



CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

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Last Meeting

The February meeting was held on the 20th at Gaetano's restaurant. The 14 people attending enjoyed lunch prior to the business meeting. Attendance was down possibly due to the run of harsh winter weather and the recent deep snowfall. Chairman Sam Zborowski opened the meeting with a short discussion of the Zenith DTV seminar that is being planned for Pittsburgh. The present plan is to have the seminar hosted by WQED and this SBE chapter. The proposed seminar is planned to be held at WQED studios in June.



Nick explaining one of the slides from his laptop

Following the short business meeting, Nick Cap offered a presentation that went far beyond his series of articles in the past three issues of this newsletter regarding the ABC coverage of the recent Super Bowl game. Nick described the planning effort to prepare for this event and showed numerous photos of the equipment setup used to cover the game.

Some of the topics covered included a description of the many trailers housing the studio/interview facilities, control room functions and editing equipment. He also described the many cameras used to cover the game and halftime activities including the skycam system that gets close to the action by use of a computer controlled cable suspension system. A mix of analog and digital cameras and a mix of analog and digital processing was used to blend the game coverage and archive material used in the commentary to provide both analog and DTV/HDTV feeds.

Also covered in the presentation was a description of the trailers used to generate the prime power for all of the other equipment, portable uplink facilities, and portable microwave link facilities used for the event. Nick also covered the enormous effort required to install and checkout the cables and fiber-optic equipment used to put it all together. Nick contrasted the Super Bowl effort to the relatively smaller effort to cover the weekly Monday Night Football (which is itself a super achievement that just happens more often).

Next Meeting

DTV Transmitter at CTV

Cornerstone TV's WPCB TV in Wall, PA is installing a new Axcera Visionary DTV Transmitter made right here in Pittsburgh. At the meeting on the 20th, Dave Benco and Don "Maxx" Thomas of Axcera will do a short overview of the transmitter/RF system and installation process and field your questions. The transmitter uses the highest power single amplifier tube available for DTV service.

The Visionary transmitter features the most advanced DTV exciter available today, with both linear and non-linear continuous adaptive pre-correction and a built-in signal analysis function that helps to reduce the need for test and monitoring equipment.

If you want to see the latest in DTV technology and get a close-up look at the newest DTV transmitter in Pittsburgh, stop by on March 20th!

You'll also be treated to a free lunch.

For additional information on the meeting, the location, and the menu, see page 4.

Next Meeting

Time: Thursday, March 20

12 noon - 1:30 P.M.

Come at 11:30 to shoot the breeze

Program:

Digital Transmitters

Presented by Axcera

Place:

Cornerstone TeleVision

Route 48, Wall, Pennsylvania

Free Lunch!



Chairman's Corner

THEMELESS

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I generally plan to have this column follow some particular theme, but I started writing too close to the newsletter deadline so this one is just random thoughts.

First, I would like to thank Nick Cap for his interesting and informative presentation on the planning, setup and equipment used to cover the recent Super Bowl game. I will never watch a football game on TV quite the same as before! We are usually looking for suggestions for presentation topics for our monthly meetings. I believe most or all of our members have been involved in some interesting activity or construction project related to broadcast. While not all projects are as exciting as Nick's, this is a good example of a member sharing some experience for the benefit of the group!

In the category of bumps in the road to the DTV transition, Dane Ericksen has a good article in the December issue of SBE SIGNAL. He presents a summary of the 4+ year long effort to get rules in place to license studio to transmitter links (STL's) using various forms of digital modulation, which are necessary to support the DTV transition. Presently, these STL's are operating under Special Temporary Authorizations (STA's), which must be renewed every six months with the attendant costs of filing preparation, license fees and uncertainty that the renewal may not be granted! While the STA problem is of more immediate concern since it pertains to primary stations, rules are still not in place to permit operation of DTV translators that are necessary to provide coverage to remote areas and on-channel boosters needed to provide coverage to terrain-shielded areas within the predicted service areas of many primary stations.

