



the monitor

a publication of the minneapolis television network

program schedule, profiles, news, information



lights camera adventure! olami's media quest

see page 2



october - november 2005

lights camera adventure!

What? You are in the emergency room with kidney stones?"

We were wondering why it was taking so long for J.C. Bagdadi to get here. In a few minutes he was going to be leading a media camp with a group of ten young people from the Sabes Jewish Community Center.

J.C., MTN's Senior Production Manager and Youth Training Coordinator, would not be arriving today, and it sounded like he would not be in any shape to teach a media camp any time soon.

Beth Peloff and I were going to help J.C. teach this camp. We are MTN instructors who normally teach video classes for adults. Our youth intern, Brandy Hyatt, had never worked at MTN until this morning. She was also here to help out. Suddenly we three had to scramble and hold a two week media camp without the leader of our training team. We were going to have these 9 to 11 year olds from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm every day, Monday through Thursday, and although we had a thin syllabus on paper to follow, we mostly had to make up our lesson plans on the fly.

The kids soon arrived with two camp counselors, Sarah and Noami. That first morning, Beth and I carried out the classes much like we would for adults, but we realized almost immediately that this would never work. The kids did not want to be talked to, they wanted to do things. So we made some changes, and after each day's camp, Beth, Brandy and I talked out our plan for the next day in some detail.

The young people were here as part of Camp Olami, a summer youth program run by the Sabes Jewish Community Center. "Olami" is a Hebrew word that means "my world,"

and the eight-week summer program provides a little taste of the world's many corners. According to camp counselor Sarah Blum, "We did things such as a photography camp, sailing, two different weeks where we did things at different parks, we did things involving science, and sport activities."

Two weeks in early August were devoted to Media Camp, and that is why the young people were at MTN. In those two weeks, the students learned a little about how TV works by making their own TV. We trained them in portable camera, editing on iMovie, studio, and production planning. The result of their work and energy was that they usually produced three short videos a day. Those videos are a little silly, a little chaotic, but also meaningful and sensitive pieces of story-telling.

The first week was mostly devoted to production training, and the second week toward producing real videos, but the young people started putting together shots to tell stories as soon as they learned the cameras and microphones. At first, all they wanted to do was interview adults down on Main Street, so after the first couple days we told them that they had to shoot silent video, to tell a story through pictures, rather than do interviews.

For the first week, we let them select and vote on topics for their short practice videos. The topics they chose were big ideas such as "sports" and "cars." That did not exactly lead to the kind of productions that we were hoping for, so for the second week we came up with some questions. We let the youth vote on a question for the day, and the video they made had to answer that question. Some of the questions they chose to address included "How do adults relate to young people?" "How does the media target youth?" and "How can you change the world?"

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the mtn monitor (october - november 2005)

editor/design... john akre (send contributions, suggestions, complaints, news tips, spooky faces, etc to: jakre@mtn.org (612) 331-8575 ext. 307.) the monitor is published bi-monthly by the minneapolis television network.

the director's corner

As we have seen, natural disasters move quickly. They devastate and destroy both lives and livelihoods. At MTN we were saddened to receive a satellite photo of New Orleans' Video Access Center, NOVAC. It was completely under water and only visible because of the satellite dishes.

Access television is a minor victim of Hurricane Katrina, and we hope that very soon NOVAC will be up and operating in a vibrant and populated city. Here is part of NOVAC'S mission as stated on their pre-hurricane web site: *"Over the years, NOVAC has continued its efforts to involve racially and economically diverse communities in television production and community programming relevant to their needs. By collaborating with local social service agencies and low income citizens to produce TV projects on housing, literacy, health care and other issues of importance to their communities, NOVAC has provided a voice to the full spectrum of our city's citizens."*

While so much of our national attention is focused on disaster and war, a scary cloud is forming in Washington D.C. that threatens the very future of public, educational and government access. Bills in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate are being vetted and the impetus to pass them is building steam. With numerous and prestigious authors these bills would allow two giant telecommunication companies (telcos), Verizon and SBC, to enter "the cable television market," otherwise known as "multi-channel

video," without making franchise agreements with local cities. MTN is funded through Minneapolis' local franchising agreement with Time Warner.

