

**Early Television Foundation  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
9/15/2024**

Attendees:

- Steve McVoy
- Dan Jones
- Bob Dobush
- Blake Hinkle
- Chuck Conrad
- James O'Neal
- Dave Sica
- Matt D'Asaro

Not Attending:

- Dave Abramson

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order, confirming a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

- Due to previous audio issues, there were no minutes to approve.

Financial Report:

- The cash balance is approximately \$4,000.

Fundraising

- The sweepstakes sales are lagging, with \$7,100 worth of tickets sold so far, compared to nearly \$12,000 in previous years.
- There are still 20 days left for ticket sales, but it is unlikely to reach last year's total.
- A commitment has been made to ensure the minimum \$8,000 required for awarding the prize. An individual has committed to purchasing at least \$500 worth of tickets on the last day, and more if needed to reach the \$8,000 goal.
- A 50% bonus ticket promotion has started and will run through September 30th, with a planned extension to October 4th, the last day for ticket purchases.
- Despite the Predicta being in remarkable condition, it did not attract as much interest as anticipated.

- The majority of ticket purchases came from within the group, with little response from the broader mid-century collector community and the Philco Predicta Club.

#### Fundraising Challenges:

- The lack of rare, valuable sets for future prizes poses a challenge. The flow of pre-war and rare sets to the museum has slowed significantly.
- We will need to find suitable items for future prizes to ensure continued interest and participation.
- Steve suggested waiting to see the final results before being too critical, as there might still be a positive outcome.

#### Promotion Efforts:

- Steve printed promotional materials and placed them in local antique stores, particularly those dealing in old televisions.
- He shared an example of a successful interaction where a customer bought a Predicta and contacted him for restoration.
- The hope is that these efforts will attract more interest and ticket sales.

#### Membership Report:

- Current membership stands at 207, up from 165 last year.
- This includes 9 lifetime members and 33 sustaining members.
- The remaining 165 are annual members.
- The organization has also received a significant number of cash donations.

#### Museum Traffic:

- The museum has seen good traffic, contributing to income.
- Larry provides weekly attendance reports, which will be shared with the board.
- Larry has conducted several tours during the week and after hours, which is greatly appreciated.
- These tours have included groups of 10-20 people.

#### Equipment Donations:

- No significant donations except for an ATC set from Seattle.
- The donation was delayed due to the donor's medical issues but is now back on track.
- The donor may be able to arrange for transport to Ohio in early October.

#### Potential Donations/Acquisitions:

- Discussion about a potential donation of a 21 CT-55 set from Missouri.

- The sellers were asking \$800, but the condition of the picture tube is unknown, making it a gamble.
- Despite fewer units made than the CT-100, there seems to be less interest in the 21 CT-55.
- It was noted that if a collector is interested, the total cost including shipping would still be reasonable.
- The group agreed to follow up on this potential acquisition, considering they have spare 21AX picture tubes.

#### Monthly Online Meetings:

- Dave reported that the monthly online meetings are still being well-received and attended.
- The meetings serve as a regular, casual gathering for members to connect and discuss various topics.
- Attendance ranges from 30 to 115 participants, with an average of 50-60.

#### Possible Museum Move:

- No updates on the outreach to the city of Hilliard or the developer. Any developments will be communicated to the board.

#### Fall Swap Meet:

- Scheduled for October 12th.
- The drawing for the sweepstakes prize will also take place on this date.
- A workday is planned for the day before the swap meet. Blake, Dan, Al Hagovsky and Tim Poliniak are planning to attend.

#### Fall Work Day:

- The initial task is to move as many CRTs to the top shelves as possible.
- Another goal is to clear out the area designated for the new display.
- Once the CRTs are moved, the remaining items are two large racks, which can be moved with a few people.
- Discussion on reassembling the aisles to better confine and organize items.
- There is additional shelf space available that should be utilized.
- The plan includes putting more items on the top shelves and organizing other available spaces.

#### Predicta Displays:

- Blake mentioned the positive reception to the Predicta displays.
- He plans to leave the Danish Modern Predicta on loan with the museum to display next to the tandem set.

- The idea of creating a “weird TV” section was discussed, featuring unique and unusual TV designs like the Dumont Clifton and the Tandem set.
- The goal is to showcase different periods of TV design that stand out for their unique aesthetics.

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

### Succession Planning:

- Steve provided a summary of the various functions he handles for the museum.
- Blake has been managing the swap meet, which is one of the items on the list.
- Other than the swap meet, Steve has been responsible for most tasks, with increasing help from volunteers at the convention each year.
- Steve’s health is currently fine, but he acknowledged the need for a gradual transition of responsibilities.
- The goal is to avoid a sudden need for someone to take over all tasks and instead have a planned, gradual handover.

