

Save KPFA “Principles” vs the Reality

By Mara Rivera

What Save KPFA Says:	The Reality
<p>Protect local control. <i>In 2014, Save KPFA led the effort that put KPFA back under the control of locally-hired management for the first time in 5 years — resulting in the recruitment of a talented General Manager, and a permanent Program Director hired by, and accountable to, KPFA’s elected local board.</i></p>	<p>Control the Station. The Executive Director of Pacifica and sometimes the Pacifica National Board make the final decision on KPFA’s General Manager hires, out of a pool chosen by the Local Station Board (see next answer). Pacifica is the parent organization of the 5 stations, holds the license and provides oversight.</p> <p>The paid staff, Save KPFA, and its previous incarnations like Concerned Listeners, have driven out most of KPFA’s General Managers for not agreeing with them 100%.</p>
<p>Ensure high-quality, progressive programming. <i>In 2010, Save KPFA campaigned to reverse Pacifica’s cancellation of KPFA’s most listened-to local program, The Morning Show; in 2012, we supported the launch of UpFront, restoring local programming to KPFA’s morning lineup.</i></p>	<p>Protect Unsustainable Budgets. In 2010 Pacifica’s Executive Director had to step in because Concerned Listeners / Save KPFA were bankrupting the station by not cutting paid staff hours as all the 5 stations had been ordered to do 2-3 years before. Shortfalls in fundraising made these cuts necessary and obvious.</p> <p>Because most station expenses are fixed, wages are the only significant place to balance the budget. The <i>Morning Show</i> staff members were low on the seniority list and, according to the union contract, had to be laid off first. Save KPFA created a huge fuss on the airwaves, in e-mails and in complaints to the National Labor Relations Board. They lied to the listeners that the layoffs were politically motivated and deceived hundreds of listeners into hating Pacifica and opposing the layoffs.</p> <p>When paid staff refused to replace the laid-off Morning Show workers, volunteers stepped up to do the programming, creating the <i>Morning Mix</i>, much of it focused on local matters. Recently, the</p>

	Save KPFA forces displaced these volunteers with a crony.
<p>Support staff and volunteers. <i>SaveKPFA led the successful fight to reverse Pacifica's 2011 hiring of the nation's top union-busting law firm; Save KPFA members have also raised money to update aging equipment in KPFA's studios, and established a training fund for volunteer staff in KPFA's budget.</i></p>	<p>Raise False Claims - Undercut Unpaid Staff. That firm was hired for its expertise dealing with a previous harassment lawsuit, not any labor issue. KPFA runs on listener support, not faction-related funding of anyone's favorites. No individual faction can claim credit for fund drive totals.</p> <p>Save KPFA does not value volunteers and trainees (unless they're part of their faction), and pushes "professionalism" (paid staff). One of their most celebrated supporters, Larry Bensky, referred to volunteer programmers as "monkeys." Years ago, this group destroyed union coverage for the unpaid staff by switching to CWA, a union which would not represent unpaid staff. The former union United Electrical Workers (UE) had covered both paid and unpaid staff for many years.</p> <p>Save KPFA later attempted to destroy the Unpaid Staff Organization (UPS), which the volunteer staff organized as a substitute. Most of KPFA's programs and 70% or more of staff are unpaid volunteers.</p>
<p>Transparency and accountability from Pacifica. SaveKPFA's representatives on the Pacifica National Board are part of a new majority that has begun issuing regular financial statements for the first time in nearly three years, dramatically shrunk Pacifica's deficit (from -\$2.8 million in 2013 to a small surplus in the 12 months ending in June 2015), and rationalized (and lowered) the dues that stations like KPFA pay to Pacifica's national office.</p>	<p>Incompetence and Lack of Accountability. The statement to the left is an egregious lie. The SaveKPFA-dominated station board has allowed the KPFA General Manager whom they helped hire and KPFA's business manager to get away with producing unrealistic income and expense figures for the required yearly budgets. They have not held the business manager accountable for her tardiness in producing necessary audit material for the national office accounting department to complete the FY2013 and FY2014 audits in a timely manner, as required by non-profit corporate law and CPB. This gross incompetence only adds to the potential</p>

	<p>bankruptcy of KPFA and the Pacifica Network.</p> <p>Some wonder if it is actually intentional, part of an attempt to grab the station for themselves (see KPFA Foundation argument below). The “three years” were three of <u>their</u> years in the majority on the KPFA board, with their incompetent financial officers and management</p> <p>On a national level, Pacifica lost 2 million dollars in Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) funding because it did not keep up with required record keeping, among other things. This might have contributed to the California State Attorney General doing a documents audit this year (although the AG office is responsible for overseeing non-profits and probably should have done one sooner}. And there is a possibility that our auditors will refuse to renew their contract with Pacifica.</p> <p>We have discovered that members of Save KPFA have secretly set up a shadow corporation, the “KPFA Foundation”, which they say is to “catch” KPFA in case of bankruptcy – which they seem to be trying to achieve in any way as quickly as possible! This is why we urgently need you to vote them out now!</p>
<p><i>Experiment with new shows; expand into new platforms.</i> Under SaveKPFA leadership, KPFA budgeted for, and carried out, a re-design of its website that makes it more accessible on mobile devices—which is where more and more radio listeners are turning to get their favorite shows. KPFA has also started using its second signal, KPFB, to pilot 20 hours of programming per week from new, energetic producers.</p>	<p>Dominate the Airwaves. The website was vastly neglected for years, under Save KPFA’s watch. Although flashy, the new website is cumbersome to navigate and a memory hog.</p> <p>Save KPFA disempowered the former democratically-representative Program Council, which evaluated and chose programming. Instead, they choose new programs by hiring their cronies. They have spoken out against and even censored local, radical, youth, Black, and investigative programming, while claiming the Local Station Board has no role in in programming (but see the Bylaws, Section</p>

	<p>7, Article 3, Item G* – below).</p> <p>The new programming at KPFB was created by one staff member and the many apprentices and former apprentices who produce programming there.</p>
<p>Reform Pacifica’s Byzantine Governance System. <i>We believe Pacifica’s acrimonious boards have generated many of its problems. Save KPFA participated in cross-factional dialogue talks this year, and now endorses the Pacifica Unity Pledge, which commits us to participating in a network-wide consensus-building process with the goal of making Pacifica’s governance system simpler, effective, smaller, and calmer.</i></p>	<p>Calm By Suppression. The “acrimonious board” meetings are a result of Save KPFA’s blocking of any governance and positive change by the Local Station Boards. SaveKPFA always votes for a hands-off policy regarding management decisions, claiming the board must not “micro-manage” the General Manager.</p> <p>Their actions show they believe that boards have no right to govern, only the paid staff, as they have often said. (The “acrimony” is the slim minority of United for Community Radio board members and allies fighting to strengthen the station, network, and democratic governance. Democratic governance may be imperfect but it’s our only hope for real community programming and a range of real progressive opinions on the air.</p>
<p>*under Local Station Board duties: their role in programming -- From the Pacifica Bylaws, Section 7, Article 3 , Item G</p> <p>To work with station management to ensure that station programming fulfills the purposes of the Foundation and is responsive to the diverse needs of the listeners (demographic) and communities (geographic) served by the station, and that station policies and procedures for making programming decisions and for program evaluation are working in a fair, collaborative and respectful manner to provide quality programming</p>	