Those in power at the federal level repeatedly speak of the importance of "local control." Yet, in one fell swoop, a 30-year history of local right of way franchising could disappear. If telcos such as Verizon are allowed to enter the cable market without a franchise, cable companies would quickly make an "unfair competition argument" and ask courts to release them from their current and future obligations to cities. Minneapolis currently receives over two million dollars in franchising money from Time Warner Cable annually.

For those who argue for competition, we say yes, but let the telcos set up franchises based on those negotiated with cable franchises. Why give away more of the municipal store to giant corporate entities? Cities have a right to regulate telecommunication corporations that glean great profit from operating these electronic highways under our streets and over our alleys.

At this time the MTN Board is working on a resolution to take to our Mayor and City Council. This resolution will urge our Minnesota Congressional Delegation and all other members of Congress to oppose Senate bills S. 1349 and S. 1504 and House bill H.R. 3146.

Please contact Pam Colby, 612-331-8575 x 304 or prc@mtn.org if you would like more information or the full language of the resolution that we are working on.

I will be in touch on this issue. It is important to stay vigilant and informed.

Pam Colby

the minneapolis television network

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mtn gets 6 new “10s”

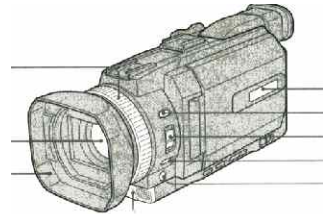
In the Equipment Checkout Area, MTN now has six Sony PDX-10 DV/DVCAM cameras. Starting in October they will be introduced as our new beginning digital camera - both as part of the Digital Combo Field Production class and through free upgrade sessions for current Canon ZR camera certified members. Until that time we have decided to allow checkouts of this new three-chip portable camera for current Advanced Camera Certified members.

The PDX-10 is smaller than the 150 with almost the same picture quality. It also gives you XLR (3 pin) audio connections. We decided to no longer use the

Canon cameras because the new models no longer offer external microphone inputs.

So try out the new PDX-10 cameras - they come with a wide LCD viewfinder, familiar 150 Menu Options and a fast zoom for quick follows. Check out mtn.org for the upcoming free upgrade classes.

Doug Cain



media camp from page 2

We started each day showing the kids a short video or two. We only had a few videos on tape and disk, but we found a treasure trove of youth-produced video on the internet. Though the image size of internet video is small on the computer monitor, when projected on the wall these small videos are quite mesmerizing.

In the second week, we put a great deal of emphasis on production planning. The youth worked in groups of three or four to make their short videos. Each group had to plan their story, write a script, draw a storyboard and rehearse their video before they shot it.

During the second week, we spent a day on animation, and each group planned, storyboarded, made construction paper characters and animated a short cartoon. Animation takes a great deal of time and patience, so watching your finished cartoon is a real victory. One group's cartoon never made it into the camera because of a misunderstanding on how to record animation on the Canon ZR-60 camera.

One of the greatest challenges we had was figuring out how to divide the ten young people into workable groups. We eventually left it up to the camp counselors to decide that, and to take care of discipline problems.

J.C. had his kidney stones removed and was able to join us for part of the second week of the class. The young people immediately took to him. Hamil Griffin-Cassidy also was indispensable for both weeks of the class. He

helped out in the studio and shot a tape of B-roll video of the young people working on their projects, and playing at the Holmes Park playground.

For the last day of the camp, the youth of Camp Olami gathered in Studio B to shoot some talk shows reflecting on their experience at the media camp. We broke into three groups again. The groups took turns acting as talent, running camera and floor direction, and running the control room.