### Proposal for Succession Planning:

- Steve invited ideas on how to cover the specific tasks listed in the summary.
- Blake proposed a two-pronged approach:
  1. Website Management: Steve currently handles all website-related tasks, including posting updates, adding new information, and updating pictures.
  2. Other Responsibilities: The proposal includes distributing other responsibilities among members to ensure a smooth transition.

### Website Modernization:

- Blake suggested two main actions for the website management:
  1. Modernize the Website: The current website looks dated, and updating it would improve its utility and appeal.
  2. Website Administration Training: Once the website is updated, Steve, Blake, and another person should learn how to manage it. This would help gradually transition Steve out of this role.
- Steve agreed that the website is dated and emphasized the importance of modernizing it. He highlighted that managing the website and related data entry tasks constitute a significant portion of his responsibilities.
- Blake emphasized the importance of having a well-organized and easily navigable website, noting that it ensures the museum’s legacy by providing valuable information for future generations.

- Steve has done an excellent job indexing and cataloging rare sets, making the museum a key resource for information.
- The website is considered one of the best among similar organizations, but it appears dated due to its older design. There is a consensus that the website, while utilitarian and well-loved, needs modernization.

#### Challenges of Website Updating:

- Members shared their experience with other organizations that frequently updated their websites, often at great expense and with limited success.
- A full update would probably require the services of a professional, full-time website manager, which could be a significant financial commitment.
- Blake acknowledged the challenges but emphasized the importance of modernizing the website for better navigation and accessibility.
- He shared his personal experiences of difficulty finding information on the current website, suggesting that the indexing could be improved.
- Blake proposed exploring modernization options independently and presenting potential solutions to the group. Blake acknowledged that updating the website won't be an overnight or cheap task. He suggested consulting Bob Anderson, a professional coder, for insights on modernizing the website.
- Blake expressed willingness to learn how to manage the current website but emphasized the importance of modernizing it sooner rather than later to avoid redundant efforts.

#### Simple Website Modernization Steps:

- Steve suggested a simple approach to modernization: updating the homepage to a more modern design while keeping the existing pages accessible through links.
- This approach would give a fresh look to casual viewers without discarding or compromising access to the valuable information already available on the site.
- Blake agreed that if he hadn't experienced issues finding information on the website, he wouldn't push for a fresh update. He suggested that reorganizing data and modernizing the look would be beneficial.
- Steve acknowledged that navigation issues will persist regardless of the website's design due to the vast amount of information (approximately 3,000 pages). He suggested focusing on improving navigation without losing existing content.
- Blake shared an example of difficulty finding information about the Predicta on the website, highlighting the need for a more accurate search function.
- Steve mentioned that the website already has a search bar and tab, suggesting that he and Blake discuss how to improve navigation and search functionality.
- Steve explained that while the inputs and processes for creating or editing pages might differ slightly on a modernized website, the core concepts remain the same.

- Blake expressed his willingness to learn and suggested a Zoom call or in-person meeting to practice using the current website's tools.
- Steve proposed that Blake bring his laptop to a meeting where they can load the software used for the website and practice together.
- Blake asked if the software works on Mac, and Steve confirmed that it should, although the software is quite old.
- Steve mentioned that the current system used is Adobe Dreamweaver, which is now part of Adobe's subscription-based cloud services but still supports the same coding as modern web pages.
- Steve mentioned that the current software, Adobe Dreamweaver, is easy to use and learn, especially for those familiar with computer input.

#### Ad Revenue and Website Perception:

- An inquiry was made about the revenue generated from ads on the website. Steve explained that ad revenue has diminished over the years, from around \$5,000 annually to less than \$2,000 currently. He noted that the decline was partly due to the ads becoming less reputable, leading to their discontinuation.
- Do the ads detract from the website's appearance? Steve agreed, noting that ads can make the website feel outdated.
- Security concerns were raised, with a suggestion that most websites today run on WordPress, which requires regular updates.

#### Potential Solutions:

- Chuck's idea of updating the homepage for a modern look while retaining the current backend system was discussed as a potential solution. This approach could provide a fresh appearance without overhauling the entire system.
- Dave mentioned consulting a web developer about Dreamweaver and its viability for their needs. He noted that moving the entire site to a new platform would be very expensive due to the vast amount of content.

