

KPFK ELECTION FINAL REPORT

Notes added by Marc Herbst, KPFK 2009 Local Election Supervisor

Nomination Phase

Signing events

Location: KPFK

- Sunday Morning-two weeks before candidacy was due.
- I received complaints that Sunday morning is too early for people to arrive at the station.
- Well attended event by regulars and 3 less known candidates. not well publicized though carts were running 5 days out. I had not yet coordinated the need for the massive publicity.

Location: Farmlab (in downtown Los Angeles)

- Saturday Morning weekend before candidacy is due.
- I received complaints that this was too early for most traditional KPFK candidates to find a place that they don't know).
- This is not a traditional KPFK venue but its mission is very much in line with KPFK's progressive and ecological perspectives. While I thought it was a good idea to reach beyond a traditional kpfk audience for signing events, apparently members of the LSB
- thought this was a bad idea. Everyone grumbled about it despite a large turnout. This event was publicized starting (I think, 5 days out) and was part of an on-air conversation with several hosts.
- Farmlab staff were very supportive of the event and worked hard to find members of their larger community to run for the board.
- They were not successful despite their efforts. Publicity ran for this event 5 days out. Programmers mentioned the event live.

Location: KPFK

- Sunday Evening weekend before candidacy is due.
- I had been told to have a pre-due-date event, the night of.
- Ian Masters thankfully also decided to have an event that morning. So by the evening, what had been everyone's desire to have a before-due-date event was now seen as too late and useless.
- This event was generally ignored by people who were complaining.
- Publicity ran for this event 6 days out. Programmers mentioned the event live on-air.

Other Outreach

I did a lot of outreach into my community of people who work at the intersection of arts and politics. This involved flyering events and several phone consultations and email exchanges with: The President of Otis Institute for the Arts, Board Members of the Hammer Museum and major institutional donor, The dean of California Institute for the

Arts, Former KPFFK program manager in the 80's now head of the Otis writing program, Head of the Watts Towers Art Project, Head of Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Dean of the Otis Public Practice program and internationally renowned artist, Hammer Museum's head of Public Programming, Farmlab staff, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions Director, Cal Arts Community Arts Program Director. Director and more.

It is important to note that many of the above devoted a significant amount of time to do outreach in attempt to find interested, competent and experienced members of the cultural community in Los Angeles. Despite our efforts, we were unable to find one candidate interested in the position.

There is an overwhelming perception by many competent people who share the values and ideals of KPFFK that the station's board and management situation is "crazy." Again, I want to stress that I made significant efforts to do outreach in non-traditional communities, but because of a common perception was unable to convince candidates to run.

KPFFK Outreach Events

I did one election outreach event during a KPFFK sponsored event. Station management invited me to be there. I handed out campaign info and talked with many people about the elections. I made an announcement from the stage and answered questions about the elections.

Carts

By the end of the first week, I had a cart cut and ready to run. It took until Tuesday June 8th for the cart to be put in rotation. I took a creative approach to the cart- using poetry and creative audio editing to announce the elections. Again, I figured that a creative non-traditional approach would attract non-traditional listeners to run.

Apparently, some members of the community responded by saying "we don't need poetry" and had the cart pulled. While station management seemed to be supportive of the approach (they suggested particular acoustics), the spanish and english carts stopped running.

Additional creative carts were made to support both the fund drive and the search for candidates. They were met with similar scorn.

Management suggested I meet with Mark Maxwell to give me advice around production because they had recieved complaint were made that the production quality of the carts was low. Mark Maxwell complimented me on the production quality and creativity of the carts and could not understand what the complaints were about besides the disaproval of my approach.

Tutorials

The coverage for tutorials, again, was very solid by my account. I had full support for the tutorial plan for 2 weeks (we had to wait until the end of a fund drive) and were able to play 3 and 5 minute long tutorials on the vast majority of programs.

I had difficulty getting tutorials to air until Jennifer Kiser and I came up with a rotation schedule for the carts. We were able to get tutorials in english and spanish to play in every time block and in most shows. The majority of tutorials were pre-produced and scheduled into the rotation through the board-op. Station management signed off on the plan and duly informed all board ops on their responsibility to play the tutorials.

The Program Manager and Assistant Station Manager and Spanish Block Liaison worked with me to communicate with key programming blocks to create or play unique tutorials.

Rumor had it that some programs were boycotting tutorials in attempt to stymie the election process.

In my opinion, and independent of the above statement, programmers need to be given more leeway to do creative approaches to tutorials. I was happy when the programmers played pieces critical of the election process while asking for candidates. This forwards a dialog and should be supported to the extent that good-will is shown to the ideals of discourse and conversation and exchange.

Campaign Phase

Candidate Carts

Candidate Cart production was rushed in attempt to show to the still complaining LSB that the elections were on. The carts began playing very soon after the close of the first phase of the election. I contracted a young NPR producer to help engineer the carts. He mixed the sound too high for some listeners who grumbled very loudly. I soon mixed the sound down, but not soon enough for LSB members who did not understand that once changes are made in my files, it takes a few days for changed files to enter the on-air rotation.

With the help of the Station Management, I made a solid candidate rotation schedule. 8 slots a day (7 english 1 spanish) every day. In each slot, 2 candidate carts were played. Following my schedule, each cart would have been played 30 times in a variety of days and times. The support I received here from station management here too was outstanding.

On-air Forums

Jennifer Kiser first suggested that we hire Michael Sanchez to do the on-air forum. I thought this was a good idea and I volunteered to pay him out of my own pockets. Jennifer approached Michael with our proposal and I approached Les and Renee with the idea.

Final Notes

In the early period of my employment, I made robust efforts to gather candidates from institutionally placed, progressive institutions. This failed because of a perception that the current Pacifica Management structure does not support a healthy environment that would justify the commitment necessary.

I tried creative approaches to both outreach and on-air publicity- going with non-traditional messaging and scheduling events at non-traditional venues. While I had support for this from station management, others were very unhappy with this approach. Unfortunately those who doubted the actions never were clear in their criticisms and did not offer advice in advance.

Pacifica and KPFK have many silent and tacit supporters who are waiting with dwindling patience for the stations to do the serious work at hand and end infighting. It is far better for the stations, in my opinion, to move forward with one plan (any plan) and fail then for them to stagnate in political intrigue.

I found the station management and staff to be quite helpful and competent. It took time to find a working relationship with some of them, but having found their trust and confidence, they were all outstanding.

A more concerted effort to instill an ethic of solidarity and collaboration within the station and broader community would go very far.

The network still has a lot of potential and will undoubtedly overcome its issues- the potential far outweighs the problems. This is clear.