

KPFA General Manager Report
March 19th, 2022
By
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State of the Station

I will be meeting with our Health & Safety Committee in three days to renew our discussions on the lower-risk options to slowly reopen the station. Our discussion will entail ways that we can manage guests, monitor vaccination status, maintain masking indoors, continue our "if sick, stay home" policy, and other challenges and realities of moving from one pandemic phase to another. In addition, we will begin the process of sending out another staff survey to gauge everyone's comfort level about re-entering the building.

It's clear this virus will remain with us for some time, if not forever. Experts fear that Covid-19 cases in the United States will rise in the next few weeks as the new variant continues to spread. Dr. Fauci, said given the growing prevalence of BA.2, he expects cases will increase within the next month.

We can't predict how much it will continue to impact our well-being, and station operations. Yet, we do know what works to minimize and will continue to use those tools as our next phase of safety protocols evolves.

Our health and safety restrictions are strict and for good reason. As Stewart my overriding responsibility is protecting the health and welfare of the staff. Our radio station's essential workers are primarily a technical staff. A very talented bunch of folks who do very specific jobs. God forbid if

two or three of these people were ill at the same time. We simply don't have a deep enough bench of well skilled folks to cover them. It's been my recurring nightmare for the last three years. As spacious as our station may seem to some, it's not big enough to keep this virus from derailing our broadcast schedule.

On the other hand, we have experimented a bit with allowing a few late night and weekend music programmers to enter. This works because the station is virtually empty except for them. Of course, vaccinations must be up-to-date, and no guests or visitors are allowed.

For the Grateful Dead marathon, we did a trial run allowing Tim Lynch and David Gans to have a band in our performance studio. They had to verify the band's vaccination status and enforce mask wearing and social distancing when the players were not performing. Make no mistake we will continue being very cautious and sticking to what's working.

I'd like to take a moment to thank Tim Lynch and David Gans for their years of dedication and passion supporting KPFA. This year's Grateful Dead Marathon raised 50 thousand dollars in our Winter Fund Drive. It's important to point out that 93% of the donations came directly from online. More on the drive in a minute.

While we're on the topic of specials a round of applause for the producers of the following broadcasts. The Black History Month daylong event aired February 21st and featured African American voices, stories, music, and culture. Special thanks to Executive Producer Jeannine Etter and Assistant Producer Prema

Jackson for coordinating the broadcast and its content creators.

The International Women's Day Special Broadcast was Sunday March 13th. The day featured content from 27 producers about a diverse set of topics that celebrated the stories of women and shed light on issues affecting them. Special thanks to Executive Producer Margo Okazawa-Rey for coordinating the broadcast and providing support to the rest of the IWD team.

Russia Invasion Coverage

This is far from a simple issue.

There is a historic split among the left about Russia and US relations that goes back to Stalin and Trotsky; and historically we have aired a wide range of those perspectives. True to our legacy, now since the invasion we've aired a diverse array of perspectives. For example, the diversity of opinions range from:

- Russia had no choice but to invade because of NATO's expansion.
- Russia was provoked by the USA.
- We should be against Imperialism by the US or Russia.
- Putin is the aggressor.
- Putin's conducting a unjust war largely on civilians

Of course, **Democracy Now** has had expansion coverage. The Sunday Show's phone lines have been buzzing with the opinions of our listeners.

Upfront during the first two weeks included live interviews with journalists in Odessa, a nursing mother sheltering from bomb strikes in Kyiv, a climate scientist also in Kyiv, and a refugee who'd just crossed the border into Poland.

Our Public Affairs shows have engaged in many points of view, from experts on Russian and Ukrainian history, on financial sanctions and nuclear safety.

Letters and Politics interviewed Medea Benjamin, anti-war activist from Code Pink. And Bill Weinberg described the dissident-left point of view. Bill was a 20-year producer at WBAI in New York.

Dr. Gerald Horne professorship of History and African American Studies at the University of Houston addressed the issues of international racism in the war.

On **Flashpoints** Greg Palast investigated the Koch Industries involvement in the bloody war against Ukraine and asked the question what did Bill Clinton have to do with Putin's rise to power?

National Broadcast

KPFA will broadcast the Supreme Court nomination hearings of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first African American woman to be nominated to the Supreme Court; Tuesday, March 22 from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm and Wednesday, March 23 from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm. Mitch Jeserich will host. Diana Martinez and Chris Lee will be the producers. This will be a Pacifica National Broadcast carried on all stations and many affiliates.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training

Beginning Friday April 1st, KPFA will offer staff **DEI Training**. After extensive research we've settled on Paradigm's online training program. Why Paradigm? Their DEI solutions have helped over 1,000 companies around the world build stronger, more inclusive organizations. The company's president, Evelyn Carter, an African American, woman who is a highly sought after thought leader. Paradigm offers a comprehensive suite of technology products and expert consulting services that will help us design and deliver an impactful DEI strategy for KPFA.

