Weathering the storm

Pictures above and to the right are from the Town Meeting in Columbus with Ohio FCC commissioners, courtesy of Steve Carter-Novotni. For more information on the future of media and how the ACM is reacting, see The Public Policy Report on page 11.

“Work Hard, Work Smart, Work Together”

www.csregionacm.org
In David Schulman’s [1994] documentary film “Everyone’s Channel” that traces the development of PEG access television, there is one line of narration that continues to strike a cord in me…

“PEG access exists because of cable TV, and in that environment it has lived a precarious existence for over twenty years”.

Friends and colleagues, I suggest to you that Public, Education, and Government access television, after more than thirty years of providing community-based media services to our respective communities, is now facing its most precarious moment.

AT&T’s effort to change the cable franchising landscape to their advantage presents, in my opinion, an ominous threat to the future of PEG access. Challenges to PEG funding, signal interconnection disputes, and PEG programming being cast into “nether-region” channels will come from both incumbent cable operators and AT&T alike. Municipalities will no longer have the ability to enforce PEG provisions contained in local franchise contracts, thus forcing PEG centers to seek assistance from state regulatory agencies that have traditionally been unfriendly to community interests.

My firm belief is that for PEG centers to remain viable media resources in their respective communities, they MUST:

1. Face the fact that the environment in which they exist has now become more dangerous than ever.

2. Quickly examine their organizational business plan and make changes focused on cost-efficiency and funding development – not “the same old song and dance, my friend”.

3. Leverage traditional services like video production and distribution while developing new services that meet community needs such as: vocational education, media archiving, A/V consultation and support to non-profits, and any other viable application of media technology in a community context that makes sense.

4. Recognize that content is still “King”, and this is still the best opportunity to build value in a community. Fresh, well-produced, local content will continue to be the single biggest asset a PEG center can bring to a community.

I have an overwhelming sense that PEG centers, and the people who care about them, have the resources and willpower to make a go of it in this new environment. It won’t be easy, but as David Shulman pointed out, it never has been. Work hard, work smart, work together… that’s my pep talk for this edition of Keylight.

Until next time…

Hap Haasch
Chair – Central States Region, Alliance for Community Media
National Board Report

by Matt Schuster

The National Board of Directors of the Alliance for Community Media met March 1-3 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The first day of the meeting, the board focused on conducting routine business of the board, including a report from the executive director, reviewing financial statements, and committee action items.

The financial position of the national organization is continuing to strengthen. The organization has committed over $120,000 to the reserve fund and daily operating cash flow remains strong. The organization did not experience our typical “lean” period of cash flow in the months of December-February.

The Board authorized the transfer of $1,000 from the Brian Wilson Scholarship reserve funds for the purpose of awarding the first of the scholarship in Fall 2007. The scholarship is for a full-time student in the field of media, communications, journalism or a related field, who is an ACM member or a family-member of an ACM member. Mike Wassenaar is appointing a committee to work on the development of application materials, and the selection of a candidate for the award. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Mike Wassenaar.

The board also voted to no longer include the affiliate financial information as part of the ACM national organization’s audit, upon recommendation by the current auditor. As a result, affiliates with total assets of more than $25,000 will be required to fill out their own 990’s for 2006.

MOTION: The board accepts the recommendation of the Audit Committee to discontinue the inclusion of the affiliate and chapter financial information in the national organization’s audit and tax return beginning with the fiscal year ended 12/31/06. The board directs the regional representative to communicate this decision to the affiliate and chapter treasurers and inform them that they are covered under the national organization’s Group Exemption Letter; and that they have an obligation to file IRS form 990, beginning with the 2006 returns, if their year-end net assets exceed $25,000.

That afternoon, the board met with former FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani to gain some insight into how to most effectively work with the FCC.

