

At-Large: Jan Howard, Frank Jamison and Lynn Meikle

Coding for the MI-ACM website was finished for final review by the board before sending for implementation. There was discussion about the MI state government and competing bills to replace the Michigan Telecommunications Act that sunsets at the end of December 2005. There was discussion on Midland hosting the spring conference for the CS-ACM. There was discussion on the MAB conference in Lansing on March 14, 2006. There is \$1,332.15 in the MI-ACM treasury as of the end of September.

Ohio-Kentucky Chapter Report

by Suzanne Patzer, Chair

The OK Chapter held a meeting on November 3, 2005 in Louisville KY at the Central States regional conference. The meeting was conducted by Steve Sobel, Vice Chair. Tom Bishop gave a national public policy report.

Elections for new officers and committee chairs resulted in the following:

Chair: Suzanne Patzer

Central States Financial Report

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

by Norm Compton, Treasurer

The current total account balance for Central States as of 11/18/05 is \$42,855.80, this is diversified over three accounts, two of which are earning interest.

Many thanks to all the hard working Central Staters who have helped out in our successful events this fall. The Philo T. Farnsworth Video under the guidance of Rod Swartz had a net income of \$4,205.76. The fall Conference held in Louisville thanks to Matt Schuster had a net income of \$1,893.48. While these events may be over, there is still account activities and these values are likely to increase over the next month.

The Central States Board will be reviewing the Central States spending plan in January and budgeting for 2006.

Membership Services, Grass Roots support, Public Policy and supporting our regional members who participate on the national board are the spending priorities of the current budget.

We are always looking at fundraising ideas and strategies, if you have comments, suggestions or questions please email me at ncompton@acpl.info.

National Board Report

by Matt Schuster

The ACM National Board of Directors met in Boston, MA from November 10 - 12, 2005. At the meeting, the board thanked those board members who were leaving the board for their dedicated service to the organization, Ruth Mills and Dee Dee Halleck. The board also welcomed and seated new members to the board, including Sue Buske, Jesikah Maria Ross, Keali'i Lopez, and Chad Johnston.

Tom Bishop stepped down as Chair of the National Board of Directors. The Central States Region thanks Tom for his year of service in this capacity on the National Board. Tom is remaining as a board member. The National Board elected Mike Wassenaar as Chair, Matt Schuster as Vice-Chair, Nancy Richard as Treasurer, and Suzanne St. John-Crane as Secretary. Julianne Turner was also selected as the Chair of Regional/Affiliate Chairs, and Tonya Gonzalez was selected to serve as the Equal Opportunity Representative on the National Board.



Matt Schuster, (left), Vice Chair of the National Alliance for Community Media Board, talks with fellow Central States Board member Norm Compton (center) and National ACM Executive Director Tony Riddle (right) at the fall conference

~ photo by Steve Sobel

The Board of Directors approved the National ACM's operating budget for 2006 and reviewed the draft financial audit for 2004. The finances of the national organization are continuing to strengthen.

Executive Director Tony Riddle reported that he has been busy with the public policy challenges on Capitol Hill. The ACM has been fortunate to strengthen and form relationships with many common interest groups and will continue to work with them on public policy issues. The ACM also participated in testimony on the Second Draft of the BITS bill, with Hap Haasch providing testimony.

The National Office will soon have a new membership coordinator joining the staff in December. This will bring the full-time national staff up to two people. The national office has also hired an answering service to make sure that your phone calls are answered and forwarded to the correct staff member for handling. These steps should make it easier for you, as a member, to reach the national office.

Membership renewal notices have been delayed due to the public policy work. Renewal notices should be arriving in your mailbox within the next few weeks. It is critical for the ACM to retain its members and increase our membership. If you have any concerns about renewing your membership, please contact a Central States or National Board member. We will be happy to try to find a way to address your concerns.

The national office is also looking for people to volunteer on projects. If you are interested in volunteering some of your time to the national organization, please contact Tony Riddle or Mike Wassenaar.

The next face to face meeting of the National Board will be March 2005 in Washington, D.C.

*raise your voice ** raise your voice ** raise your voice ** raise y*

"Raise Your Voice"
Spring 2006
Central States Regional Conference

May 4-6
Midland, Michigan

MCTVNetwork & the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library

Keynote Speaker: Melissa Davert, Executive Director-
Center for Independent Living of Mid-Michigan, an
advocacy group for people with disabilities and long-time
producers of "Access MidMichigan," program on MCTV

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For more information, contact Ron Beacom
at 989-837-3475 or rbeacom@midland-mi.org



Public Policy Update

A Snowstorm of Reaction to New Cable Legislation

On November 7th a “Snowstorm!” blanketed the entire United States, from Florida to Alaska, from Hawai’i to Maine as Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) channels on cable systems simultaneously played one minute of video snow. Snowstorm! was an action to organize grassroots support among PEG producers and viewers.

This Snowstorm! was played to remind communities what could be lost if new cable legislation before Congress is not fixed to protect the wonderful community channels we have all come to know and love.

“This nation has come to a critical juncture in the legislative battle to protect local franchising — especially Public, Educational, Government and Institutional Network resources for our communities,” warns Anthony Riddle, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Media (ACM).

“These bills, as written, give a few powerful corporations complete control over the information passing into and out of every home in America,” Riddle continued. “No people can be free who do not have freedom to share any information they feel they need to make decisions. The greenspace provided by Public, Educational and Governmental access channels is a real protection against corporate domination of our communities. Corporations should have the freedom to compete and innovate. Do our children deserve less? We believe in profits, but not at the expense of our Democracy.”

The House Energy and Commerce Committee Staff released a revised discussion draft of the “BITS Bill” which threatens the future of PEG access. Though the first draft, referred to as “BITS I” showed extraordinary promise to be a balanced and powerful piece of legislation, the new draft “BITS II,” evidences the end of bi-partisan dialogue and productive outcome, says the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA).

National organizations such as NATOA and the ACM submitted comments on BITS I, but received little to no consideration from the majority staff of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and its Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet on BITS II.

NATOA reports that BITS II creates a one-sided and grossly unfair regulatory regime that allows the telcos to circumvent the franchising process and subsidizes their competitive entry by depriving local governments of their fees – the same fees that the cable industry currently pays. BITS II reneges on the commitments made in BITS I and should be sent back to staff to draft a more balanced bill. Telcos gain their fast track franchising process, all other parties involved lose:

- ◆ Like services are not treated alike
- ◆ Social obligations are ignored and economic redlining is allowed
- ◆ It limits rights-of-ways fees to the recovery of management costs
- ◆ Video franchise fees are limited to 5% of subscriber revenue, not the 5% of gross revenues which is standard today
- ◆ PEG and INet capitol support are lost
- ◆ Public safety needs and responsibilities are ignored
- ◆ Consumers are left unprotected from monopoly pricing and providers.

Please see the Alliance for Community Media website for more public policy updates.



The Central States Board members strike a pose at the fall conference!



Top left:
Rod Swartz poses with a prize
Top right:
Jen Otten strikes a model pose
Middle:
Tom Shubert posing with many, many awards
Bottom:
Central States Board in their usual poses

~ photos by Mark Monk, Matt Schuster and Steve Sobel