

2010

Local Election
Supervisor

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**[FINAL ELECTION REPORT–
KPFT]**

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Executive Summary

The following report is intended to provide information for future election supervisors such that mistakes and successes experienced by myself can be shared to make the election job of others easier. Prior to beginning on Jun 1, I read reports from prior election supervisors from all stations and found it very helpful. One of the first actions I took was to call all current Board Members and I learned a lot from them about what worked and didn't work in prior elections.

The key factors that made this election a success in my eyes are the following:

1. I had full cooperation from KPFT management, staff and LSB.
2. The NES was in constant communication and information flowed quickly and efficiently.
3. Materials were made available to us before we began working at the station. Materials included a manual that explained the entire process, reports from previous years that gave us insight into successes and challenges of prior elections and sample CARTS to begin recording.
4. I was exacting in my requirements and follow-thru of play times of candidate statements.
5. I was able to get PSA's on immediately and I was able to get on the shows of most programs in Jun to promote the nomination phase of the election.

6. PSA's were continually created and played to explain each step of the process.
7. Random.org was a useful site for allowing for random sequencing of candidates whenever I needed that. (Particularly helpful for determining order of candidates every time we had an on-air or community candidate forum.)

In each section, I have included two categories: 1) What I wish I would have done differently; 2) Recommendations for improvement at the national level. In including these categories, my goal is to provide information at the local and the national level for ways to improve the process.

Finally, I have included recommendations for changing the election bylaws. I know this is not an easy process and I know many people will be involved in this discussion. My suggestions are intended to begin this discussion and in no way am I suggesting that these suggestions are the "be all to end all". I hope to provide thought starters that will assist in improving this very cumbersome process.

Introduction

Pacifica's election process is cumbersome and too much for one person to do. It was not until I was fully in the process that I realized I had taken on more than I considered. Two simultaneous elections are being conducted, one for staff and one for listeners. Staff and listeners were constantly confused by this and each could not understand why they could not vote for the other. In the election bylaws section, I have made recommendations to ease this process and make it less confusing for all.

My background is in political science; I have run a Congressional election campaign in California and have spent time in D.C. as a grassroots lobbyist and organizer. I am well versed in the political process and understand elections. The integrity of any election is of utmost importance. There were many concerns about the fairness and integrity of the election process at KPFT and I recommend that this be an election supervisor's main focus. Anything you can do to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and that there is integrity in the process will go a long way in allowing people to trust the decisions you make.

I also have a background in mediation and nonviolent communication and I found this to be invaluable. There were several situations that occurred where candidates were upset with programmers, or staff or each other. Also, some Board Members had concerns or were upset about decisions I made. I found it very helpful to be able to skillfully handle these conversations and/or situations. Again, this is the nature of any election and is to be expected.

As you read through this report, what you may not be able to detect is all the communication that happened before anything else happened. There is a saying: First

you explain to people what you are going to do, then you remind them what you explained you are going to do, then you do it and then you remind them what you did.

I worked hard to be in clear and constant communication with candidates. As hard as I worked at this, because I had 24 candidates, I had to rely on email a lot. I found this was not sufficient and I had to call people before each major event to make sure we were on the same page, etc. My recommendation for the next election supervisor is to hold regular conference calls every 2-3 weeks and candidates can feel free to join if they have questions.

In summation, I believe the most important areas to focus on in order to be successful are the following: treating all candidates fairly and impartially; maintaining integrity of the process; and having clear and easy ways to communicate with the candidates.

Nomination Phase

I was fortunate to have PSA's begin playing on day 1 (Jun 1). The program manager contacted me to come in and record PSA's so that we could get the nomination phase started. I and/or Board Members were also on most of the programs during June, so I was able to get the word out in that way. Every time someone contacted me by phone or by email or through the website, I followed up immediately. I think what helped candidates the most was the petition party to assist them in getting signatures. I held these on Jun 29 and Jun 30 and had lots of food and snacks and we had PSA's playing to invite listener members to come in and meet candidates and sign their petitions.