The advantage to online training is that every participant can take the course at times that work best for their schedules. Even though this will not replace the benefits of in-person training, we see this as a good first step to relay the basics of DEI, bring staff to the same understanding of the basic terms used in DEI training and to get the conversation going with people who generally can't attend training due to other life commitments. Paradigm is in Palo Alto and their training doesn't strain our budget.

April 15th is KPFA's birthday. The cultural institution will turn 73 years young. This year we're finally reinstating the KPFA Vigilance Awards we suspended because of the pandemic. Past winners were **Alice Walker, Amy Goodman, Walter Turner**, his friend **Danny Glover, Bob Baldock** and **Miguel Molina**. This year in addition to having a single day on-air fund drive, the annual birthday appeal letter has been created and will be mailed to ~15,000 donors and supporters, with a goal of raising \$25 grand. The appeal letter will announce the seven recipients of 2022's Vigilance Awards – a crystal plaque will be given to this year's

recipients. We expect another strong response from donors to this year’s Birthday Appeal Letter and Vigilance Awards.

Events

With the retirement of KPFA’s Event Producer, Bob Baldock, event production has been folded into the Development Department. There has been one author event thus far in 2022, with Bob Baldock himself for the publication of his novel, *Wild Green Oranges*, and it was the second most successful event in the last two years, raising more than \$2,100 in ticket donation for the zoom only event! Upcoming events for the months of April and May include **Alice Walker, Sasha LaPointe, Tony Messenger, Azar Nifisi, Sean Levy** and in the future will also include an in-person celebration of the life and work of singer **Barbara Dane** at Freight and Salvage.

Fund Driver Recap

CAMPAIGN	GOAL	PLEGGED / PERCENT OF GOAL	RECEIVED / PERCENT OF GOAL
Holiday Drive	\$300,000	\$276,873 / 92%	\$227,412 / 82%
Post-Holiday		\$102,938	\$98,017
Winter Drive	\$450,000	\$436,983 / 97%	\$339,976 / 77% *
Post Winter (as of 3.17)		\$7,625	\$6,405 ^
End of Year Mailer	\$20,000	\$53,743 / 268%	\$52,813 / 98%

*Invoices have not been mailed – will go out during the week of March 21st, 2022.

^Post Winter drive to run until 3.21.2022

KPFA’s Winter Fund Drive

Our Post Drive phase is still ongoing. The drive was successful reaching 97% of our goal. In addition to an outstanding show of donor support, there were specific areas of success that deserve

to be recognized. As I mentioned earlier the Dead Marathon raised \$50-grand an increase over 2021's event. Two of the most successful premiums during the drive, was a "live recording" of **the Jerry Garcia Band** and the **2022 Grateful Dead Marathon tee-shirt**.

We also created a wonderful new premium—KPFA's "**Banned Book Bag Bundle**" a newly designed cloth bag with a curated selection of five of the most challenged books in American history. Not only was this \$300 premium very well received by our donors it also strongly reinforced KPFA's commitment to our mission of supporting the free exchange of information and speech. The banned book bag, without books will continue to be available online.

Q1 Development Department Database

2022 began with strong administrative needs in the Development Department reconciling all 2021 donations, merging all recurring donor information from Allegiance database into Station Admin database.

The merge from Allegiance into Station Admin was the culmination of months of collaborative effort between the development department and engineering was a herculean effort. It was successful and donor accuracy is excellent, allowing for the tax letters to be mailed to donors in a timely manner.

The 2021 tax letters were not only more accurate than the ones issued in previous years, but changes were also initiated in production methods that saved KPFA thousands of dollars. Many thanks are owed to our Chief Engineer Brian David for his phenomenal work in steering this project to completion.

Operations Department Interns Update

During the past two years of the pandemic the Ops Department interns, graduates of our **AMP Program**, have supported the station as fill-in board operators, News Technical producers, Special Broadcast producers, assistant engineers, social media content producer and On Air Studio/Main Production Studio/audio editing trainers to programmers. All of them performing two and sometimes three of these different roles. These Interns are E.A., Paula Burch, Jose Gonzalez, Ky Gustafson, Prema Jackson, Peter Stickney and MikO Tolliver.

I'm delighted to report that all their training was made possible by the **Cabin Road Foundation Grant** we were awarded five years ago at 90 thousand dollars a year. It allowed us the ability to train interns and staff members in skill areas like multi-track editing, field production and recording, sound production, voice work, and long form storytelling. Our Long-Form Storytelling and "Storytelling for Social Change Mentorship Programs" were both led by Lucy Kang, KPFA's Excellence in Journalism and Public Media award winning journalist. Lucy authored the proposal that won us this amazing grant.

In late Spring, we will offer a "How to Pitch Successfully During Fund Drive" class for On Air Hosts and Producers. Also, we will be doing another round of staff orientations and certifications. Antonio Ortiz are Director of Operations and Programming wants to ensure that everyone knows station protocols, standards, and FCC rules and regulations.

Finally in April, board op/technical producer training will begin again to continue to add to the Operations Department's incredible bench.

