

WVIA Community Advisory Board

Thursday, May 22, 2014 12 noon

The Community Advisory Board met at noon on May 22, 2014 at WVIA. In attendance were Jo-Ann Reif, chair, Tony Brooks, Caryn Powers, Doris Bigelow-Lees, Carol Tome, Tom and Judy Hall, Linda Keene, Tom and Sue Walker, and new members Meg Welker and Elaine Herzog. Tom Curra, Chris Norton, and Ginny Fredmonski represented WVIA. Jo-Ann Reif called the meeting to order and welcomed new members Meg Welker and Elaine Herzog, representing the Lake Wallenpaupack region. Dick and Barbara Briden from that region have also accepted an invitation to join the CAB at the next meeting.

Chris Norton described WVIA's Pocono Lake Region Community Leader Outreach event April 25 at the Hawley Silk Mill, in classroom space donated by Lackawanna College. Twenty-one invited community leaders brainstormed regional assets, including important arts and cultural organizations, public events, and local economic issues. They expressed appreciation for WVIA's efforts to publicize the lake region. As a result of this outreach, Meg Welker, Elaine Herzog, and Dick and Barbara Briden have accepted invitations to join the CAB. Other community engagement efforts include WVIA's participation in a Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profit Organizations/ NEPA Alliance planning session, WVIA's "listening" participation in the Luzerne Foundation Non-Profit Forum (2 sessions), and WVIA's attendance at the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development "Indicators" report meeting just this morning (May 22.) As an additional outreach project, WVIA will host an ArtScene Conference in the fall, bringing together regional arts and cultural organizations to share success stories, offer promotional and marketing assistance, and promote collaborations.

Tom Curra reviewed recent and upcoming WVIA TV program highlights, including 3 *Chiaroscuro Conservancy* jazz education shows with students from Berwick Area, Williamsport Area, and Jersey Shore High Schools. The *Poetry Out Loud* regional competition aired in April, national Poetry Month. WVIA produced a special program with regional educators on Civil War history that included a Skype appearance by special guest Ken Burns, part of an outreach project promoting his PBS documentary, *The Address*. Many of our educational services programs culminate in the *Scholastic Achievement Awards Show*. WVIA's original documentary *Little League: A History* premieres in Williamsport June 9 and will be aired on many PBS stations across America this summer. The *Our Town* series highlighted Sunbury in April; Luzerne is scheduled May 28, with Montoursville to follow June 18. Communities in the pipeline for possible future projects: Towanda, Bloomsburg, West Pittston, Orwigsburg, Moscow, Mifflinburg. New episodes are in production for the *Greenlife PA* environmental series. Carol Tome asked about the upcoming *Back in the Day* program, and was told it would premiere later in May.

Tom Curra told the CAB that WVIA is proposing to host candidate debates in October for the congressional and gubernatorial races. He asked for input on an idea to invite former PA governors to participate by asking the questions of the current candidates. Tom Hall felt it would be interesting to get insights from experienced governors. Tom Walker felt it may evoke more genuine responses. Linda Keene suggested it might be difficult to get former Governors Ridge and Rendell in the same room, but if they agreed, it would definitely be an audience draw. She urged that questions focus on the effect of each candidate's policies on the individual voter.

Chris Norton outlined recent WVIA FM program highlights and upcoming events. *The High School Musical Preview* series ran February through April featuring 17 schools. A *Simply Grand* concert April 6 showcased a chamber ensemble from the Mansfield University music faculty. *Homegrown Music* concerts: Rogue Chimp and Clarence Bucaro April 14, Jon Fuller and MiZ May 12. This spring marks the 40th anniversary of George Graham's *Mixed Bag* contemporary music program, celebrated with congratulatory messages on air. WVIA FM has hosted 3 Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic chamber programs this season, with plans to host 4 next season, and we'll host their Piano Competition final rounds June 29.

Tom Curra explained that WVIA's audience/membership research project has led to the development of a "brand filter" by which we measure local programming proposals. WVIA is known for **quality, educational, informative** programming and we should focus on 4 genres:

1. **Health and wellness**
2. **Economic development**
3. **Lifelong learning** (PBS Kids, school serviced, regional docs, how-to, citizenship)
4. **Quality of life** (regional arts, culture, history)

Chris Norton reported that the TV station's June membership drive messaging, supported by radio promos, direct mail renewal letters, and e-mail blasts, will invite everyone to participate in a "Fine Tuning for the Future" survey. The goal is provide additional input on programming while reinforcing the message that financial support is critical. Judy Hall remarked that it's crazy that there is a stereotype that public media is "liberal." Tom Hall added that WVIA does a splendid job of public service. Judy asked whether the sustainer program has helped membership support, and Tom Curra explained it's main effect is to even out the regularity of cash flow over time, even though it can temporarily hurt, as fewer people pay pledges in up front. Meg Welker asked whether WVIA had a matching gifts program, and Ginny Fredmonski replied that some area employers do match employees' donations, but that the application process can be a chore, and it is difficult to monitor.

Jo-Ann Reif, chair, confirmed that she will present her annual report to the WVIA Board of Directors June 12, summarizing highlights of CAB deliberations regarding WVIA's service to the public. The CAB selected dates for upcoming meetings:

September 11, 2014 January 15, 2015 May 21, 2015 all at noon at WVIA

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Norton