



# CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

society of broadcast engineers  
pittsburgh chapter

March 2004

Volume 12 Number 3

## Last Meeting



*Ed in action at his day job.*

## Ed Gave Us Hints on Keeping Those Passive Systems Working

Chapter 20 met at Gaetano's on the 19th. There were about 19 members and friends present for the first use of our new 2000 lumen LCD projector.

In the technical presentation, Ed Murlatt of Technical Broadcast Consultants gave us the benefit of his many years of experience working with filters, transmission lines and waveguide, antennas and combiners, etc. He covered both design considerations and maintenance tips for keeping your passive systems working.

Ed showed how design parameters and the physical layout are chosen to make for a reliable system. He said when having a system designed, make sure the firm doing the work has people who have had experience working in the field. If they don't, then it is wise to have the plans checked by someone who does.

Ed also gave many practical hints, procedures and recommended changes to make maintenance easier. Such things as why it is better to use dry air than nitrogen in your transmission lines. He also warned that the protection systems built into your transmitter are there to protect the transmitter, not all the systems that come after it, so that makes careful attention to these things very important.

## Next Meeting

## 2GHz Band -

## *Let's Negotiate*

Have you done your mandatory negotiations with the Mobile Satellite Services who want your 2GHz band frequencies?

The deadline is rapidly approaching and the next SBE Chapter meeting will be part of the necessary local transition plan.

The use it or lose it law doesn't hold true once government is involved.

So, if you don't want to wake up later and not have these frequencies, wake up now and come to our next meeting on Thursday, March 18.

See the Chairman's article on page 2 for more details.

## *Next Meeting*

**Time:** *Thursday, March 18*

**12:00 NOON**

***Come at 11:30 and shoot the breeze***

### **Program:**

## **2GHz Band Coordination and Transition Plan Meeting**

**Place:** Gaetano's Restaurant  
1617 Banksville Rd.

Use the Rt. 19 South (Banksville Rd)  
exit when coming out of town.

Use the Greentree exit when coming in.

**Lunch Fee \$7**

Article on page 2

Map on page 4



## Chairman's Corner

### How Does 7-2=7?

Bob Jordan, CPBE  
bjordan@wpxi.com

Got any plans for December 8? If not, and you use 2GHz BAS, then you need to make plans for lunch on March 18.

So, what are these dates? March 18 is the upcoming SBE meeting at Gaetano's, and December 8 is the end of the mandatory negotiation period, after which MSS (Mobile Satellite Services) can involuntarily relocate 2GHz BAS users in the top 30 markets where there is no negotiated plan in place.

But, if you're not actually in one of the top 30 markets, don't tune this issue out. Once relocation starts in Pittsburgh, whether by a voluntary plan or not, those of you in the smaller neighboring markets will immediately lose channels 1 & 2, leaving you with 5 channels until relocation is completed for your market. Oh yes, and if you use any 2GHz fixed links, you follow the top 30, no matter where you are.

It is unclear whether incumbent licensees need to initiate contact or whether MSS (read that as Nextel) will contact them to negotiate, but whether negotiating individually or collectively, all licenses in a market must adopt the same channel plan and abide by a coordinated relocation date.

There are still various issues which await clarification by the FCC, and there will be several hot topics for discussion during this year's NAB convention, so it is highly desirable to at least have an initial coordination meeting prior to NAB. We also don't want Nextel to be able to say the broadcasters aren't ready to negotiate. So, that first meeting for the Pittsburgh region will be the Chapter 20 SBE March meeting.

For our program on the 18th we'll be using the Chapter's new 2K lumen projector (sunglasses optional) to present the slides that were used for the recent NAB live web forum on this subject.

And, although unconfirmed, we hope to have an expert from MRC or Nucomm at the meeting to help us to understand the technical and logistical issues involved, as well as how we can best meet the time constraints. Pittsburgh area Frequency Coordinator Otto Schellin is also planning to be there.

Even if you're in one of the smaller neighboring markets in Ohio or West Virginia, I highly recommend and invite you to participate on the

18th to help us understand your situations, and to try to incorporate those considerations in the Pittsburgh plan where possible. While you may not be required to adopt the same relocation plan, you already know you'll be losing two channels at that time.

And how do you minimize interference when licensees in different markets need to cover a major news story that crosses those boundaries?

Besides, it's a great opportunity to get a good lunch cheap and get up to speed on something really important.

There are couple of things you're going to need to do before you get into any MSS/BAS negotiations, and those come under the general heading of inventory.

First you need to get all of your 2GHz FCC authorizations (licenses) together, make sure all information is accurate, and prepare a list of those call signs.

