



# CHAPTER TWENTY NEWS

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*Dave Kasperek talks about DTV transition phonebank plans.*



## Last Meeting

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The February 19 meeting gave us the chance to again visit the WPXI studios. Lunch was catered by Panera Bread and we had 20 members and 4 guests in attendance.

The meeting began with chapter 20 business and the introduction of Stephen Zelenko as the new Treasurer and Sean Ryan as the new Secretary. Paul Byers and David Kasperek will continue in their current roles.

The topic of the meeting was a round table discussion of the DTV transition, focusing on experiences of stations around town as the original February deadline had come and gone. The focus now is continued viewer education and focusing on June. The collaborative efforts of all stations were highlighted in making a smooth transition effort so far with planned, simultaneous test dates and open sharing of experiences.

A request was made for volunteers to assist with a phone bank to help answer viewer questions and concerns. A sign-up sheet was passed around and we gathered about a dozen names of willing volunteers.

Continued on page 2



## Chairman's Corner

### Kindle Power

Paul Byers  
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I'm sure you will agree that it has been a loooooooooooog winter, but it looks like Spring is right around the corner so there's no excuse for not getting out of the house and coming to our next meeting. This month we will once again be back at Alexander's Pasta Express on Liberty Avenue in Bloomfield on Thursday, March 19th at 6:30 PM. I hope you can make it.

As predicted in many technology reports, Amazon recently announced the Kindle 2. While today this isn't directly important to the video world, we definitely need to be thinking about what it will mean to us in the years ahead.

What is Kindle? Not something you put at the bottom of your stack of wood to get the fire going. Kindle is a 10.2 ounce electronic book reader that enables you to buy ebooks, newspapers, and

Continued on page 2

## Attend! Sign In! Win!

We have begun a new program to help increase the attendance numbers for our meetings. Beginning with the February meeting, we now keep a running total of meeting attendance. Each meeting that you attend counts as an entry into a special raffle that will take place at the Expo in October for a prize that has yet to be determined. The only way to enter and win this raffle is to attend the meetings.

Make sure to attend our monthly meetings whenever possible and sign-in on the attendance sheet.

## Chairman's Corner

Continued from page 1

magazines from Amazon and read them anywhere, any time.

Why is it interesting? Three technology factors make the Kindle different:

Wireless connectivity. There's no computer involved and no WiFi network connection. The Kindle uses an occasional 3G cellular connection (using Sprint's WhisperNet) for everything.

Display. The Kindle uses a 6" epaper display. Fairly high resolution, grayscale, no backlight, matte screen . . . consumes little power, but is still highly viewable under a wide variety of lighting conditions - including bright sunlight.

All silicon storage. Books are small, so you can store a LOT of them in 2GB of flash memory.

When you add these together, you get a device that isn't cheap (\$359), but is very simple, has no moving parts, is not dependent on a PC, requires no monthly subscription (the connectivity cost is embedded in the price of the book) and lasts up to 8 days on a charge - even when you are reading continually (battery life is shorter when you're downloading a lot of content). Each book you buy seems to cost somewhat less than the price in paperback - and magazines and newspapers are significantly cheaper than home delivery pricing.

So, imagine your technical library - including every manual from every device in your station - in something the size of a single book - searchable, annotatable, mobile in and among the racks. Would that make your job easier?

Imagine what happens when the epaper displays become color . . . and the internal memory increases . . . and the bandwidth on the network gets cheaper (all of which are inevitable and no more than a few years away). Suddenly, the Kindle is a very, very efficient, subscription-free, mobile media device for any kind of media.

I don't know if Kindle will succeed in the long-run. Amazon's market is relatively small compared to Apple's domination of music and video on handhelds. And, of course, reading seems to be a dying art. That said, if the product survives, the changes enabled by simple linear technology advances could mean yet another interesting outlet for media organizations like public television.

Forty years ago, Alan Kay of Xerox PARC described the concept of a Dynabook. A connected, tablet-size device that would bring the world's knowledge to people the world over. Devices like the Kindle, the One Laptop Per Child computer, and the iPhone should make us think that this era is upon us. What are we going to do to bring the same kind of high-quality, thoughtful, valuable content to these devices? The answer is up to all of us.

Let me know what you think.

(Thanks to John McCoskey at PBS for providing the topic for this article.)

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## Last Meeting

Continued from page 1

Jan Strock from WHTM in Harrisburg demonstrated a rooftop DTV Antenna design from Signals Unlimited. Check out their web site at <http://www.dtvto.com/>. He spoke about his experiences in Chambersburg/Harrisburg with the antenna and the ability to tune in multiple markets including Baltimore, Washington DC, Harrisburg, and Altoona.



*Justin Akers of Signals Unlimited aims the demonstration antenna's rotor.*



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# FCC Report

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## Broadcasters Sue FCC Over White Spaces

Two Broadcast Associations said the FCC's decision to allow unlicensed use of television spectrum for internet access is illegal.

