Early Television Foundation

Board of Directors Meeting - Minutes

Date: August 13, 2023

Time: 8:00 PM

Location: Zoom meeting

Attendees: Dave Abramson, Dave Arland, Geoff Bourne, Chuck Conrad, Matt D’Asaro, Bob Dobush, Blake Hinkle, Dan Jones, Steve McVoy, James O’Neal, Dave Sica

Members absent: (none)

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Finances:**

Currently, our cash balance stands at around $21.000, with incoming funds from the sweepstakes providing a helpful boost.

**Membership:**

Our membership count has risen to a total of 180, marking an increase of about 20 from the previous year. Among these, we have 8 lifetime members, 28 sustaining members, and 144 annual members.

**Donations:**

Notably, we've recently received several significant donations. The InfoAge Museum donated an EMI vidicon camera and CCU.We acquired approximately 40 CRTs from the estate of Chuck Azar and from an individual in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, a majority of these CRTs were found to be in poor condition. For instance, the 7JP4s were mostly unsatisfactory, with only a few deemed suitable for sale. A similar situation arose with various other tubes. Nonetheless, around 10 of them were salvaged, which while not ideal, is a positive outcome.

We recently added to the collection a Lucitron flat panel display that was shown at the Convention. We have also received a Houston Fearless camera tripod.

One of the more interesting donations is a Jenkins Prismatic Disc, which was the subject of the most recent online meeting.

Steve has spoken to longtime ETF supporter Don Saltzman’s son who is disposing of Don’s collection and was looking for pricing information. We have not been asked to otherwise assist with the sale of Don’s items nor has the museum been offered any donations of equipment from his collection other than a mention that some of the items may be offered at our upcoming swap meet.

**Sweepstakes:**

The sweepstakes tickets have been selling well and we’ve already reached approximately 75% of the minimum required, which is $8,000. The rules require that the ticket sales must conclude a week prior to the drawing, so since the drawing is scheduled to be held at the swap meet on October 14th, October 7th is the last day of ticket sales.

**Monthly Meetings:**

The monthly online meetings continue to be well-received in the early television community. Attendance has continued to be good both on Zoom and YouTube. These virtual meetings continue to offer value as an outreach tool for our organization and as a social platform for our community. We anticipate continuing to host the meetings for the foreseeable future. They will continue to feature guest presenters and/or in-depth looks at areas of the Early Television Museum and/or simply providing a social environment for collectors to gather.

**Convention Report:**

An review of the convention was presented by Steve, highlighting good attendance and income, with particular success in auctions. Steve will send out a detailed convention report to the board shortly.

**CT-100 Auction:**

Plans were discussed to auction the CT-100 from Ray Sieracki’s estate in the future. We also discussed offering it instead as a private sale in order to realize a higher price as realized auction prices continue to be unpredictably low.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Swap Meet Planning:**

Organizing the fall swap meet event doesn’t take a large amount of effort and the only new issue this time is the raffle drawing which will be held at 2 PM on the day of the event. We’ll plan to livestream the drawing. Blake Hinkle has been handling most of the details for organizing the event.

**Warehouse Organization:**

A plan to clear space in the warehouse area for exhibitions was discussed, involving potential carpentry work and shelving installation. This project will be part of the effort to build a new display area, discussed further on here.

**Fire Suppression System:**

The possibility of implementing a fire suppression system was touched upon. Matt D’Asaro reported on his research into the subject. A summary of his research appears at the end of this document. It appears unlikely that a practical, affordable system would be able to be implemented and we will likely continue to operate for at least the foreseeable future with a fire alarm system but without a fire suppression system.

**Sweepstakes:**

The question was raised as to whether or not board members were allowed to participate in the sweepstakes. It is, in fact, legal for board members (although not for officers and employees) to participate in the sweepstakes and several have expressed an interest in doing so. It was noted that there was some discussion a number of years ago when a board member won the prize and it was decided to include a prominent notice in our communications about the sweepstakes in order to maintain transparency and stave off any future confusion or criticism should a board member win. We will ensure that the rules are clearly posted on the website in order to avoid any confusion.

A suggestion was made to consider offering an alternative cash prize to encourage more participation. This was deemed a good idea. We will also be publicizing the part of the rules that state that in the event that the fundraising minimum in order to award the prize is not realized, the winner will receive 50% of the proceeds collected.

Proposal to restore and feature a Predicta Danish Modern or Tandem as the next year's sweepstakes item.

**New Display Area and Storage Shelving:**

There was a proposal to build plywood shelves along the eastern wall of the warehouse for better organization and more efficient use of space for stored items.

We discussed moving British pre-war items to the larger room to consolidate space.

There was a proposal to create a temporary display area in the smaller room for changing exhibits.

Suggestion to make announcements about upcoming changes and build excitement among donors and visitors.

Consider involving member contributions in the temporary display.

Suggestion to publicize this upcoming exhibit for greater engagement.

Plans to construct a room (approx. 12x20 feet) between the CRT room and the current European room.

Consider options for arranging new and existing displays effectively.

There was debate about the positioning of the new display area: front vs. back of the building.

Highlight the importance of the rotating exhibit and tell a compelling story.

Decision to focus on the rotating exhibit for now and address further changes after the new room is built.

Plan to clear the space and create a basic structure with a wall and ceiling for storage this autumn.

Coordinate with a contractor for necessary construction work.

All proposals were approved by the board for implementation.

**Insurance:**

A discussion exploring insurance options for the museum's collection took place. Different members had researched various insurance options, including stated value insurance. However, it was noted that obtaining comprehensive coverage for museum collections, especially for non-replaceable items, could be challenging due to the independent and inexpert valuation processes used by many insurance companies. The board agreed to share and review available existing insurance policy information for review and further discussion.

**Museum Display Item Loan Agreements:**

Another topic of discussion was the lack of formal loan agreements for items on loan to the museum. It was brought up that having written and recorded agreements would provide clarity in case of any unforeseen events. The example of items loaned to the museum, such as CRTs as well as Dave Arland’s Nipper, was mentioned. The discussion highlighted the importance of having a formal memo of understanding between the museum and lenders to clarify responsibilities and expectations in case of loss or damage. It was suggested that a simple agreement could be created based on documents used by other museums to ensure that both parties are aware of the potential outcomes. Steve will research loan agreements requested by other organizations.

**Visitor Experience / Self-Guided Tours:**

Stever suggested that since we don't offer docent-guided tours of the museum, we should explore ways to provide more information to our visitors. We currently have audio tour boxes in each room that provide a brief overview of each display area. He has also begun creating slide shows accessible by visitors via QR codes on signage in the museum. He’s created a few of these narrated slide shows they are currently being tried out.

**Admission Charge:**

Over the past month, Larry has been keeping track of the number of visitors and how many paid the suggested five-dollar admission donation. In the last month, we've had 147 visitors, and 12 of them didn't pay, while the rest contributed the $5, or in some cases more. The question is whether raising the admission fee would better support our operations.

There was discussion of ‘perceived value’ of something that costs a nominal fee vs. the same experience that is offered for free. Chuck Conrad remarked how the Texas Broadcast Museum’s raising its admission charge not only did not seem to deter any visitors but the number of visitors has actually increased.

A motion was passed to raise the admission fee to ten dollars for adults, eight dollars for seniors and veterans, and five dollars for children.

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