The next two days were spent on strategic visioning and planning for the organization. The board developed some specific goals and tasks to accomplish in the next year while looking forward towards some 5-year goals.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments related to the National Organization, please feel free to contact me or Dale Geminde.
Greetings from Grassroots
by Sara Mahle

The 2007 Roxie L. Cole Leadership Award

Nominations are now being accepted for The 2007 Roxie L. Cole Leadership Award. The award is given to a person who exemplifies the spirit of access television in their community. This person is a leader who has effectiveness, initiative, energy, skill, authority and vision, and who has made significant contributions to their community. The nominee can be a Volunteer, Producer, Board Member, Staff Member, or Community Activist.

A bit about Roxie…
Roxie L. Cole was very dedicated to PEG Access in the Central States Region as well as on the national level. She started public access in Dayton, Ohio in 1978 and is known to many as the Mother of Public Access. In addition to her work there, she was a vital part of the Alliance for Community Media. Roxie passed away in 1994 leaving us with fond memories of her drive and vision to keep community media alive and well in our respective communities.

To nominate a person, send answers to the following questions along with their name, mailing address, phone number and email to the address below. Also include your name, address, phone number and email. Submit to Sara Mahle c/o Media Bridges, 1100 Race Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 or email sara@mediabridges.org.

The Roxie L. Cole Leadership Award is open to the Central States Region (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan). All applications must be received by Friday, May 4th, 2007.

1. How has this person served the community in relation to Community Media?
2. What leadership role(s) have they taken in their community?
3. How does this person handle challenging issues?
4. What has been this person’s best contribution to the Community Media movement?
   • Please limit applications to two pages in length

SPECIAL NOTE: While the Roxie Cole Award is typically given at the spring conference, since we will not being meeting formally as a regional group, ceremonies will be held at the Fall Conference in Fort Wayne, IN.

National Conference Scholarships:

The Alliance for Community Media offers scholarships in an effort to facilitate attendance at the national conferences by interns, staff of small access centers, access volunteers, independent producers and those traditionally denied access to the media who may otherwise be unable to attend.

The National Conference will be held
July 25-28, 2007
in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN.

Scholarships cover full registration and partial reimbursement for food and travel related expenses. Here’s how to apply!

How to Apply:
Submit your application to your local PEG Access Center or Region Representative by the deadline. Be sure to complete all of the information and insure that contact information is accurate.

The deadline date for applications is 5:00 PM Friday, May 4, 2007.

Completed applications should be returned to:

Your Access Center
or to:
Sara Mahle, c/o Media Bridges
1100 Race St., Cincinnati, OH 45202
or email
Sara@mediabridges.org
SHOW ME THE MONEY!

by Norm Compton, CS Treasurer

We have a rule in our region, that we only budget the money we have on hand at the beginning of the year (the Swartz/ Miller amendment). As of January 1, 2007 we had $38,228.22 in the bank diversified over three accounts. This years budget is set at $16,650 in expenditures and 8,400 in income.

The CS Board has set a conservative spending plan for 2007 that I have attached. We have $1,300 budgeted for Administration costs, $10,350 for Membership Services, and $5,000 for Public Policy. On the income side we are just as conservative with a goal of bringing in $8,400 from six different income sources.

As you can see Membership Services is the bulk of our spending plan. The region will be offering scholarships to the National and Regional Conferences as well as travel compensation to our representatives participating on the National board. I encourage all of our members to visit the Central States web site, as a member service it is a great resource of information and contacts around our region.

Looking over the spending plan you will notice we increased our Public Policy spending this year up to $5,000. The CS Board feels this year could be pivotal with state and national franchise issues coming at us from legislators and the FCC. Look for the Central States to be actively working with elected officials to shape the future of Access.

The Central States board is very grateful for the support we get from our membership and the role they play in making things happen. While we are not having a conference this Spring, we are having a great fall conference in Fort Wayne this November 8-10th. We will be awarding the Roxie Cole award as well as hosting the Philo T. Farnsworth video awards. A memorable time will be had by all in Fort Fun Indiana.
### CENTRAL STATES REGION

**ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA**

**SPENDING PLAN** Updated Feb. 6, 2006

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<td>Philo T. Farnsworth Awards $3,753.00</td>
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<td>Checking-Fifth Third Bank $2,215.00</td>
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<td>Fifth Third Savings $16,117.66</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL Cash On hand on the 1st of Year</strong> $38,323.00</td>
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One of the events held during the Michigan Association of Broadcasters Convention in Lansing Michigan was the ACM Michigan Chapter meeting and workshop.

