

MICHAEL CLARK

# On Local Television

BY ELIZABETH VESPE

**LTV** Studios is celebrating 40 years of broadcasting out of its Wainscott studios, connecting public access viewers to local government, environmental programming, and the arts. Executive Director Michael Clark sat down with the Express Magazine to talk about the past and what the future looks like on Industrial Road.

**GIVE US A LITTLE BIT OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF LTV AND ITS FOUNDING?**

The founder was a man by the name of Frazer Dougherty. He founded it back in the early 1980s, but it became incorporated as LTV in 1984. We're celebrating our 40th anniversary this year. There will be celebrations for the 40th anniversary throughout the summer.

It started basically in Frazer Dougherty's garage as the first public access station — he produced shows right near the East Hampton dump on Springs Fireplace Road. They went by the mantra "By the people, and for the people." It was started as a local TV station that reported on all things happening on the East End. The construction of this facility was raised through private donors at the time. Now, it is fully sustainable by LTV itself.

**WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR 2024 AT LTV?**

We're doing a lot more stuff this year than we've ever done before. We still have to recognize our mission and not lose sight of the fact that we're public access and we're here for the community. LTV is now home to South Fork Performing Arts — they're doing all of their productions here. Our Fabulous Variety Show — this is their home. The Hamptons Festival of Music, which is the big 45-piece classical orchestra — the cream of the crop from across the country — are here every September now. We have the perfect facility to do all of this.

We're like a smorgasbord of different types of community things going on. In addition, while we have those things going on, we still have the studio shows where people come in. If you live in the East Hampton community and want to do a show, you're entitled to do a show.

**HOW DOES LTV REMAIN DIVERSIFIED ENOUGH TO REACH MULTIPLE AUDIENCES?**

It's a huge part of our strategic plan for



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2024 — diversity — focusing on the diversity of the East End. You see the posters on the walls — celebrating Black culture, Latin dance night. We have a very big Indigenous event coming in May, an Indian sitar player in June, celebrating Black culture again in July, and many more to be announced. That's always on our mind. How can we bring things to the local community about other cultures? There will always be something cultural happening here.

**HOW HAS LTV EVOLVED OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS, AND HOW HAS MICHAEL CLARK TRIED TO GROW THE ORGANIZATION?**

Hiring Josh Gladstone was a big deal for us. We saw the opportunity to grab him and use his expertise. Having been in the business for over 20 years, he knows so many people. I've known Josh since I owned the music store. We used to produce shows together at Guild Hall. As soon as I saw he was available, I swooped in. We offered him the creative director job. That's why we're able to present these things. He's a huge part of the future of LTV. LTV was evolving as a public access station pretty slowly, and then I came on board in 2019. I was here for two months and the pandemic hit. We were deemed an essential business because we're communication for the local community. The good thing that came out of the pandemic was that we were able to reengineer our business. That was a turning point for us. Jason Nower, our chief engineer, he's got an unbelievable technical mind. Jason is amazing. During the pandemic,

Jason was able to set everything up for remote recording of government meetings. Now, we do everything from here. That was a huge change in the way we do business — the ease of getting that communication out based on the system Jason built.

**WHAT HAPPENED TO LTV POST PANDEMIC?**

That's when we started to open our doors. It was an underutilized facility. It's a huge space. When I got here, there were two studios being used. Now there are seven. They were all redone with sound reinforcement and new cameras. We're constantly updating and trying to keep up with the ever-changing world of technology. I experimented. It started small. Over a couple of years, we were trying more and more and bringing in these community groups. We had no stage. We just built as we went along. People saw what we were doing and wanted to support us.

**WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS SUMMER?**

(Clark points to his whiteboard which takes up his entire wall)

There are big things coming up. This is it. These are all the events. Just that board alone is the big studio, Studio 3. We have something called Hamptons Cabaret. Cabaret singers from Manhattan perform several times a year. The Playwright's Theater of East Hampton with Sawyer Spielberg is happening, too. East End Underground which is our musical program — we have well over 70 shows now. I started producing that before I even worked here. All different community events are coming up — the East Hampton Democratic Forum, League of Woman Voters, i-tri holds their yearly fundraiser here. We're the community facility. We are looking forward to a successful 2024.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?**

For the future, I hope we stay the course. Keeping up with technology and keeping LTV sustainable. Funding is based on viewership. We have to continually find ways to keep the business running. That's why we even have to charge for anything for the community groups. We'd love to be the community place for everyone to hang their hat. We have a good game plan. As long as we stay technically relevant, we'll be in great shape.

## STAY TUNED

From plays to live music and more, LTV has a lot coming up this late spring. Here are some of the events we are looking forward too.

**"The Pillowman"**

Presented by the Playwrights' Theatre of East Hampton in association with



Kassar Productions. Starring Sawyer Spielberg, John Kroft, Edward Kassar and Joe Pallister, and directed by Stephen Hamilton.

April 25 through April 28 and May 1 through May 4, with performances at 7:30 p.m.

**R. Carlos Nakai in Concert**

Presented by LTV's World Voices Series, the concert by the multi-Grammy Award winning indigenous flutist, will also feature special guest



The Youngblood Sisters, from the Shinnecock Indian Nation in Nakai's East End debut. The concert will be followed by a Q&A artist talk-back, moderated by Jason Amis of LongHouse Reserve.

Sunday, May 19, at 6 p.m.

**Staged Reading of Hugh King's "The Lipping of a Muse"**

Presented by the Playwrights' Theatre of East Hampton, the staged reading of King's new play, "The Lipping of a Muse:



The Literary and Dramatic Writing Career of John Howard Payne," honors Payne's 233rd birthday with

an ensemble of actors under King, the Town Crier and Historian.

Sunday, June 9, at 4 p.m.