

2008
MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION

2008 has been a year of stabilization as well as improvements. The presence of the station at public events continues to draw praise from community members and cooperative efforts with other organizations continue to improve.

There was coverage of several "annual" events including the Turners Falls Block Party, the MIAA Championship Women's Softball game, the Valley Idol competition at the Shea Theater and other community events. MCTV's presence at the block party was appreciated and board members took turns on cameras as well as staffing the tent where Brent Eaton did a fundraiser "air brushing" tattoos on partygoers.

With the help of the CAC the board and staff researched the possibility of increasing the number of drops in town to simplify the airing of live events. Unfortunately, it was determined there is no I-Net which meant the activation of additional drops was not a simple or inexpensive matter. The board has not seen information on the price of installing new drops.

The station continues to have a number of options for community input. Attendance at public hearings and board meetings has been non-existent but community members have been contacting the station directly with feedback. Due to the efforts of Robin Mide, Charles Kelley and Comcast, we appear to have resolved the intermittent sound issues at the Town Hall. The town hall switcher was replaced with the studio switcher and the Sony AnyCast is being used as the switcher in the studio.

Communication and technical issues with the School District has been resolved for the most part and it is hoped the relationship will continue to grow. There were many Town Meetings and School District meetings this year and the staff is to be commended for working hard at ensuring effective coverage. An email notification list was established to prevent miscommunications.

It is unclear what will happen with the nesting bald eagles on Barton Island. An autumn storm took down the tree with the nest and damaged the battery. The camera is askew and no longer broadcasting useful footage. It is hoped the eagles will rebuild their nest in an adjacent tree with previous nest activity as there is a second camera trained on that tree.

FirstLight Power is in the process of being acquired by another entity and it is not known whether the new owners will be interested in repairing the damaged equipment or activating the second camera to enable the live viewing of the eagles.

The station's operating budget remains conservative and revenues were higher than projected so there is a surplus of operating funds that may become available for capital purchases. The Princeton Server, the largest capital purchase of 2006 has been a tremendous asset to the station. Previously the station was restricted to six programs repeated twice daily due the limitations of the rack components. The server has capacity for 24 hour programming and alleviates the need for staff or board members to manually change tapes/dvd's on the weekends and holidays, has terrific reporting capability and can store more than 500 programs. In addition, we can now encode live programming directly to the server. Not only does the server reduce staff programming time by about 70% but the improved quality gives the station a more professional image. It was well worth the expense.

The station continues to purchase new equipment. The single largest lease/purchase was the Sony Anycast – the final lease payment will be made in February 2009. Truly a studio in a suitcase, without the Anycast, MCTV would not have been able to broadcast the special town and school meetings, the Valley Idol competition or its studio programming. What used to be two or three vehicles full of equipment transported to off-site shoots can now be packed into one small car and the set-up time is dramatically reduced. In addition to the Anycast, MCTV purchased a fourth Sony camera, more storage for the server and editing machine as well as Final Cut Pro software to increase our editing capabilities and a number of smaller purchases.

In addition to equipment acquisition, Robin Mide has documented the rack set-up and developed a series of "how to" manuals on topics such as, "Selectboard Meeting Set-up," "Airing School Committee Meetings," "Town Meeting Set-up," as well as a step-by-step user manual for the editing software.

Community outreach continues and more producers are learning to use the editing software. Most notable is The Friends Group of the Great Falls Discovery Center who now independently produce their coffee house series and other programs. Recently Laurel Facey completed the editing of a two-hour program of the Connecticut River Watershed Council's river song competition with technical help from Robin Mide. It was a significant undertaking as it was the first two-camera shoot she edited and the first time using the Final Cut Pro software. More recently The Friends group used a two-camera set-up to video the December variety show at the Great Hall.

The staff continues to work collaboratively with regional access stations and local producers to share programming. We also assisted the Town of Gill with advice about necessary equipment for their setup.

MCTV did not have any major fund raising campaigns again this year though the fund raising subcommittee did meet several times to map out a strategy for fund raising. There has been no sense of urgency because the cable revenues were higher than anticipated and operating expenses continue to be conservative enough to continue acquire needed equipment. On the recommendation of Michael Bosworth, the board voted to transfer \$24,000 from the excess 2006-2007 operating funds to the capital savings account for the purchase of new equipment.

Robin Mide trained several producers on the editing software – there were three classroom series and a number of one-on-one trainings. Producers are becoming more independent and the backlog of unedited footage is diminishing.

