

MICHIGAN NATOA CHAPTER
Friday, November 5, 2004
Southfield Public Library
Southfield MI
(unapproved)

Attendance

Officers: Kathy Sherman, President; Caren Collins, Vice President; Leslie Helwig, Secretary

Members: Janet Christian, Waterford; Evelyn Goudrequ, Livonia; Jeanniene Finegan, Trenton; V. Olimpio Varsogea, Van Buren Township; Cathy White, Livonia

Guests: Kim Walsh, Detroit Radio Information Service (DRIS); Michael Watza, attorney, Kitch Drutchos

Discussion

Kathy Sherman noted that attendance has been down at recent MI NATOA meetings; perhaps because of lack of urgent issues, since no one is going through a franchise renewal or transfer now.

We held a conference call with Paula Gentius-Harris, City of Detroit Cable Commission, regarding her proposed Michigan NATOA Tape Exchange Program (MNTEP), submitted October 11, 2004 to Kathy. The idea originated at the 2003 National Conference in Denver. The purpose would be to share programming that is governmental, educational or community-related that would be of interest to citizens in different communities. Participants would list programs (and the pertinent accompanying information) they have to offer on the website. The MI NATOA listserve could be used to notify members to go to the website. Policy needs to be developed for giving credits and paying for tapes. Paula will revise her proposal to include some of the points brought up in discussion.

Caren Collins and Kathy Sherman reported that the national NATOA conference held in San Francisco in September was excellent, but that attendance was down there also. Next year the conference will celebrate NATOA's 25th anniversary. It will be held in Washington D.C. on a Thursday – Sunday (instead of Wednesday – Saturday).

Attorney Michael Watza gave a status report on the franchise fee class action lawsuits against several Michigan cities, currently in the Court of Appeals. The plaintiffs charge that all monies collected by the cities beyond the direct cost of cable programming should be considered unfair taxes.

There was general discussion about franchise fee audits.

Kim Walsh presented information about DRIS, an audio information service for people who can't see, hold or comprehend print material. She remarked that many issues confronting DRIS are the same as those confronting cable programmers.

Caren Collins reported on plans for the MAB conference, to be held Tuesday, March 8 in Lansing. The group encouraged her to book Les Rose, *CBS News* and *60 Minutes* photojournalist. He gave an excellent workshop at the NATOA conference.

Kathy encouraged everyone to attend MAB.

No date was set for the next meeting.