As of late, Michigan has endured drastic cable legislative changes. Michigan Public Act 480 has been in effect since January 1, 2007. Currently the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has been charged with the implementation of the law and will be releasing its notice in June of this year. As a Chapter of the Alliance we were happy to have as our workshop feature, the top two cable folks from the MPSC; Orjiakor Isiogu, Director of Telecommunications and Ryan McAnany, Analyst, Telecommunications Division.

The workshop with the MPSC was well received for all who attended. One of the bigger news items was the MPSC’s impression that the ‘video service providers’ (cable companies) want to keep the status quo until June 2007, when the MPSC will release their notice on the implementation of PA480. This means that even though there is a law in effect, the related changes may wait until the later half of the year.

The other bit of advice I can give for those of us in Michigan is to create a “needs assessment” for your center. This documentation is the best way to secure funds directly related to the operations of PEG facilities in Michigan. If you wait until your local government is given notice from the service provider you will have less than 15 days to complete the task. The changes in Michigan are not over but the ACM Michigan Chapter will stay strong and shall champion local voices being heard over the interest of big business.

Baby Meikle arrives!

Congratulations to Lynn Meikle of HOM-TV on the birth of Jillian Nicole, affectionately known throughout the Central States Region as “Nexus”. Jillian was born on January 12th weighing 7 lbs. 7.4 oz.
Ohio Kentucky Chapter

To All Ohio Access Centers

IMPORTANT!
Please contact me to start receiving critical information about Ohio SB117
This bill drastically affects every PEG center in the state.
Action is vital every voice is crucial please respond Now or lose it all.
Steve Sobel, OK Chapter Chairman ACM CS Region.
steve.sobel@cincinnati-oh.gov
513-352-5308 Work
513-352-3257 Fax

The OK Alliance would like to invite you to attend a one day workshop for photojournalists, editors, producers, and reporters in Cleveland, Ohio on April 20, 2007. Learn from Emmy Award winning photojournalist Les Rose, from CBS LA News Bureau. Space is limited. For more information contact Chip Bergquist or Kathie Pohl, President of OH-NATOA.

See Your Future. Be Your Future.
April 27th 9am - 4pm
at Media Bridges Cincinnati. Help create the community media center of the future. Discussion and Activities designed to create a model for how we will serve our communities in the years to come. Facilitated by Media Working Group Sponsored by the OK Alliance, Ohio Arts Council & Media Bridges. Final Friday Art & Film Party to Follow. Watch in the mail for your brochure.
Indiana Chapter Report

The Indiana Chapter has spent the past quarter attempt to re-generate movement and reorganize the chapter. We are still in the process of creating a membership brochure followed by a membership drive. Once we have a stronger membership base, there is talk of designing a new and improved State Chapter Directory.

The chapter has been in dialogue with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission’s new Telecommunication board in regards to the Indiana Telecom Bill 1279 that as passed last year. After our meeting with the commission we submitted a letter detailing our concerns with the bill and how the Commission can clarify certain portions. We are currently gathering information about PEG centers funding mechanisms and how they receive capital monies to ensure that these monies continue to flow into access centers. Other steps are assisting the IURC with the necessary language to allow for the growth of new PEG access centers in communities within Indiana where none currently exist.

Humbly submitted,

Erik S. Möllberg
Chair, Indiana Chapter

Photos by Steve Sobel
“Save This Dog!”

Enter your Philo Video by July 25th or we will fire this public access employee!

you wouldn't want his dog to starve, would you?

check for updates @ www.csregionacm.org
look for applications in the mail

For a list of 2006 Philo T. Farnsworth Video Festival Award winners go to

www.csregionacm.org/content/winner.doc
The FCC released the Report and Order on Local Franchising on March 6. A coalition of local government organizations (NATOA, NACo, NLC, USCM), along with the Alliance for Community Media and the Alliance for Communications Democracy denounced the FCC’s action. This coalition is currently reviewing the Order and preparing a legal battle to have the order stayed and then overturned. More detailed analysis will be released by the organizations after careful review of the order.