Due to the number of Town Meetings and District wide school meetings MCTV did not hold the youth summer program in 2007. Hopefully we will be able to offer it again in 2008. Robin Mide spent her 3 hours/week at the Middle School from January through June. At the conclusion of the program, their videos were aired. At this time, the staff does not have a presence in the school system as there have been so many special town and district meetings there is no time left in their schedules.

The main users of the studio continue to be Montague Update and Brent Eaton's regular shows though the Shea Theater has worked with Robin Mide on producing a couple short video pieces promoting the Shea Theater in their efforts to revitalize the facility. The first helped the Shea Board of Directors to publicize their very successful July fundraiser in Peskeompskut Park. As previously mentioned, The Friends group is independently producing their coffee house series. Anna Viadero of the FCHC has been training in camera work and editing and has produced one video with more in the works. Sita Lang has been converting footage of the Seneca Falls encampment from ¾" Umatic to DVD. Copies of the usable footage have been given to the station. Robin Mide produced a "People Living with Aids" series of five studio shoots on various aspects of the disease. In addition, John Duda and Don Clegg produced the Gill music on the commons series.

Reviewing our third year of progress relative to the 2005 proposal for PEG Access was again a positive experience. MCTV continues to have an impressive level of local programming in addition to the sharing of programming from other local access stations. We have received consistently positive feedback from townspeople and hope to distribute a questionnaire for more specific feedback about our future direction – in particular the Board wants to investigate the desire of community members to access more satellite programs.

Another addition to programming has been made possible by a collaboration between the Princeton Server Group (PSG), the State government and the Alliance for Community Media. PSG has contributed server storage space and made available downloadable coverage of government meetings. This database of programming has been made available since WGBX no longer airs the State House meetings. MCTV has taken advantage of the database and begun using the meeting coverage.

The Erving Selectboard signed a 10-year contract with Comcast and Erving CAC members George Bohrer and Linda Downs-Bembury attend board meetings (George also joined the MCTV Board of Directors). They have not started broadcasting or producing shows at this time and Comcast has 16 months to install the additional cabling for the Farley portion of town. No formal arrangement has been made between MCTV and Erving at this time regarding shared programming or equipment consultations.

Financial reports have been distributed monthly to the CAC for review and MCTV has received positive feedback about the continued quality of reporting prepared by Michael Bosworth. CPA Bernice Lord was hired to do a formal

review of the MCCI financials – good business practice and also a step recommended before the purchase of Director's Insurance. Copies of the 2007 Financial Statements are included with the annual report as well as the most recent monthly financials (November, 2008). At this time the documents for the 2008 review are being gathered.

The Board of Directors and staff of MCTV have worked hard to maintain a viable and community friendly access station while adhering to the proposal submitted to the Selectboard. In particular, we feel the transparent financials and increased local programming have been appreciated by both the CAC and Selectboard. It is hoped that MCCI's contract will be renewed.

Looking at the future, MCTV hopes to begin a more structured programming schedule so recurring shows have their own regular time slots. It is believed community members might be more encouraged to produce shows and/or find sponsors if more this type of scheduling were adopted. Other ideas include sponsoring an annual video contest with cash prizes; encouraging lapsed shows such as the Montague Music Train to get back on track; and encourage more non-profit and service organizations to do in studio programs. Other ideas and feedback from the CAC and Selectboard would be welcome.

2009

Montague Community Cable, Inc. (MCCI)

Town of Montague Cable Advisory Committee

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Eileen Dowd
Laurie Callahan

MCCI Board of Directors

Anne Harding, President
Donna Festinger, Secretary
Linda Downs-Bembury, Treasurer
Michael Langknecht
Charles Kelley
John Duda
Brent Eaton
Mik Muller

MCTV Staff

Robin Mide, Station Manager
Dean Garvin, Associate Station Manager

Montague Community Cable Incorporated (MCCI) is The Access Management Organization (AMO) given the contract by the town of Montague to run Montague Community Television (MCTV)

Montague Community Cable Inc.
34 Second Street
Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376

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Annual Summary of Operations

The Cable Advisory Committee (CAC) reviewed the performance of MCCI/MCTV following the culmination of a three-year probationary period. The CAC recommended the Montague Select Board renew MCCI's agreement to manage the local access station through 2013 (for the remainder of the town's contract with Comcast). The Select Board unanimously approved this recommendation.

MCTV continues to conservatively manage their funds and monthly financial statements are produced for review by the board of directors, CAC and other interested parties. Comcast revenue rose slightly in 2009 and donations increased over 2008. There were several sponsors for special events like the Turners-Greenfield Thanksgiving football game and the annual town meeting in addition to contributions by individual donors.

