

KPFA GM Report: September 19, 2020

**By
Quincy McCoy**

All successful radio is local. I've heard that mantra for 30 years. It was true then as it is today. What it means is *Radio continues to connect people to their communities, perhaps now more than any other medium. Radio remains unique as a local communications service, one that is the lifeblood of local information in all our communities and in our culture. With daily climate emergencies and cultural eruptions, it's our duty to provide our listeners with local pertinent information and resources.*

In the last few months, KPFA has used our frequency as a life-line to reach thousands of people—in church groups, black and brown community action groups, schools, hospitals, and prisoners and provided resources and critical Covid-19 information. Information they could share within their distinct communities. That's radio playing a vital role.

Nonprofits are struggling. KQED laid off 20% of their workforce just a few weeks ago. Why? The corporate sponsorship and underwriting money has dried up. We fortunately don't take corporate funding and it doesn't affect our budget line.

Our mission is our life raft. KPFA is adapting to the new normal of remote broadcasting and fundraising with heroic energy and speed. Are we worried about the future? We don't have time to worry. We're prevailing doing what we always do best, continuing to live our mission, lead with our hearts and values, and serve our communities well.

Yet we must continue to creative inventive new ways to transform our programming and fundraising events on and off the air to remain financially sound. And we're proud that our donor community has responded in kind to our energy and creativity.

Programming

The programming department has put together a brand new **KPFA Bay Area Voting Guide and Resource Hub** which you can find on the front page of KPFA.org. It covers everything you need to know about voting in person, by mail, where to drop off your ballot and **your rights** covering all the counties in the KPFA signal area. It includes voting rights for incarcerated people, disabled people and Latinx resources. The local news outlet "**Berkeleyside**" called us this week to ask if they can share it on their website.

The Fall Fund Drive is Tuesday, September 22nd through Friday, October 9th. For this drive we've put together a new digital collection of audio from KPFA speaker events, writers, thinkers, historians and activists that speak powerfully to this tumultuous time. Everyone who pledges at any amount will receive the "**Don't Believe the Hype Collection of Political History,**" a digital gift that's delivered automatically in a confirmation email. On the website, we've got a new splash page and on-air promos reminding listeners that no matter which way this election goes KPFA won't give up the fight.

NEWS DEPARTMENT

The News Department provided comprehensive coverage about the science and the politics of the coronavirus pandemic. Early on, news reporting focused on the warnings that prisoners in the state's overcrowded prisons were at high risk of contracting COVID-19, a prediction that sadly came to pass. We featured coverage of the battle to provide safe housing for homeless people from the streets to shelters. **Up Front** has a regular Monday morning 7:30 AM interview and call-in segment with epidemiologist Dr. John Swartzberg that has provided an important service in explaining the latest developments on issues such as vaccines and

transmission and answering basic questions about the virus.

POLICE KILLINGS & PROTESTS

Later in the spring and summer, the News Department covered the protests over the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade and the attempts at the state and local levels to defund the police and impose restrictions on the use of deadly force.

WILDFIRES

Starting in mid-August, the News Department also turned to extensive coverage of the wildfires raging around the Bay Area and throughout the state in cooperation with KFCF.

ELECTIONS

The News Department in cooperation with **Up Front** is planning a series of in-depth election reports and debates on state and local ballot measures and candidate races. **Mitch Jeserich of Letters and Politics** will host election night coverage, along with Mark Mericle and Christina Aanestad. KPFA'S locally produced coverage will air from 9 PM to Midnight and will be preceded by national coverage either by Pacifica or Democracy Now.

OPERATIONS

After months of brainstorming and planning KPFA is ready to debut our new virtual KPFA Events. We will be using the Zoom Webinar platform. Our first official event is Wednesday September 23 with guest Obi Kaufmann hosted by Brian Edwards-Tiekert. The event is already sold out and we're excited to bring this event online. Special thanks to the KPFA Events Team and also OM--Antonio Oritz and PD--Laura Prives.

NEW IN-HOUSE INSTRUCTION: "A Collaborative Communication Skills Building Class" that focuses on Shared Responsibility for Ensuring an Equitable and Inclusive workplace Culture. This course is geared toward KPFA Management in order to give the team new tools that can help build upon the values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility. This class is taught by Nancy Kahn.

We are in the planning stages of conducting more interactive courses for staff members in October, November and December so they can acquire the skill-set necessary to actualize the values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

ENGINEERING

Off-site Production:

During Covid-19 we have provided hosts with the training and tech they needed to perform broadcasts from home. This includes purchasing usb microphones, lending computers, and training on professional remote audio tools.

Station Upgrades:

The first stage of decommissioning aging audio equipment has begun in Master Control. We have upgraded our automation software and are currently retooling it to work with our new digital equipment.

The News Dept will receive a studio upgrade in October after the Fall Drive. This will be a complete overhaul of the aging studio providing a modern facility with a networked, digital, air-chain. Our **On-**

Air and **Production** studios are next for facility upgrades.

The equipment upgrades will have a noticeable impact on the quality and sound of our airwaves, bringing a greater dynamic range and acoustic accuracy. The facility upgrades will position KPFA once again as a world-class broadcast facility that attracts talent,

innovates new revenue streams such as rentals, and a learning facility for Apprentices and Interns.

FUNDING UPDATE

Spring Fundraiser GOAL:

\$500,000

\$502,765 AMOUNT PLEAGED:

\$445,106 PAID SO FAR @

89% fulfillment

KPFA donors had the opportunity to choose from a list of nine local nonprofits to share 10% of their donation. This was a huge success raising over \$5,500 in donations for local charities serving our community and building good will and exposure to other nonprofits in the area that could be potential partners in the future.

Summer Fundraiser GOAL:

\$300,000

\$355,352 AMOUNT PLEDGED

\$273,456 PAID SO FAR @ 77% fulfillment with 97%

projected

During this drive we curated **The Abolish Racism Audio Collection** that featured esteemed voices from KPFA's author events archive, speaking about the history of

racial inequity in our society. This collection was free for ANYONE who donated to KPFA, regardless of the amount they donated.

APPEAL LETTERS:

To help jump start our drives we send out appeal letters. In conjunction with our on-air promos, E-blasts and social media campaign. With envelopes and website donations still being returned so far, we've reached over \$30 thousand dollars in donations in checks and clicks.

Quincy McCoy