We ended up with 23 listener candidates and 5 staff candidates. We needed 6 staff candidates and so had to extend. Due to the extension, we got 2 more listener candidate and 3 more staff candidates. (One listener candidate ended up having to drop out of the election, so we had ended up having 24 listener candidates that people could vote for.) **Please note: I do not think KPFT should have extended to accommodate staff candidates. If staff candidates are not motivated enough to honor the process, we should have gone with what we had. We were electing 3 staff, so there was still enough choice in having 5 candidates.**

What I wish I would have done differently: I wish that I had done the petition parties a few days apart. Two nights in a row was a bit much. I think a few days apart would have been better.

Recommendation for improvement at the national level: End the nomination phase at 9PM and end it on a Saturday to allow people to get things completed. So

many people work during the week and a weekend ending time may suit everyone better. We need a part-time person to manage the staff process during June. There is a lot to be done with staff and listener candidates and it is difficult for one person to do all of this and do it well. Had someone been dedicated to working with staff, we would not have needed to extend.

Candidate Packet – provide space for City/State/Zip. I had to follow up with a lot of candidates to get this information. The candidate packet asked for address, but didn't ask specifically for City/State/Zip, so a lot of people didn't include that.

Include a checklist with the Candidate Packet so that the candidates have to check off each thing they need. While it was listed in the packet, candidates were still confused. If it was an actual checklist and it was on the top of the packet and they had to check everything off, it might be clearer for them. On the checklist, include their name and their email address and their preferred phone numbers for contacting them. I made my own checklist and it was very helpful to have everyone's information in one spot. It also served as a way to make sure everything was in and was useful for ongoing items I had to track. (See Appendix.)

Campaign Phase

I had the good fortune of having a very cooperative staff and management in getting carts played and in having office space. We had 24 candidates and we played candidate statements hourly on many days. We began playing statements on Aug 2

and played through Sep 6. Except for 10 days that a fund drive occurred and 1 day that a Pacifica National Archive day-long fund drive occurred, candidate statements played every day.

Each candidate's statement played 35 times over the course of a few weeks. While it was very time consuming, I verified that each statement played by listening to the radio and by reviewing archives. I always had my spreadsheet with me so if I was listening in the car, at home, or at KPFT, I could check off when a statement played.

A spreadsheet allowed me to see what time everyone played so that when I created the next schedule, it was easy to see what the next rotation should be. It was also easy to keep track of how many times each statement played by keeping track on a spreadsheet. I also sent the spreadsheet out to all candidates at least 2-3 times weekly so everyone could see when everyone was playing. This made the process open and transparent. I used aliases so that programmers would not know who they were playing. (There was concern among some candidates that programmers would not play certain candidates, so assigning aliases is how I addressed that concern.) This area had the highest potential for dissatisfaction among candidates, so I spent a lot of time making sure this was a fair process and that everyone got played consistently.

Candidate Forums for Listeners and Staff:

Listeners

- Candidate On-Air Forums as of Jul 15

- Aug 23–27 from 9AM – 10AM
 - Format: Each candidate interviewed for 10 minutes. I took questions from information listed on candidate statements. The goal was to allow listeners to hear what candidates stand for, and how they intend to accomplish their objectives, etc... These 10 minute interviews were added to the candidate statement web page.
- Sep 6 –10 from Noon –1PM
 - Format: We had 2 candidates on for 30 minutes and they took questions from me and from callers. We had 4 candidates per hour and we did this Mon – Fri and completed all 24 candidates that way.
- Sep 20–24 from 6PM–7PM
 - Format: Due to FCP violations, we had 3 fewer candidates this week plus a couple of candidates could not make it this week. For most of this week, I had on 2 candidates and interviewed them per each 30 minute segment, same format as above. For filler on the days I had only 2 candidates, we played an 18 minute interview with Les Radke explaining STV. There was a part one and a part two and both were 15–18 minutes in length.
- Listener Candidate Community Forums
 - Sun Aug 29 from 3PM–6PM at Houston Institute for Culture