There were no major equipment purchases in 2009 but the MCTV made the final payments on the leased Sony AnyCast which has lived up to its reputation as a "Studio in a Suitcase." The AnyCast has been invaluable at all multi-camera shoots and live shoots and is used as main switcher for both on-site and off-site productions.

MCTV continues to video town business including town meetings, select board meetings, and various special events. We have begun to air the finance committee meetings at their request. Turners Falls High School staff works with MCTV to ensure airing of the school committee meetings.

Our 2008 TFHS interns have never left – they can frequently be seen behind the cameras at local events. One of their first projects was a show called "Cops" where they visited the police station at the Town Hall and interviewed members of the police force. Later in the year they visited the new station and witnessed first hand the tremendous improvements in the facilities. Rumor has it 2010 will see their take on the Gill-Montague bridge construction project.

MCTV's presence is now expected at events like the Turners Falls Block Party and Valley Idol at the Shea Theatre. In addition community producers aired the summer music series on the Gill Commons and of course The Friends

Group at the Discovery Center continues to produce their excellent coffee house series. The station produces an impressive slate of community programming with more than 4,000 hours of local programming in 2009.

MCTV has taken advantage of a service provided by TelVue – the manufacturer of our Princeton Server. TelVue donates a portion of their server space to Massachusetts Alliance for Community Media. Alliance members can download programs from the server and air them locally and can also upload our programs to share with other communities across the state. MCTV has been using the service to air meetings and press conferences that take place in the eastern part of the State. These meetings might not be available to viewers otherwise.

Viewers were disappointed when a storm knocked the tree holding our resident eagles' nest. MCTV staff visited the island with Bill Gabriel of FirstLight Power Resources Northfield Mountain along with Scott Graves of Comcast and naturalists from the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife.

We had a brief success restoring the signal to a second camera which is trained on another nest the eagles built in a different tree. Later storms further damaged the aging equipment so MCTV will be unable to broadcast the annual nesting of the eagles. It is hoped logistics will work out for the 2010 season.

The station continues to be available for training and our first round of community volunteers have begun producing multi-camera shows on the AnyCast. MCTV also hosted a video camp this summer where nine area youth were trained to use the station equipment. They produced and aired a video about the situation at "Eagle Island" in Barton Cove.

The staff continues to work collaboratively with regional access stations and local producers to share programming. They attended the Alliance Community Media Northeast regional conference in Burlington, Vermont last May and to attend meetings of the local Alliance Community Media.

The Board of Directors and staff of MCTV continue to maintain a viable and community friendly access station while adhering to the proposal submitted to the Selectboard. We welcome feedback from viewers at any time.

2010

MONTAGUE COMMUNITY CABLE, INC. (MCCI)

Town of Montague Cable Advisory Committee

Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno
Eileen Dowd

MCCI Board of Directors

Anne Harding, President
Linda Downs-Bembury Treasurer
Donna Festinger, Secretary
Michael Langknecht
Charles Kelley
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Annual Summary of Operations

MCTV created an advisory board this year. We decided help was needed for community outreach, fund raising, and other special projects. The advisory board should not be mistaken for the Cable Advisory Committee, the town committee created to oversee cable operations for the town. The advisory board is an MCTV organization. The members include: Al Ross; Patricia Pruitt; Carlyn Saltman; Lee Wicks; Linda Ackerman and Steve Alves.

MCTV took the opportunity to survey the crowd during the Turners Falls block party. We found that 8 out of 9 people surveyed knew about MCTV and six out of nine people watch MCTV often, and two people watched MCTV sometimes. Other questions were asked as well. This was not a scientific poll but it gave us some idea who is watching the station. It is particularly important to get information regarding cable viewing as the town of Montague is entering re-franchising negotiations with Comcast. This means that input is needed from town members regarding how well Comcast is serving the town.

David Detmold, the editor of the Montague Reporter asked MCTV to produce a live forum with the candidates for select board. The forum was open to the public. The Reporter, Recorder and WHAI were there to ask questions of the candidates. We took questions from the audience as well as prepared questions from the reporters.

MCTV continues to video town business including town meetings, select board meetings, and various special events. We continue to air the finance committee meetings at their request. In addition, all GMRSD school committee meetings are shown. Those held at Turners Falls High School are produced by school staff while MCTV video tapes school committee meetings held at the elementary schools. The town of Gill is now showing its select board meetings on MCTV. They had been using MCTV's cameras, but recently bought their own equipment.

We continue to show the Turners Falls Block Party and Fabrications Fashion Show; the Valley Idol competition at the Shea Theatre; the summer music series on the Gill Commons; special programs at the Great Falls Discovery Center and other community produced events. Laurel Facey and Sita Lang are producing the Discovery Center Coffee House series. Sandy Facto and Marge D'Elia continue with "Under the Patchwork Quilt," and Ethan Reipold and AJ Cook are working on the "Bridge Project."