#### Next Steps:

- Blake and Steve will bring their laptops to the next meeting to load the necessary software and practice using the current system.
- They will also pose the question of website modernization to Bob Andersen for his insights, given his professional skills and his interest in the museum.

#### Delegation and Time Management:

- Steve clarified that updating the website itself is not the primary time-consuming task. The major time consumer is managing the auction pay system, which serves as the database for all members, auction items, donations, and sales.

#### Membership Solicitation:

- Steve mentioned that starting December 1st, he will begin soliciting memberships for 2025. This involves categorizing members in the database and sending tailored letters to current members, past members, and potential new members.
- The process includes following up with additional letters and manually entering membership information from PayPal into the database, which is time-consuming.

#### Database Management:

- The database is currently stored on Steve's computer, but there are ways to make it accessible on other machines to allow multiple people to make entries.
- Dave suggested that having a central database accessible by others could help distribute the workload.
- Steve mentioned the possibility of moving the database to the cloud, which would allow remote access for multiple users.
- If cloud migration is not feasible, other methods of providing remote access to the database could be explored.
- Blake will investigate third-party software options for nonprofit management, particularly those that include auction functions. Steve agreed that there are likely better programs available and that migrating data to a more modern database should not be difficult due to the manageable amount of data.
- The primary task would be transferring member information and replicating the event structure from the current system.
- Steve emphasized the importance of having nonprofit management software with an auction function, noting that data migration should be straightforward.

#### Auction Management:

- The auction system is crucial for maintaining records of items and sales. Steve highlighted that the database contains approximately 1,500 names, including all past and present members, donors, and sales records.
- This database is essential for various activities, such as membership solicitation and managing the sweepstakes.
- Dave suggest checking TechSoup, a platform offering discounted software for nonprofits, including products from Microsoft and Adobe. He suggested it might be worth exploring for affordable software solutions.
- Geoff recommended a software called PastPerfect, designed specifically for museum management. It handles memberships, contact management, inventory, and more<sup>2</sup>. The AWA has been using it for about 15 years with good results.

#### Facilities Maintenance:

- Steve discussed the time-consuming nature of facilities maintenance, although Larry handles much of it. Routine tasks include building maintenance, such as fixing door hinges.
- Bob has been very helpful with various maintenance tasks.
- Steve maintains the computers, with the primary one being at the front desk. The museum also has a network, motion sensors, smoke detectors, thermostats, and video/audio playback equipment that require maintenance. Larry handles most of this maintenance with Steve's guidance.

#### Repair and Restoration:

- The repair and restoration of TV sets is a significant task. The museum has about 10 sets currently operational for public display.
- A technician from West Virginia has been consistently helping with these restorations. The technician has restored about eight sets for the museum, all of which are still operational.
- There was a discussion about promoting restoration tasks to member volunteers more effectively. Establishing criteria for which sets can be restored by less experienced members versus those requiring expert attention was suggested.
- Dan proposed more significant outreach to encourage members to participate in restoration projects. He noted that many members are willing but unsure if they are allowed to take sets home for restoration.
- It was suggested that the museum could benefit from formally establishing criteria for set restoration, allowing members with varying levels of experience to contribute.
- Encouraging communication and promoting the opportunity for members to take on restoration projects could increase participation and distribute the workload more evenly.
- Formal criteria should be established for high-value sets to ensure fairness and prevent claims of favoritism. Members with a proven track record should be allowed to restore these sets.
- A tiered system was suggested, where new restorers start with basic sets and gradually move to more valuable ones as they prove their skills.

#### Management of Restoration Projects:

- There is a need for someone to manage the restoration projects. Blake volunteered to spearhead this effort, keeping a database or record of who takes which set and their progress.
- Blake will be the point of contact for members interested in restoring sets, relieving Steve of this responsibility.

#### Challenges with Pre-war and Color Sets:



- The pre-war and color sets, such as the CT-100, are more challenging to maintain as they slowly deteriorate over time.
- The museum currently has only one working 15-inch color set (CT-100). Other sets like the Westinghouse and Model 5 have stopped working.
- Even simple issues can be difficult to diagnose and fix, as illustrated by a professional technician who struggled with the CT-100 for two days before Steve identified the malfunction as a simple problem.
- Fixing pre-war and color sets is increasingly difficult due to the delicate nature of the components and the declining availability of skilled technicians.
- Steve mentioned his declining physical abilities, making it challenging for him to work on these sets. The museum has a few pre-war sets still operational, but they will eventually fail.
- The community has lost several skilled technicians, such as Daryl Hock and John Folsom, who were capable of repairing these sets. There is a concern about finding replacements for these experts.
- Matt was encouraged to take on more responsibilities in the restoration projects due to his technical proficiency. He expressed interest in working on pre-war sets to gain experience.
- The team acknowledged the need for more hands-on involvement and the importance of distributing the workload among capable members.
- Blake volunteered to manage the restoration projects, keeping records of who takes which set and their progress. This will help streamline the process and ensure proper tracking. Blake will be the point of contact for members interested in restoring sets, relieving Steve of this responsibility.
- Blake also suggested the possibility of sending high-end sets to a highly proficient technician in California. Blake will reach out to his contact to see what type of arrangement can be negotiated.