- Format: 5 Candidates at a time had opening statements of 1 minute each. We took 2 questions from the audience per round, and each of these 5 candidates had 1 minute to respond. Audience participant had 1 minute to ask their question. We had a timekeeper and time was strictly kept. Everyone had a 10 second warning to wrap up. If there were no questions from the audience, I had questions prepared to ask. I sent those questions to candidates, a week in advance of the forum.
 - We did 3 rounds of 5 candidates each and then took a mingling break for 20 minutes. Snacks were provided.
 - We returned and completed final 2 rounds of candidates.
 - We had closing remarks of 1 minute from each candidate. We went in reverse order from how we began. The last 5 candidates presented their closing statements first, and the first 5 candidates presented their closing statements last.
- Sun Sep 12 from 3PM–6PM at Houston Institute for Culture
 - I did something creative for the second forum – a talent show. Candidates displayed a talent based on some aspect of the mission statement and had 3 minutes to do a skit. It turned out to be a lot of fun!
 - We took a food break after the skit.

- Candidates came back and answered a couple of questions from myself and/or the audience, with 1 minute answers and then did a one minute concluding statement. It was a very smooth process.

Staff

- Staff Candidate Forum – Monday Sep 13 6-7:30 PM Sandwiches and snacks. This was an informal process. We had about 15 in attendance and candidates took a few minutes to explain their platform and took questions from staff.
- Staff Candidate Forum – Sunday Sep 19 Noon – 1:30 PM Pizza served. Same process as above.

Training Calls for Listener Candidates:

In addition to candidate forums and on-air forums, I had a series of conference calls for the candidates:

- Les Radke talked about the formation of the Bylaws and talked about the Specific Powers and Duties of the LSB and briefly explained STV.
- Bill Crosier explained the Bylaws that pertain to the Specific Powers and Duties of the LSB and talked about KPFT committees.
- Les Radke explained STV in depth

What I wish I would have done differently: I recorded 2 – 1 minute carts for each candidate. That turned out to be a lot of work. I think a one minute statement is

sufficient. I also should have recorded only 45 seconds for each candidate...by the time I put the station ID and the disclaimer after each statement, they were too long and I had to do a lot of editing to get them to 1 minute.

Recommendation for improvement at the national level: I recommend only 2 on-air candidate forums and that one of these be a 10 minute one-on-one interview that is posted to the candidate website. The candidate website was an EXCELLENT idea! It was great to be able to refer people to that site for information about the candidates. I recommend only 1 candidate community forum. I realize this probably requires changes in the election bylaws, nonetheless, it seems as though most people get their information from the airwaves, the website and the candidate booklets. I also recommend staff and listener candidates do forums together and I recommend staff candidates be part of the on-air forums and that everyone be able to vote for listeners and staff. More on this in recommended changes to election bylaws.

Ballot Reissuing and Receipt Phase

CARTS played continually to remind people of the deadline to receive ballots, and of the reissuing process for those who did not receive a ballot or who misplaced their ballot. We also had a cart explaining the decision to send candidate booklets separate from the ballots, so listeners would know they were coming. We began playing the carts the first week of Sep and the General Manager recorded carts in his voice and I recorded carts in my voice. Carts played every couple of hours.

Listener Ballots Reissued 76

Staff Ballots Reissued 18

Ballot Pick Up Results	Sep 8	193 Listener & Staff Envelopes
	Sep 15	114 Listener Envelopes/ 4 Staff Envelopes
	Sep 22	81 Listener Envelopes/10 Staff Envelopes
	Sep 29	250 Listener Envelopes/10 Staff Envelopes
	Sep 30	100 Listener Envelopes/ 7 Staff Envelopes
	Oct 1	6 Listener Envelopes (Final P.O. pick-up for

ballots that can be counted in the election.)

Oct 1 125 Listener Envelopes/17 Staff Envelopes*

Oct 21 2 Listener Envelopes (Final Post Office Pick
Up/Not able to count these ballots, because
they came in after Sep 30.)