Another interesting perspective on the DTV transition can be seen in the current edition of TV Technology (available also on www.tvtechnology.com). Mario Orazio (The Masked Engineer) reports that FCC Chairman Michael Powell stated in January that the transition to DTV is "finally going pretty well". The statistics behind this statement apparently come from the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) who reported sales of 1.6 million DTV units over a nine-month period! Closer examination of the data reveals it is all in how you define DTV units. President Clinton (and many other lawyers) have illustrated the importance of definitions-remember what the definition of "is" is? The vast majority of CEA-defined DTV units do not have the ability to receive terrestrial DTV broadcasts off-air. Mario suggests a more precise definition for units that are capable of receiving dTTb or Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcast. I'm looking forward to CEA's statistics on dTTb but I'm not going to hold my breath!

Mark your calendars! Paul Byers and I have been in discussions with Zenith to hold a DTV transmission seminar at WQED studios. It looks like the date will be Thursday June 19th, which happens to also be our regular Chapter monthly meeting date. The details are not yet finalized but planning is proceeding very well. We should have more to report by the March meeting.

2003 Certification Exam Dates

Exam Date	Location	Application Deadline
April 8, 2003	NAB - Las Vegas	March 1, 2003
June 6-16, 2003	Local Chapters	April 25, 2003
August 15-25, 2003	Local Chapters	June 13, 2003
November 7-17, 2003	Local Chapters	September 26, 2003



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VMP Studio and CG Xtreme Part 1, Deciding Which Way To Go

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In today's broadcast world, budgets keep shrinking and equipment is getting older. In news departments, as in others, fewer people are doing more work while trying to maintain the same level of quality. When it does come time to replace a key piece of gear, like a character generator, there is a lot of pressure to get the most for your budget dollar. This is the environment that Inscribe's VMP Studio and CG Xtreme were designed to live in.

Recently, we installed a VMP Studio and CG Xtreme in Peak Media's studios in Johnstown, PA. Peak Media owns both WATM Channel 23 (ABC) and WWCP Channel 8 (FOX) and runs both stations' operations from their facility in Johnstown. We have been doing business with Peak Media for some time now and they asked us to suggest a CG. They wanted to replace their aging on-air CGs with new units that would step their quality and capabilities up a notch without breaking the bank. They also wanted CGs that could be integrated into a news automation system should they decide to go that route. Of course, reliability and ease of use were primary concerns in their decision.

We met with Peak's engineering and production staff and spoke to the people who would be using the CGs most. Peak's Production Manager, Jill Ream, was both extremely helpful and knowledgeable, and really helped us understand their particular workflow and needs. We also spent some time observing their news shows in order to clearly understand their needs. After careful consideration we recommended the latest versions of VMP Studio and CG Xtreme. We then arranged to bring a VMP Studio to their facility so they could test the unit to see how they liked it. One of our Product Specialists remained on hand to show them how to use it and gauge their response to it. The VMP Studio was well received by the production and engineering staff and shortly thereafter they decided to purchase the units. What follows is a brief description of the CGs and the installation process.

Like most of the video equipment we have installed, the VMP Studio and CG Xtreme were manufactured at Specialized Communications' facility in Hagerstown, MD. These units are a combination of software provided by Inscribe Technology Corporation and hardware engineered and built at our facility.

These units used the latest versions of the software, ver 4.5, which seems to have had some improvements to make it simpler to configure. Otherwise they are very similar in operation to the previous version.

VMP Studio is the flagship of Inscribe's CG product line. It incorporates on-air CG, video paint, still store, sequencing, and animations in one package. CG Xtreme has all the same modules except the still store module. Both can be configured for single channel or dual channel output. They also can be configured to accept ODBC (Microsoft standard) data and to support the Chyron Intelligent Interface data format for integration into newsroom automation, perfect for Peak's future plans. This is also great for dynamically changing data such as election results and sports scores.