Information that can be provided at large is minimal at this time, as legal strategies need to remain confidential. The ACM National Board of Directors authorized the ACM to join the coalition of local government agencies to challenge the FCC Report and Order on Local Franchising. Mr. Alan Fishel and Mr. Jeffrey Rummel from the firm of Arent Fox, LLP in Washington, DC, have been retained as counsel.

This legal challenge is above and beyond the National Organization’s daily operational funds. Membership costs have been kept to a minimum over the years, which requires us to turn back to our members in times of high financial costs for donations to the organization. The Alliance for Community Media has launched a fundraising campaign to help cover the costs of the legal challenge. To donate please visit www.alliancecm.org. The good news is that the ACM’s financial position is strong, so this money is not being solicited to help cover standard operational costs.

At the same time, the ACM is fighting the battle with the FCC, our members are working against state legislation that threatens the future of PEG access programming. State legislation has been passed in Michigan and Indiana, and the full effects of this legislation is still to be determined. Ohio Senate Bill 117 was just introduced in Ohio. An analysis of this bill is not available at the time that I’m writing this article.

While we continue to focus on public policy battles, we must also be sure to focus on new business models and plans to move forward with our cause and operations in what may be considered an “unfriendly environment”. Begin to explore new revenue streams outside of franchise fees, and analyze the role your operation plays in your community and the value placed on your services.

Regardless of legislative outcomes, I’m confident that PEG access will continue, if we have the strength and fortitude properly “prepare for and weather the storm”.

For resources and more information on national legislation and FCC actions, check www.alliancecm.org and NATOA’s website www.natoa.org.
Central States
Public Policy Fund Drive

Support the legislative advocacy work of the Alliance for Community Media! Choose a handy lunch bag, comfy baseball cap, attractive and professional portfolio or a roomy briefcase.

Premium Offer - Central States Public Policy Fund Drive

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<th>Premium Selections</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACM Baseball Hat</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACM Padfolio</td>
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<td>ACM Briefcase</td>
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<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
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Name ________________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

Access Center ______________________________________________________

City, State, Zip ___________________________________________________

Phone/Fax #s ________________________________/________________________

Email _____________________________________________________________

ACM Member _____Yes _____ No   Date ___________________

Amount Enclosed $ ______________________

Send check or money order to:

Tom Shubert
115 Wilbur Drive
Munroe Falls, OH 44262

Make checks out to: Central States ACM
## Central States Region Board Members

### Hap Haasch, Chair
Community Access Center  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
269-343-2211  HapHaasch@net-link.net

### Chip Bergquist
Waycross Community Media  
Forest Park, Ohio  
513-825-2429x11  chip@waycross.org

### Frank Clark, Equal Opportunity Chair
Office of Cable Communications  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
513-352-5307  frank.clark@cincinnati-oh.gov

### Norm Compton, Treasurer, Finance Chair
Access Fort Wayne  
Fort Wayne, IN  
260-421-1246  ncompton@acpl.lib.in.us

### Sara Mahle, Grassroots Chair
Media Bridges  
Cincinnati, OH  
513-651-4171  sara@mediabridges.org

### Mark F. Monk, Michigan Chapter Chair
Community Access Center  
Kalamazoo, MI  
(269) 343-2211  MFMonk@Net-Link.Net

### Matt Schuster, Vice Chair, Public Policy Chair
Louisville MetroTV Channel Manager  
Louisville, KY  
502-574-1904  matt.schuster@loukymetro.org

### Tom Shubert, Organizational Development Chair
115 Wilbur Drive, Munroe Falls, OH  
330-686-4933  tshubert@neo.rr.com

### Steve Sobel, OK Chapter Chair
Office of Cable Communications  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
513-352-5308  steve.sobel@cincinnati-oh.gov

### Rod Swartz, Education Committee Chair
Princeton Institutional TV Network  
Cincinnati, OH  
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