*Collected ballots at the station on Sep 29 and Sep 30. We had almost 150 people come thru on both of these days. This was an important part of the process. I think if we end phases on a Saturday at 9PM to allow more people to take advantage of coming to the station and to have reasonable hours, this may provide better opportunities for increasing turnout. We promoted this station ballot collection with on-air carts for a full week and also every couple of hours on the days we were there. In the cart, we asked people to not mail the ballots past a certain date.

There were a few people for whom I sent replacement ballots by email and they scanned and returned to me by email. These are difficult to count in the scanning process, so I would discourage this and only do it if necessary.

What I wish I would have done differently: I picked up the ballots every Wednesday and locked them in a filing cabinet. They were securely wrapped and intact when we counted the ballots, but there were many concerns about the ballots being kept at the station. Last year, Mail Boxes Etc. was used and they had space to store the ballots for us. I recommend doing this next time so that no one is concerned about the safety of the ballots.

We went 23 rounds in the ballot counting phase. In all the tutorials I did with Les Radke, I wish that I had recommended that people rank all the candidates.

Recommendation for improvement at the national level: There was some confusion about candidate statements being mailed with the ballots. There was a decision made by the PNB after the ballots were at the mailing house. The candidate statements arrived long after the ballots. If statements are going to be mailed, this is something that should be done at the time the ballots are mailed, or not done at all. People seemed to be satisfied that they were available at the station or that I could mail to them. Perhaps this option is the least costly and makes more sense.

BALLOT COUNTING PHASE

We did the ballot count at a local church that is very supportive of KPFT. The contact was Brandi Henley at St. Paul's United Methodist Church at 5501 Main Street. They had set up an electronic screen that was 4'x 3' and it made it very easy for everyone to review the ballots being scanned and to verify the process of counting the votes.

We had 6 people to help open envelopes (We had approximately 900 envelopes) and it went very quickly. After all envelopes were opened, we had people go thru them again; a few checks were found in the envelopes. We collected \$842 in checks that day.

Election Results:

- Listener Ballots - 854 valid ballots.

Electing 9 candidates.

Winning threshold is 86 votes.

There were 9 invalid ballots.

(863 total ballots processed.)

Elected Jomonica Phoenix

Teresa Allen

Ruth Nasrullah

Jim Krafka

Jim Boyd

Ted Weisgal

Doc Dougherty

Kevin White

Darelle Robbins

Alternate Joseph Kaye

- Staff Ballots - 65 valid ballots.

Electing 3 candidates.

Winning threshold is 17 votes.

There was 1 invalid ballot.

(66 total ballots processed.)

Elected Eddie Garcia

Jessica Apolinar

Tony Cox

Alternate George Reiter

What I wish I would have done differently:

- I wish that I had given everyone ground rules before we began. I had one individual in particular who wanted to rehash decisions made during the campaign phase and she was also talking about various candidates and programmers in unfavorable ways. I had to keep reminding her that if she was

going to be involved in this process, she needed to be impartial. Had I had ground rules set, I could have avoided this.

- I wish that I had let candidates know ahead of time how I was going to communicate to them who won. I called each person individually, and had I asked ahead of time, some people may have wanted an email, some people could have called me etc....I wanted to contact everyone before we posted the results.
- One of the Board Members was not satisfied that all the envelopes had been thoroughly searched for checks and ballots and wanted to go through them a third time. If we had a procedure in place whereby on the second time we go through the envelopes, we slit open two more sides so we can turn the envelope inside out, then this will prevent any concerns anyone might have about residual checks and ballots being in the envelopes.

Recommendation for improvement at the national level: Our ballot receipt phase ended at midnight on September 30. We had to wait until October 19 for the ballot count. I recommend review of this process so that ballots can be counted immediately. More on this in section on recommended bylaw changes.

From reviewing the ballots, it was clear that a lot of people did not understand the importance of ranking and how to do it. I think the ballot instructions could be more detailed. I played interviews with Les Radke to explain the STV process and we had on-air carts, but I think having something written and with examples, for people to review while they are completing the ballot, may be the most helpful.