And second, you need to inventory all of your equipment, so you know not just what you own, but what your replacement requirements are.

That inventory should include type of equipment (xmtr, rcvr, antenna), manufacturer, model name, model number, manufacture date, and location. And don't forget antennas!

It's very possible for a workable coordination plan you're going to end up using polarized antennas, if you don't already.

Since you're going to need to get that inventory together eventually, why not get a rough draft together and bring it with you to the meeting so you have a good handle on what your needs are going to be.

One more thing. It would be extremely prudent to bring your news operations manager with you to this meeting (unless that happens to be you). Tell him you're taking him to lunch.

See you there.



**Chapter Twenty News** is published monthly  
(except during the summer) by

**Society of Broadcast Engineers**  
**Chapter 20**  
**P.O. Box 16312**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15242-0312**

Web page <http://www.broadcast.net/~sbe20>

#### Chapter 20 Officers

Chairman Bob Jordan	412-237-1174
Vice Chair Blake Richert	412-824-3930
Secretary Paul Byers	412-622-1530
Treasurer Paul Mastorakis	724-348-6681
Frequency Coordination Otto Schellin	412-237-1184
Convention Chair Kim Cannon	412-374-1700
Certification Tom Skubel	412-244-4435
FCC Committee vacant	
Newsletter Editor Gary Stewart	412-824-3930

# Is HD a Subscription Service?

By Dick Brad  
Editorial Director  
*Broadcast Engineering and  
Broadcast Engineering World Edition*

High-definition images will save over-the-air broadcasting. Right? Not so fast, TV breath. It seems that viewers are so confused about HD that almost half don't know if HD programming is available in their area and 23 percent don't even know if they have an HDTV set!

A recent study by Dove Consulting provides a conflicting image of viewers' perceptions of HD programming and technology. The study, which was based on 1500 consumers, was finished in November 2003.

More than 87 percent said they had some awareness of HDTV. That's up from 81 percent in April 2003. Also, there's an increased willingness among viewers to pay a premium for an HDTV set. About 10 percent of those surveyed said they would pay \$1500 for an HDTV set. This rate doubles to 20 percent if the set costs \$1000, and almost one-third said they'd buy an HD set if it cost \$700.

When it comes to HD programming awareness, it's clear that both broadcasters and the consumer electronics industry have again failed to educate the public. Of the less than half that do know that HD programming is available in their area, 56 percent learned about it from some form of advertising. Cable is the most effective at marketing HD, with almost 33 percent of viewers learning about HD programming from their local cable provider. Only 11 percent learned about the availability of HD programming from their local electronics stores. This again shows that the local retail electronics outlets are missing an important opportunity to educate the public about the availability of HD programming.

One aspect of the study does concern me, and it centers on what viewers think they have to do to receive HD programming.

There appears to be a viewer perception that HD is only available through the rental of a receiver or STB. Some 45 percent of non-HDTV set owners said they would be more interested in buying an HDTV monitor if they could "rent the set-top box/receiver from the cable/satellite provider for a small, additional fee." Note there is no mention of free over-the-air reception.

Among those planning to purchase an HDTV in the next six months, a whopping 75 percent would be even more interested in buying an HDTV monitor, if they knew they could "rent" the set-top box.

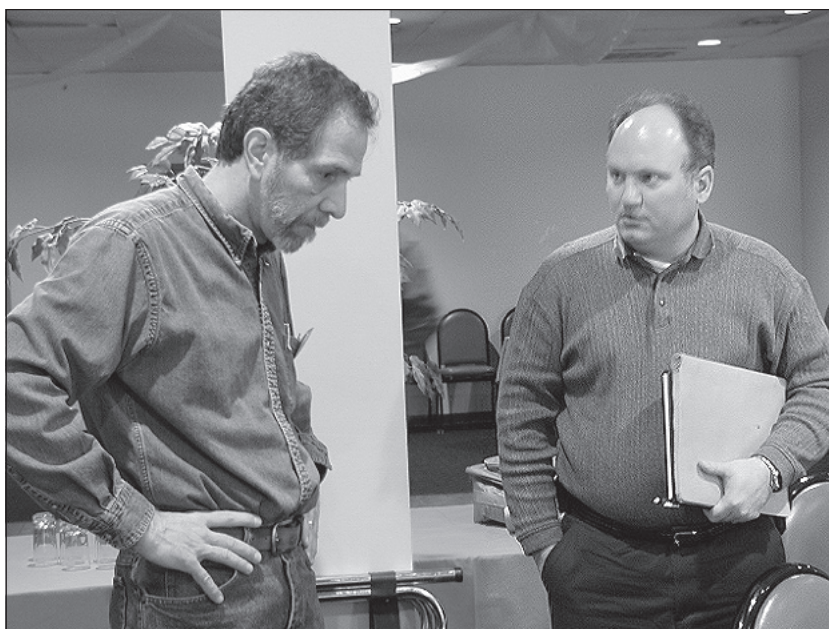
All this hints that consumers may mistakenly believe that HD programming is strictly a subscription-based service. They also may wrongly assume that HD receivers are expensive, hence their desire to rent one.