Reipold recorded a meeting about the residents of the town of Leverett inviting a prisoner from Guantanamo to live in their town. The meeting was uploaded to the MCTV web site upon request of David Detmold whose article in the Montague Reporter referred people to our web site to watch it in its entirety. Don Clegg and John Duda recorded

the Eggstravaganza at Unity Park and a number of other events. Clegg recorded the Morris Dancers at the community garden. Mik Muller organized a crew to record the 'Welcome Yule' production at the Shea Theater and covered the annual fashion show at Suzee's Laundromat.

Muller also organized the first Montague Soap Box Race, a fundraiser for MCTV. The event was a tremendous success thanks to the help of volunteers including many of the town's employees and elected officials. There were thousands of people in town to watch the race and participate. Naturally the event was videotaped and shown on Channel 17.

A few pieces of equipment and some software were bought this year. One piece of software, Facil, is a data base system that helps us keep track of equipment and facilities use. The Tight Rope Carousel is a computer that specializes in running the electronic bulletin board seen on channel 17. It automates the removal of dated messages and saves time creating new messages with built in templates. It is much better suited for running an electronic bulletin board than the Power Point Software that we had been using. MCTV also bought a much needed editing system as well as a new audio mixing board to improve the audio quality of the meetings held in the select board room.

MCTV welcomed two new interns -- Intha Lepkham from TFHS and Robert Flandreau a Montague resident attending Four Corners School. The two 2009 interns from TFHS are still working at the station. One of them is now a part time employee producing the Montague Finance committee meetings.

The station produces an impressive slate of community programming with more than 4,000 hours of local programming aired. The station continues to be available for training. A studio training class took place during the spring. The eight people enrolled in the class were then able to set up and produce studio and remote electronic field productions.

The staff continues to work collaboratively with regional access stations and local producers to share programming. MCTV joined both the Western Massachusetts Alliance for community media and the Massachusetts Access Alliance.

The Board of Directors and staff of MCTV continue to maintain a viable and community friendly access station while adhering to the proposal submitted to the Select board. We welcome feedback from viewers at any time.

2011
MONTAGUE COMMUNITY CABLE INC.

Montague Community Cable Incorporated (MCCI) is the Access Management Organization (AMO) awarded the contract by the town of Montague to run Montague Community Television (MCTV). MCTV's mission as the public access provider is to make the tools of modern electronic mass communication easy and convenient to use. We encourage all citizens, organizations and institutions in Montague and the broadcast viewing area to be involved in quality programming "by and for the community."

The station provides training, free use of camera equipment, studio use and editing equipment to anyone interested in producing their own show(s). Stop by the studio and talk with our staff if you would like to know more. MCTV is currently staffed with three part-time employees – Dean Garvin, Administrative Director; Cindy Tarail, Outreach & Communications Coordinator; and Owen Weaver, Technical Coordinator. The studio is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 600 p.m. Other hours are available by appointment by calling the station at (413) 863-9200 or stopping by the studio in the Crocker Building at 34 Second Street in downtown Turners Falls.

MCTV currently broadcasts on Channel 17 covering most of the villages of Montague, as well as parts of Gill and Erving. The station routinely covers Montague select board meetings, finance committee meetings, annual town meetings, special town meetings and other special meetings by request. In addition, the Gill-Montague Regional School District works with MCTV to air live school committee meetings. The school district videos the meetings that take place in the high school while MCTV assists with the video taping of the meetings that take place at the elementary schools. Volunteers from Gill continue to cover Gill select board meetings, annual town meetings and other governmental meetings as requested by their town government.

The station continues to broadcast special events taped by our community producers -- Valley Idol, the Turners Falls Block Party, concerts in the parks, fashion show events. This year MCTV worked with Comcast to set up a direct feed for the live airing of the Second Annual Montague Soapbox Derby. Special thanks to Easthampton Cable Access Television for their technical and personnel support during this event. The Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center is in their fourth year of producing the Coffee House series bringing an eclectic collection of local musicians to the airwaves following their live performances at the Great Hall.

The Town of Montague granted a ten year cable television renewal license to Comcast in August, 2003. The town's Cable Advisory Committee (CAC) has begun discussions with Comcast regarding license renewal when the current contract expires in August 2013. Anyone interested in working with the CAC should contact the station for further information.

MCCI Board of Directors

Anne Harding, President; Mike Langknecht, Treasurer; Donna Festinger, Secretary; and directors Mik Muller, Charles Kelley, and Kristi Bodin