#### New Initiatives:

- Matt has been working on producing new World Converter boards, the first in two decades. These boards are essential for making signals for pre-war and sequential color sets.
- Matt managed to obtain the designs for these boards and has been sourcing obsolete parts to create them. The first batch will include five boards, with potential for more if there is demand.
- The boards will be available for sale, with one going to the designer as part of the agreement and one for Matt's personal use.

#### Repair and Restoration:

- Potential to involve others in the repair process.

- Confidence in the ability of the technician to perform maintenance and touch-ups.
- Assurance that any work done would be in good faith and to improve circuit stability.
- Matt has the tuner from the national video meter loaned by Steve. He checked the alignment and found it fine. He will return it to the museum as the first step in restoring the set.
- Repair Commitment: (Matt)
  - Proposal to commit to repairing one unit per year to help manage attrition and maintain functionality.
  - Viewed as a realistic commitment considering personal constraints and other responsibilities.
  - Consideration of restoring other equipment like the national video meter.
  - Appreciation expressed for the opportunity to work on rare sets.
  - Simplicity of older sets compared to newer ones noted.
- Discussion on shipping sets for restoration:
  - The museum has a TRK-12 and a TRK-9 that are currently non-functional. Both sets share the same chassis, and the issues might be simple to fix.
  - Shipping options include creating a crate or using moving blankets. The goal is to ship one set per year for restoration to manage attrition.
  - Shipping a set across the country for minor repairs (e.g., replacing a resistor) may seem impractical.
  - Emphasis on the expertise needed to identify and fix issues.
- Additional Repair Resources:
  - A contact, Tom Albrecht, known for his expertise in repairing various models, including Predicta, CT 100, and others.
  - Tom can complete a Predicta repair quickly.
  - Potential to have Tom repair additional models like the Model Five and Westinghouse sets.
- Collaboration and Expectations:
  - Setting proper expectations with Tom could lead to him doing the work for free.
  - Tom is highly regarded in the California antique radio and television circles.
  - He has contributed to publications and is active in the TV collecting community.
  - Tom has worked on rare and early models, such as a Farnsworth, requiring custom coil manufacturing.
  - His ability to create parts from scratch highlights his skill and dedication.
- Restoration Costs:
  - Debate on whether it's worth paying for professional restoration of sets like the Westinghouse color set.
  - Museum's limited budget highlighted; need for creative solutions to minimize costs.
  - No definitive decision made; further consideration needed.
  - Suggestion to find dedicated individuals willing to volunteer their expertise.

- Importance of prioritizing expenditures, such as advertising and extending museum hours, over costly restorations.
- Agreement on the need to balance spending to ensure the museum's sustainability.
- Preservation vs. Restoration:
  - Discussion on the value of preserving historically significant sets in their current state versus restoring them to working condition.
  - Emphasis on the importance of preserving artifacts that might otherwise be lost.
  - Plan to reach out to potential restorers to discuss terms and costs.
- Future Planning:
  - Concern about the availability of skilled restorers in the future.
  - Need to ensure that some sets remain operational to preserve the historical significance and visitor engagement.
- Preservation of Pre-War and Color Sets:
  - Concern about the future availability of working pre-war and color sets.
  - Aim to maintain a few working sets of each type to preserve historical significance.

## Visitor Experience

- Visitor Experience:
  - Emphasis on considering the visitor's perspective; most visitors are impressed by a few working sets rather than needing all sets to be operational.
  - Importance of having a few representative sets working in each room to enhance visitor experience.
  - Example from the Texas Broadcast Museum where a mix of working and non-working sets still provides an engaging experience.
  - Goal to maintain a few pre-war and early color sets in working condition to showcase the evolution of television.
  - Use of digital media players to show period TV shows, such as "I Love Lucy," which attract and engage visitors.
  - Suggestion to install small flat screens in each area to continuously play relevant content, enhancing the visitor experience.
- Challenges with Restored Vintage TVs:
  - Difficulty in maintaining restored vintage TVs for public exhibition.
  - Potential fire hazards associated with running vintage TVs for extended periods.
  - Common compromise is to use flat screens to display vintage content, avoiding the risks associated with vintage hardware.
- Engaging Content for Displays:
  - Mention of DVDs like "Rock Around the Clock," which feature a full day of 1950s programming, including commercials.