Unfortunately, this study supports my own experience. In all my travels this year around the country, I have never seen an analog television station promote their own digital service. That tells me a lot about how little these stations value their digital signals. Worse, it does nothing to promote the technology that represents their future.

If broadcasters won't promote HD as a free, off-the-air service, why would a consumer ever bother to install an antenna? After all, they are being told by cable that HD is a subscription service.

From the January, 2004, issue of **Broadcast Engineering** magazine. Used with permission.

Invite Your Friends to the Party!  
SBE Turns 40!  
Gifts for all members who recruit just  
one new member during the  
2004 Membership Drive.  
See page 4 for more info.



*Stan Falor (right) of He's Alive Radio, Grantsville, MD., talks to Ed after the meeting in February. He's Alive Radio is moving their transmitter in the east suburbs of Pittsburgh to a new location.*



# Membership Drive Bigger & Better

The 2004 annual membership drive is even better this year.

There is the usual \$5 off your annual dues for each new member you recruit. But this year the chapter can win a prize for having the largest percentage of members bringing in a new member. And, there are \$10,000 in prizes for recruiters, donated by a long list of manufacturers and service providers. There is even a prize for one of the new recruits.

We have included a membership form with this newsletter. Qualifying applications must arrive at the SBE National Office between March 1st and May 31st. The name of a member sponsor must be on the front page.

Give prospective members a copy of the enclosed membership application and ask him/her to fill in your name on the line "Sponsor's Name/Who introduced you to SBE." (You may want to write or type your name in this space before making copies.) The enclosed form may be duplicated or you can contact the SBE National Office for additional supplies. Once the new member's membership application has been approved, your name will be placed in the prize drawing, which will take place in June 2004.

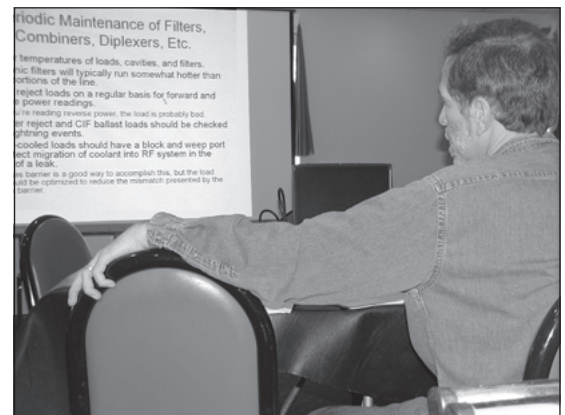
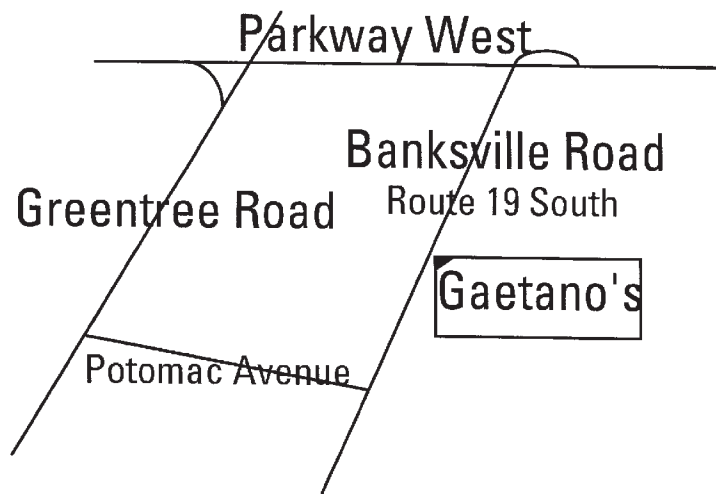
For additional information on rules and prizes, see the "Invite Your Friends to the Party ... SBE Turns 40!" brochure sent to SBE members from the SBE National Office.



*See all those empty chairs at the February meeting? Let's fill them with new recruits!*

## Map to Gaetano's

For March Chapter 20 meeting



*Ed explaining some important things to keep track of to maintain your passive RF system.*



*The good thing about being a speaker at a Chapter 20 meeting is that you get a free lunch. The bad thing is that you might be looking at your Power Point screen and grab your ice cream instead of your mouse.*