Recommendations for Changes in Election Bylaws

- ✓ Reduce number of people on the Board from 24 to 15[12 Listeners and 3 Staff]
- ✓ Hold an election for everyone on the Board every two years (serve two year term), or every three years (serve three year term).
- ✓ Have everyone vote for Listeners and Staff Candidates
- ✓ Allow for flexibility in each location as to number of community forums and on-air forums. Minimum number could be 2 on-air forums and community forums optional or minimum of 1 community forum.
- ✓ Candidate Statement playing time reduced from 30x to 20x. Listeners are getting turned off by saturation of candidate statements. When you have 24 candidates, as we did...it requires them being played hourly every single day. Have other special circumstances if you have more than 30 candidates and leave it open in the bylaws, to be decided by LES and NES, as to what the playing times will be.
- ✓ Simplify the voting process by asking people to rank all candidates, 1-24. (If you have 24 candidates) In our ballot counting, we went 23 rounds, so it would have helped if everyone had ranked more candidates.
- ✓ Begin the process earlier in the year. We received a lot of criticism for doing so much for KPFT's election and not doing much for the local and national elections. Of course, part of the reason for this is not all candidates will come on KPFT. But perception is reality for many people, so this might go a long way in satisfying the needs of some listeners---to have Pacifica elections during times when we are not competing with the November elections.

- ✓ Do not have all five cities' elections at the same time. Do L.A. and Berkeley one year and do Houston/D.C./New York the next year. Time it so that the NES is hired during most of this entire process. This will allow for more focused attention for each election and quicker counting of the ballots. NES will also be able to give more support and attention to each city. As it stands now, nobody has enough time to do any of their jobs thoroughly.
- ✓ We need more variety in people serving on the Boards. Allow people to serve two terms and then have to sit out a term. Having only a year off is not enough time to allow for vacancies and encourage other people to run.

Conclusion

The success of the KPFT election would not have been possible without the cooperation of KPFT management and staff and the LSB. I discovered that many listeners, staff and Board Members have opinions about the elections and candidates and Board members. I repeatedly reminded people that I was not there to solve any problems or make judgments about KPFT or the Board. My job was to run a fair election. As soon as I reminded people of this, I found people to be very respectful of the job I wanted to do; they stopped their conversation and realized I did not want to take sides or get myself in the middle of any unresolved issues.

I also discovered that many people realize the bylaws were written at a time when people felt very fearful and distrusting and the bylaws reflect that. Most people I talked to would like to simplify the bylaws and realize the election process is a complicated one and is a financial burden to KPFT.

I enjoyed this job. I loved the diversity of candidates that went thru the election, the depth of caring everyone brought to the process and I deeply respected the hard work that everyone did to run for the Board.

Even though I loved the job, as I indicated in many ways in this report, this job was too much for one person to do. Even though I had volunteers to help, because of the importance of integrity in this process, there were certain things that only I could do,

and so I could not delegate a lot of duties. Or even if I had help, it was something I also had to participate in. The only way I would do this job again is under three conditions:

1. I was able to begin May 1 instead of Jun 1 and have more time to get everything done, or
2. I have a part-time person in June to help with all the staff duties that need to be done, e.g.,
 - a. Fair Campaign Provisions signed
 - b. Gather all staff information, such as emails, addresses, phone numbers
 - c. Verify who all the staff are
 - d. Contact all staff to arrange for me and/or Board Members to come on their shows and talk about the elections and then call back to verify and remind them of upcoming arrangement
 - e. In order to do all of this, a person needs to be at the station at varied times, specifically to catch staff when they come in for their shows
 - f. Recruit staff to run for the Board and follow-thru with completion of their paperwork so that we do not have to extend the nomination phase

One final word, because there is a very good manual that was created by the NES, many of the items in there are not addressed here. If something worked and it was in the manual, it is not necessarily included in this report. I highly recommend the use of that manual as a starting point to figure out your road map and then fill in the gaps by reading everyone's final reports.