

Minutes of the Early Television Foundation Board Meeting

Date: December 1, 2024

Location: Online via Zoom

Present:

- Dave Abramson
- Geoff Bourne
- Chuck Conrad
- Matt D'Asaro
- Bob Dobush
- Dan Jones
- Steve McVoy
- James O'Neal
- Dave Sica

Absent:

- Blake Hinkle

1. Financial Report

- Bank Balance: Approximately \$4,000, unchanged since the last meeting.
- Sweepstakes Revenue:
 - 2023: \$10,185 (Prize: Predicta; costs \$1,200).
 - Previous years: 2022 - \$12,000, 2021 - \$14,000.
 - Decline attributed to prize selection. Considerations for future: iconic or unique prizes, potential for multiple winners.
- Membership Revenue:
 - 2025 membership renewals underway, showing strong early momentum.
 - Total 2024 memberships: 217 (record high).
 - 9 Lifetime Members, 36 Sustaining Members (up by one).

2. Membership and Donations

- Equipment Donations:
 - No significant updates.
 - ATC Set: Owner facing personal challenges; arrangements to collect are ongoing.
 - Possible acquisition of a rare Hollis Baird drum scanner (pending negotiations).
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3. Museum Updates

- Construction/Storage:
 - Storage locker costs have risen to \$300/month (originally \$160).
 - Efforts underway to build additional shelves to eliminate locker usage, saving \$3,600/year.
 - Exhibit Enhancements:
 - Installed monitors displaying operational footage of mechanical, prewar, and early color sets.
 - Considering adding an interactive display featuring a historical overview video (researching copyright permissions for suitable content).
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4. Events and Community Engagement

- Swap Meet Report:
 - Attendance consistent; younger demographic noted.
 - Trends: Increased interest in kitschy and newer solid-state CRT items (e.g., JVC Videosphere).
 - TV test equipment value declining.
 - Online Meetings:
 - Informal discussions continue to draw engagement.
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5. Sweepstakes Planning (2024-2025)

- Prize Options:
 - Suggestions: Early color sets (e.g., CTC 5, CTC 9), iconic vintage TVs (e.g., 630TS), or sought-after kitschy models.
 - Consider multiple prizes to attract broader participation.
 - Potential Donations:
 - Bowie Museum identified as a potential source for deaccessioned sets.
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6. Old Business

- City of Hilliard Collaboration:
 - Minimal updates. Awaiting further developments with the city and local developers.
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7. New Business

- Future Projects:
 - Developing new displays to attract younger audiences, such as video game-themed exhibits using CRT TVs.
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8. Succession Planning:

- Blake plans to visit in the spring to discuss processes like website management and data entry.
- Remote training using software like TeamViewer or AnyDesk was suggested to streamline data management.

9. Convention Planning:

- The 2024 convention will be held at the museum, saving \$850 by canceling the previous venue reservation.
- Food trucks will provide varied options, simplifying logistics and enhancing the experience.
- Seating improvements will include purchasing sturdy, used padded chairs and ensuring carpet safety.
- Weather contingencies, such as propane heaters or exhaust fans, will be prepared for temperature extremes.
- Presentations will be tailored to appeal to a broader audience, focusing on accessible topics rather than highly technical content.
- Admission fees will be reduced to \$25, and the swap meet will be free to encourage participation.
- Proposed additional Friday activities include a hands-on technical seminar and restoration workshops.

10. Repair Room Improvements:

- The repair room requires reorganization, cleaning, and inventory to identify missing or broken essential equipment.
- Suggestions included creating an Amazon wish list for community donations of tools and supplies.
- Plans to expand repair spaces and equip them with scopes, voltmeters, and other basics for restoration work were discussed.

11. Temporary Display Topics:

- The success of the Predicta display sparked discussions on future temporary exhibits:
 - Obscure Video Formats: Focused on U-matic, Beta, VHS, CED, and Open Reel formats. A live demonstration of vintage video cameras and players to engage younger visitors was proposed.
 - Retro Video Games: Pairing historic gaming systems (Atari, NES, Pong) with era-appropriate TVs to leverage current interest in retro gaming.

12. Other Notes:

- Technical workshops during the convention were noted as successful and will be refined for spring.
- The potential for a communal effort to maintain the repair room and fund restoration projects was emphasized.
- The board agreed on the importance of balancing the museum's mission to preserve early television history while adapting to the interests of newer audiences.

13. Ideas for Future Exhibits:

- Three key exhibit ideas were discussed:
 1. Early Video Recorders and Gaming: A focus on vintage gaming systems and early video recorders. The board noted that some members, such as Blake, have collections that could be contributed to the exhibit.
 2. 1970s Cultural Room Expansion: A current "1970s room" concept includes items like vintage TVs, Betamax, VHS machines, quadraphonic stereos, and more. Suggestions for improvement included adding music-focused items such as reel-to-reel recorders.
 3. Solid-State Technology Displays: Emphasizing portable color TVs and unique designs from the 1970s. The idea was not fully developed but noted as a potential exhibit theme.

14. Rotating Display Concept:

- Board members discussed implementing rotating displays to keep the museum dynamic. Potential themes could alternate every 3-6 months, allowing repeat visits and targeted advertising.

15. Public and Board Meetings:

- A suggestion was made to differentiate between the public annual meeting and quarterly board meetings to enhance progress and member engagement.

16. Newsletter Updates:

- It was clarified that a mass email announcing the November newsletter had not been sent, and it will be rectified moving forward.

17. Picture Tube Rebuilding Project:

- Ongoing experiments with rebuilding picture tubes were discussed. It was noted that there are sufficient resources for practice and development, despite initial challenges.

18. 21CT55 Restoration:

- A member shared progress on restoring a historic 21CT55 television, thanking museum members for their support. The restored set coincided with its 70th production anniversary, which was celebrated.

19. Texas Broadcast Museum Collaboration:

- A volunteer from the Texas Broadcast Museum has initiated a newsletter and demonstrated enthusiasm for museum activities, which was noted as a positive development for collaboration.

20. Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned with plans to continue discussions via email and at the next board meeting.