Before we shot the interviews, we brainstormed some questions and wrote them out on a chalkboard. Each group had to pick a host when they were the on-air talent. Each group's host could glance over at the questions we brainstormed, as if the blackboard were a TelePrompter.

I had the honor of editing together all the video produced by the young people, along with the B-roll material shot by Hamil and J.C. The kids came up with the name of their compiled video, "Lights Camera Adventure: Olami's Media Quest." If you look at the MTN channel line-up on the web site, you might catch a playtime for it.

Five of the short videos produced in the camp are also posted on the MTN web site. You will find them at www.mtn.org/Video/education/jccclass.html.

John Akre

access and fair go together like food and sticks

What do you think about the State Fair?" A chubby-faced 10 year old boy wearing glasses and holding a microphone is chasing down fair-goers walking down the aisle of the Wonders of Technology building. It's about noon and the boy has been here for nearly an hour, starting on the two studio-style cameras mounted on tripods at our Minnesota Community Television booth. When his parents swing back by to pick him up, we talk to them about community television and look on our list to see which access center services their area.

Public access at the Minnesota State Fair? This was a new idea, a way to reach out to the many people who come to the fair every year. With all the changes in telecommunications law on the horizon at the federal and state levels, it seemed more important than ever to educate as many people as possible on the importance of public access television.

The idea originated at the January Public Relations Committee Meeting of MTN's Board of Directors. Board member Tom Cassidy brought up the idea. He suggested that the Wonders of Technology building would be a great place for a community television booth, because it would attract people interested in technology who maybe did not know about public access.

MTN executive director Pam Colby, who was at that first meeting, said that several people on the committee thought "it would be a huge amount of work, hard to pull off." The committee then decided to bring other access centers into the project, partly to share in the workload, but also to widen the scope of the project and make the booth relevant to as many fair-goers as possible.

Pam found more access centers that were interested in the idea when she mentioned it at the Midwest Regional Alliance for Community Media Conference. To a lot of people this was not only a creative marketing idea, but also something that could be fun.

The basic set-up for the booth was like a small television studio. There were two cameras on tripods and a third attached to the back wall. All the cameras were hooked into a switcher, which allowed the operator to choose shots from the three camera angles. The switcher was connected to a large plasma screen TV, so that the "show" being produced would simultaneously appear on the screen, giving people the feel of being on TV.



Initially there wasn't a plan for what people would do at the booth. According to Martin Hallanger, it was good "not to have a clear script. It left more room for experimentation." Since Community television is about access to the media for everyone, it was natural, if not inevitable, that kids would actually be operating the equipment. "Using kids as bait worked well," Jim Lundberg from Lake Minnetonka Cable wrote in an email. "Parents would stand back to watch their kids on TV while we got the chance to talk to them about access in their area."

It wasn't entirely the kids and their parents who enjoyed the booth. Adults also tried out the equipment and served as interviewers or interviewees—or both. Once folks were operating the equipment, it naturally led into an explanation of access. "It shows how you can just come and make a show and we'll just show it. [The booth] gives the flavor of access," explained Mike Wassenaar from the St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN).

One fringe benefit of this project was that staff and volunteers at Twin Cities access centers got to meet and talk to each other and work together. Over 80 people from six Twin Cities area access centers participated. As Tim Domke from CTV in Roseville said, "It's a good stepping stone for people to work together on other projects."

And having so many people participate from access centers throughout the Twin Cities made an originally overwhelming idea not only possible, but manageable. As Kyrsten Thompson from CTV put it, "It didn't seem like a whole lot of work. It seemed everyone worked well together. It was spread out so it wasn't one group doing more than any other. That's what made it so successful."

Beth Peloff



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**next mtn member's
screening:**

**friday, november 11
7 p.m. in studio A**

Bring something to screen or just come to watch. There is a 10 minutes limit on all show clips. Questions? Call John at (612) 331-8575 ext. 307.



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