- These DVDs can provide an authentic viewing experience without the need for operational vintage TVs.
- Plan to bring and share these DVDs for potential use in the museum.
- Mechanical TV Display:
  - Idea to create a video showcasing mechanical TVs, including the Western Electric TV used in “Boardwalk Empire.”
  - Highlighting the historical significance and functionality of these sets in the video.
  - Currently, four mechanical sets are operational.
  - These sets are not typically displayed to the public due to their delicate nature and the need for manual operation.
  - Suggestion to showcase these sets more during special events or tours to enhance visitor experience.
  - Emphasis on the mystifying nature of these sets and their potential to captivate visitors.
- Showcasing Mechanical Sets:
  - Proposal to install flat screen TVs in the mechanical area to display videos of the sets in operation.
  - Videos could highlight the functionality of the sets and promote special events or tours where the sets are demonstrated live.
  - Acknowledgment that convention audiences and general visitors have different interests, but both would benefit from seeing the sets in action.
- Educational Tours:
  - Schools and educational institutions are charged \$6 per person for groups of 20 or more.
  - Discussion on the potential to increase engagement with educational groups.

#### Museum Management:

- Sale and Shipping of Items
  - Larry and occasionally Bob handle packing for parts and CRTs.
  - No major concerns in this area as they manage it well.
- Accounting and Financial Management:
  - Simple accounting system in place with a checking account and company credit card.
  - Regular deposits and transfers from PayPal to the bank account.
  - Bob is a signatory on the checking account and the credit card.
  - An accountant is paid to handle the books and tax returns.
  - Information is logged in Quicken and sent to the accountant annually.
  - Quarterly filing of 941s is required.

- Potential for someone else to handle these tasks in the future.
- Bob's extensive knowledge of spending and financial details makes him a suitable candidate for accounting tasks.
- Suggestion for Steve to sit down and review everything when Bob is in town.
- Discussion on the possibility of changing addresses for billing and handling online billing.
- Billing and Payments:
  - Most payments are made electronically from the bank account.
  - Occasionally, checks are mailed.
  - Agreement to continue with electronic payments where possible.
- Email Management:
  - Steve handles the museum's email (info@earlytelevision.org) and the newsletter email.
  - Receives about three to four emails daily, mostly inquiries about the value of sets.
  - Larry answers approximately 75% of these emails.
  - Importance of having access to email passwords in case of emergencies.
- Data Backup:
  - All important information, including passwords and bank account numbers, is stored on a dedicated computer.
  - The file containing this information is labeled "info board" on the home screen.
  - Suggestion to back up this file externally to ensure access in case of an emergency.
  - Steve has a Carbonite subscription for cloud backups.
  - Additional suggestion to store the information on a thumb drive and mail it to a trusted person.
  - In case of an emergency, Bob can access the computer and retrieve all necessary information.

#### The Future:

- Raffle Ideas
  - Suggestion to raffle a brand new 21AX CRT with excellent testing results.
  - Consideration of having multiple smaller prizes instead of one large prize.
  - Lowering the entry fee to \$5 to encourage more ticket purchases.
  - Multiple smaller prizes could increase chances of winning and attract more participants.
  - Discussion on the feasibility of raffling a 15G CRT, though these are rare and typically retained by the museum.
- Board Member Attendance:
  - Discussion on the importance of board member attendance at major events.

- Acknowledgment of personal commitments and the challenges of attending all events.
- Confirmation that there are no critical meetings scheduled for the upcoming swap meet, alleviating some pressure on attendance.
- Confirmation that missing the swap meet will not result in missing any critical meetings.
- Encouragement to attend if possible, especially to help out on Friday.
- Ancient Computers at Swap Meet:
  - Inquiry about specific items to look out for, such as Apple Lisas.
  - Mention of a missed opportunity to purchase Apple Lisas at a previous event.
- New Exhibit:
  - Introduction of a new exhibit featuring a Neilson box, with plans to bring it in the spring.
  - Request for any additional information on the Nelson box to aid in the exhibit's development.
- Restoration League:
  - Plan to establish the ETF Restoration League with clear guidelines and objectives.
  - Emphasis on starting with easier restoration projects and gradually progressing to more complex ones.
  - Open to feedback and improvements on the phrasing and structure of the guidelines.