Of course this all sounds good, but how easy are they to install and use? We installed a single channel CG Xtreme and a dual channel VMP Studio for Peak Media. Afterward we provided basic training to the staff on how to use the systems. We also recommended that they purchase the Inscribe training manuals with these systems. These manuals are different than the operator's manuals. They are a two-day training course in a book and come with samples on CD for use in the tutorials. The training manuals are extensive and mostly well written and easy to follow. The only complaint so far is that the section on the still store module could be clearer. A nice touch is that Inscribe includes the training manuals in Adobe Acrobat format as well. We installed the training .pdfs on the CG's and also installed the operator's manual. This way the operator can find the answers he or she needs quickly, without having to figure out who took the manuals.

Next month: The Installation.



EAS Chairman Still Needed

Contact Sam Zborowski if you are interested in volunteering for this.

Free Lunch at SBE March Meeting

Rich Schwartz of Axcera has offered to pick up the tab for our lunch at the March meeting.

The menu is:

Meat Loaf

Mashed potatoes and gravy

Corn

Salad with Italian or Ranch dressing

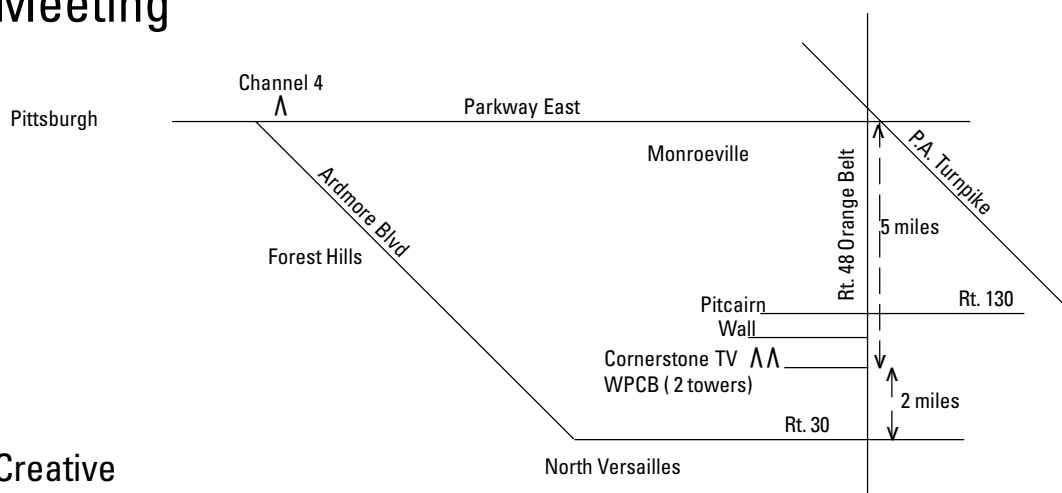
Cake

Thanks, Rich!



Roger Wilson checks out the new Axcera Visionary DTV Transmitter at Cornerstone TeleVision, which will be featured at our March meeting.

Map to Cornerstone TeleVision for the March Meeting



2003 RMT Dates from PEMA

January 22	10:45 AM
February 19	4:45 AM
March 21	10:10 AM
April 23	12:05 AM
May 21	12:45 PM
June 18	4:45 PM
July 23	1:45 PM
August 20	12:05 AM
September 17	2:45 PM
October 22	4:45 AM
November 19	10:15 AM
December 17	12:05 AM

Creative Maintenance

Thanks to Joe SeNay ...

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots and the replies from the maintenance crews. (P)=PROBLEM (S)=SOLUTION

(P) Left inside main tire almost needs replacement

(S) Almost replaced left inside main tire

(P) Test flight OK, except autoland very rough

(S) Autoland not installed on this aircraft

(P) #2 Propeller seeping prop fluid

(S) #2 Propeller seepage normal - #1, #3, and #4 propellers lack normal seepage

(P) Something loose in cockpit

(S) Something tightened in cockpit

(P) Evidence of leak on right main landing gear

(S) Evidence removed

(P) DME volume unbelievably loud

(S) Volume set to more believable level

(P) Dead bugs on windshield

(S) Live bugs on order

(P) Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent

(S) Cannot reproduce problem on ground

(P) IFF inoperative

(S) IFF always inoperative in OFF mode

(P) Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick

(S) That's what they're there for

(P) Number three engine missing

(S) Engine found on right wing after brief search