AREA 941

In my 4th Quarter report I mentioned our plan to refresh AREA 941 in 2022. The new content will align with KPFA's existing brand **Storytelling for Social Change:** narratives of impact—that illustrate the power of our programming to create change. The hosts, their content, their community presence and their partners and collaborators will both align and advance KPFA's mission to create a media landscape that identifies, lifts, and amplifies voices that speak for communities that are shut out of the mass media institutions.

The Area 941 Podcast project is in its middle phase. This project allows KPFA to use its inherent advantage - its ability to gather attention and motivate action - in the podcast space in a focused, cost-effective manner.

Podcasting has never been a richer, more meaningful part of the media ecosystem, but it has never been harder to discover new shows.

Area 941 will address this problem for the KPFA listener. We have hand-selected a collection of established podcasts that are diverse both in who makes them and their topic area. We will create a section on our site to highlight the podcasts and then leverage our air and owned digital media to drive traffic to the Area 941 collection. This allows KPFA to use the trust we've

earned with the audience to create a **new listener benefit** and reinforce our position as a highly relevant, useful media entity in their lives.

Area 941 will relaunch by late Spring.

Social Media Report

What is the purpose of social media? Mainly to improve brand awareness, distribution, and our revenue stream. To put KPFA more in touch with our listenership. Through social media we are working to reframe our brand, so people see us differently, so people's interest in KPFA is suddenly renewed. Because we're part of a fast-moving media world, our brand cannot remain stuck. It must build and reinforce itself day after day.

KPFA is working to build our social media presence, to broaden our reach globally. A simple way to imagine what the amplification of social media can do for us is to consider that we now have four additional broadcast signals.

Twitter
Youtube
Instagram
Facebook

In the last six months, our social media team has been able to grow the station's social media community. For example, our numbers have increased at a rate of 100 new followers a month on Instagram. We're not shattering any records here, yet it's a steady process we know we can improve upon. A process that gives us a new vitality and a wider reach to younger adults.

For most creators their problem is creating content, we don't have that problem. KPFA is a content creating machine. This new media world forces us to "rethink" the content we produce and how we distribute it.

Our biggest challenge is schooling our hosts and producers to utilize our platforms as a resource. We need everyone to post and share our content and encourage our listeners to spread our messaging. This is what a grassroots campaign looks like in today's media landscape. And remember social media has cultural, political, and financial power, the very playground we need to operate in to give agency to our mission for social change.

Facilities:

I asked our Chief Engineer Brian David to give us an overview of ongoing projects currently being worked on.

The Engineering Dept. upgrade to our Performance Studio's audio infrastructure has been completed. A digital music console and furniture has been installed. The performance space itself no longer obstructed with Pacifica files and furniture and we baptized it with a band performing during the Grateful Dead marathon.

- There is some cosmetic clean-up work left to finish in the Control Rooms: Flooring and Carpeting, Patching and Painting.
- The flooding situation has not been fully resolved and still presents a major risk to equipment. Currently a sump pump and

manual labor is used to triage. We're thinking about a Capitol Campaign to raise the needed funds for a permanent fix.

- The Door Access System has been replaced. Entry now is with official KPFA cards which you hold over the new entry screens. We've been beta testing the new system with our essential workers and all is good so far.
- We can eliminate \$11k/year cost with NPR by directly receiving Democracy Now via a one-time purchase of hardware. We're working on raising the funds to facilitate that cost saving move.

Transmitter:

The Main and Primary KPFA Transmitters atop Grizzly Peak are in good working order and with regular attention they will continue to serve KPFA for the foreseeable future. We recently purchased some replacement power modules and fans to support the mechanical operations.

Personnel: Steve Hawes has done a remarkable job maintaining the site and creating a stable environment. The staff responsible for the Transmitter operations are at retirement age and backup personnel are now being trained.

Software Development:

The main software project KPFA is currently developing is StationAdmin. The project has been the product of 4 years of on/off development. KPFA has invested several thousand dollars into its front-end development.

Website:

Our website is stable, albeit with an aging theme. We've put it through its paces lately and she's hung in there. Yet it's time for an

audit review and future proofing for any necessary changes to keep the website up to date.

Archives:

The archives are stable and redundant at both studios, and our datacenter.

Community Advisory Board

The Pacifica Executive Director, Stephanie Wells has asked all General Managers to assist local station boards with starting up CABs in her pursuit of eligibility for Pacifica to regain CPB funding in the future.

I understand you folks will be addressing this issue in your meeting today and I would like to ask you to consider the need for insuring age diversity on the CAB. There are 200 thousand college students within our signal range. I urge you to appoint students to KPFA's CAB to support our current efforts to connect with young adults.

Also top of mind should be people of color to meet the CAB requirements for racial inclusion.

Out of Office

I will be out for three weeks in May. My son is having major jaw surgery in Los Angeles. After the surgery he will be unable to speak or eat solid food for at least three weeks and will be unable to travel, except to post op Doctor appointments. I will be working from LA as much as possible, but basically, I will be

on duty administering pain meds and working blenders to feed and comfort him.

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