

BCAT Newsletter

Burlington Cable Access Television FALL 2005 Issue 35



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Kudos to BCAT's Resident Volunteers

by Jennifer Dodge



In recent months BCAT has been fortunate to have some "resident" volunteers. By that I mean volunteers we see on a day to day basis. There are many opportunities to get involved with BCAT and become a part of our community without ever touching a camera. However, we find most people can't fight the urge after a while and jump right in to crew studio productions or run out with a camcorder to grab shots from somewhere.

Our summer started a little short staffed as long time staff member Derek Blakeman resigned to work free lance at MSNBC as a tape operator. We wish Derek the best of luck with his new endeavor - he will be missed by all. (You can find some parting words from him on page 4 of this newsletter.) At the same time Tricia Hicks had a two week vacation scheduled that coincided with Derek's departure.

One day BCAT Sport announcer/reporter Andy Spinali came in to edit a baseball game and couldn't help but notice that we were short on staff. Having a couple of weeks open in his summer, before heading off to the

University of New Hampshire, he enthusiastically offered to help out in the mornings, to answer phones and jump in where needed. We took him up on his offer and the following Monday Andy "moved in." He brought pictures and mementos to make BCAT his home away from home. Andy answered phones, ran errands, filed, organized and label DVDs, as well as participated in some production work. He wrote *BNEWS Weekly* stories, reported in the field, and served as a videographer getting roll-in footage for the news. Essentially he got "the full intern experience,"



BCAT Sports Announcer & Resident Volunteer
Andy Spinali

as he described it, and yes he even got us lunch and coffee from time to time.

We were sad to say goodbye to Andy, but the arrival of Joe Boffa kept things equally exciting for us here at BCAT. Joe, who is from Australia, was visiting one of our volunteers for six weeks, and as he had free time during the days he decided to spend it learning

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From the Engineering Department

by Richard Linder



CAMCORDERS, BATTERIES, TAPES, DISCS and STICKS. When the half inch videocassette finally fit into a portable television camera we thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. Could the design ever be improved? Well, time and hindsight has provided the answer. The portable camcorder has come a long way since then. The equipment has not only been reduced in size but has also evolved from the analog format to digital. We have traveled from half inch VHS and BETA to half inch S-VHS to half inch Compact S-VHS and now, the explosion of assorted packaging of digital tape; HI-8, DV, MINI-DV, DV CAM etc.

Now, you have the option to purchase a camcorder which



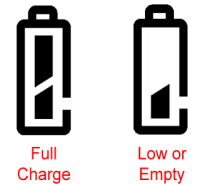
records digitally on a mini DVD if you have about a thousand dollars to spend on such a toy. But if you wait a few months the price of disc based camcorders will come way down because the disc camcorder will begin to be overshadowed by the latest camcorder which uses a memory stick to store digital video and audio. The motor which spooled the tape or turned the DVD is gone. It was inevitable. Early models are on the market right now but need some time to mature in design. What's next in the camcorder evolution? Probably electronic zoom and focus which will eliminate other motor driven devices resulting in additional reduction of battery drain. Batteries are another issue. One cannot live through a single day without some



dependence on battery technology. Here at BCAT the first battery issue that comes to mind relates to camcorders but camcorder lights and wireless microphones are of equal importance. Fortunately we are now enjoying battery technology that



has eliminated the "memory" problem. A battery with a memory requires that, in order to get full capacity, must be recharged from an almost dead state. Now batteries can be recharged at any point in the discharge cycle and will deliver full power. All BCAT camcorder lights are now powered with the latest battery technology so there should be no unexpected lighting problems while shooting on location.

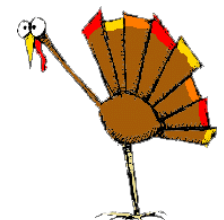


As an interesting aside, cobalt is one of the major ingredients in these batteries. From 1995-2000 there has been a 700% increase in the demand for cobalt, mostly from the battery industry. Substitutes for cobalt are under development, however the anticipated demand from the auto industry for batteries to power newly developed electric vehicles will probably overshadow the new chemistry discoveries for the next several years.





*Happy Autumn from the
BCAT Staff &
Board of Directors!*



(Continued from page 1)

about the workings of a local TV studio. And that he did! From the glamour to the mundane, monotonous details, Joe did it all. He spent the mornings helping engineer Dick Linder with various projects, including creating a refreshed inventory of all of our equipment and wiring an antenna for BCAT's bulletin board music. Joe often used this opportunity to pick Dick's brain about all sorts of engineering questions. In the afternoon Joe was more creative and would work on graphic designs for programs and update our bulletin board announcements. Joe has a good eye for design and brought a

lot of creativity and attention to detail to his postings. He also had the opportunity to take a camcorder workshop that was being offered, and once properly trained, Joe jumped in as a videographer whenever needed. He went out with the

Brendan Egan and Paul Ganley to tape their Summer Rec. Review segment for *BNEWS Weekly*. He also taped short roll-ins for various shows. Joe also became very familiar with our studio setting after spending six weeks with us. He

helped set up, breakdown and served as crew when needed. He also jumped in and labeled DVDs, logged many into our tape library and helped organize the physical library up in our attic. We had him working all the way through his last day! Joe wasn't the only one who learned however, I was pleased to pick up many of Australia's unique phrases and expressions, such as "***What you lose on the swing you gain on the round-a-bout.***"

We were all sad to say goodbye to Joe, but thanks to the communication world we live in today, we'll keep him updated with what's going on at BCAT and continue exchanging jokes with the guy from down under.

Once Joe left, it marked the end of summer which is traditionally a time we experience a change of pace at BCAT with the return of students to school. Philip Poillucci, a BHS Senior, is our current resident volunteer/intern. He has been involved with BCAT since middle school when he

was a Video Voyager. He elected to take an independent study with us this semester, and we see him for approx an hour a day. He has already learned and accomplished a lot. He is now Final Cut Pro certified, GL2 certified, he has written scripts for skits that he plans to produce, learned our Scala graphics system and has assisted with the set up for many studio tapings.

I can speak for all of the staff when I express what a fortune and pleasure it has been to have these people participate with BCAT on a daily basis and really get a feel for the day to day flow here. As I mentioned before, there are many

ways to get involved here at BCAT that doesn't necessarily involve TV production or touching a camera at all. All too often people are overwhelmed when they see our equipment and think they could never be a part of all of this. There is a lot happening down at BCAT, and many ways to help, including office help by answering phones, filing, etc. If you are interested in being a part, whether it's one hour, once a week or whatever your schedule and interests allow, we'll help you find your niche. To learn more about volunteer opportunities you can call me here at BCAT: 781 - 273 - 5922. Hopefully you'll be able to learn a little and have fun at the same time!

"What you lose on the swing, you gain on the round-a-bout."

About BCAT

For information about volunteer opportunities, equipment check-out policies, or BCAT classes please give us a call at 781 - 273 - 5922 or check out our website at www.BCATtv.org



BCAT Staff Tricia L Hicks & Cory McNeil with
visiting resident volunteer
Joe Boffa of Australia