The fight over using the empty TV spectrum for unlicensed wireless services is not over, as the National Association of Broadcasters and the Association for Maximum Service Television sued the Federal Communications Commission for its decision regarding so-called white spaces.

When the transition from analog to digital TV signals is completed in June, there will be open spectrum between channels. Companies like Hewlett-Packard, Google, and Microsoft lobbied to have these white spaces be unregulated so companies can use them for wireless Internet services. Broadcasters, wireless microphone companies, sports teams and telecoms say using white spaces could interfere with nearby spectrum bands.



*In February, Jan Strock, Chief Engineer at WHTM, Harrisburg, spoke about his sideline, an antenna manufacturing and installation business.*

The issue appeared to be finalized last November, as the FCC unanimously approved unlicensed public use of white spaces with some safeguards. But the broadcast associations are now saying the decision was "arbitrary, capricious, and otherwise not in accordance with the law."

"The Commission's decision to allow unlicensed access to the television spectrum will have a direct adverse impact on MSTV's and NAB's members because it will allow harmful interference with reception of their broadcast signals," according to a petition review filed by the associations.

The broadcast associations want the courts to overturn the FCC's decision, but they did not elaborate on why the decision is illegal.

Companies like Google have touted the use of white spaces for altruistic reasons like providing universal broadband access to bridge the digital divide. But using white spaces for cheap and easy high-speed Internet access also creates multiple revenue opportunities.

"We make most of our money on advertising on search, and there are a lot of times I can't easily do a Web search even with 3G or open Wi-Fi networks," Google co-founder Larry Page said. "If people can get easily connected anywhere [with white spaces], we can make 20% to 30% more money."



## Musings of a Consultant Industry Trends

John Luff  
Television Technology  
Consultant

As I write this there is an important story about Thomson deciding to spin off Grass Valley, which, as I understand the announcement, includes all baseband products (cameras, switchers, modular, servers, etc) as well as transmitters and video compression products. They will hold onto set tops and the service businesses including Technicolor and VPN, which does in-store display networks like Walmart.

The world financial crisis has made this inevitable for Thomson. How many other companies are at risk we don't know yet, but I noted that Miranda gobbled up NVision, again. They announced a purchase a few years ago and couldn't close the transaction, leaving NVision private for several more years before the time was right again.

Those with cash and strong sales are certainly looking at bargain purchases. Panasonic bought controlling interest in Sanyo last year, creating the world's largest electronics manufacturer.

Is this trend good for our little industry? Time will tell, but weak companies are seldom useful to end users. Maybe we'll hear about a few more during NAB next month, including who is bidding on Grass Valley.



*How many SBE Certified TV Engineers does it take to set up one TV antenna?*

## Two Chances to Win!!

### 1. Recruit a new member...

*(Membership Application inside)*

Win a Flat Screen HDTV,  
Panasonic Blu-Ray Player,  
Eton E1XM AM/FM/Shortwave/XM Ready Radio  
or one of many other prizes.  
See your *Strength in Numbers* flyer for details.

### 2. Attend the Chapter 20 meetings,

**Sign in** for a chance to  
**Win** at the Expo in October.  
*(Details on page 1.)*



Next Meeting ...

## 8VSB Digital Translation

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Our March meeting is Thursday, March 19 at Alexander's Restaurant. Dinner at 7 PM in the downstairs private room. Meeting discussion follows.

Come out by 6:30 PM and shoot the breeze.

The Program will be about 8VSB Digital Translation: DTV Gap-Filling Essentials and Other Translator and Low Power Fundamentals.

Scott Barella of LARCAN USA will explore the current state of DTV Translators and how they are being utilized. Most recently, the FCC has allowed full service stations to apply for "DTV gap filler" translators, a new wrinkle to the many UHF TV stations in the country. This ruling will be discussed along with the fundamental technical elements that make up modern DTV translation.

Program System Information Protocol (PSIP) will also be discussed as it related to DTV translators and LPTV stations along with some interesting applications. This part is tricky when some

viewers may get both a main and a translated signal and the same PSIP branding is on both carriers. New strategies may be necessary.

Scott Barella is VP of Technology and Business Development for LARCAN USA. Scott has been involved in the broadcast industry since 1977.

Before joining LARCAN, Mr. Barella was the Vice President of Engineering for Burst Communications for six years and led the company's Broadcast Systems Integration division. Previously he was Chief Engineer of the Broadcast Ops and Engineering at AT&T Digital Media Centers (now Comcast). Scott also served as the Chief Engineer for 3 years at KCNC Television, a CBS O&O in Denver where he led the station's technical efforts with innovative engineering projects including one that won the station an Engineering Emmy for the application of the first digital microwave in helicopters in 1999.

Scott holds a B.S. degree in Radio and Television Broadcast from the University of Wyoming. He is the Current SBE Chairman for the Denver SBE Local Chapter 48. He is also a published writer for industry trade journals including *TV Technology* and *Broadcast Engineering*.

