

Program Committee Minutes, 14 April 2009

Present: Rabia Yeaman (chair), Jamilah Bourdon (secretary), Jay Bozich, S.W. Conser (Conch), Rich Lindsay, Per Fagering, Bill Resnick, Chris Merrick, Roger Warner, Bill Zimmerman, Kathleen Stephenson, Linda Olson-Osterlund

Absent: Daniel Flessas, Tony Alabi, Jade Pekkala, Reggie Bob Hamilton

Guest: Ani Haines

REPORTS:

Kathleen: At the staff meeting, information was shared about the NFCB conference. She is also getting ready for the membership drive, which begins on the 1st of May. There will be a May Day special on that day.

Ani: The spring membership drive pitching trainings are happening in the next thirteen days; there is a need for program hosts to sign up. The 'how to pledge' thing has changed. It begins on the 16th, for two hours. On Thursday it will be from 7-9 pm, on Saturday from 12:30 to 2:30 pm and Sunday from 2-4. On Monday it will be from Noon to 2 pm. On Wednesday it will be from 3-5 pm. The staff will send out information about this.

Jenka: She had a good time at the NFCB conference. \$4000 was raised at the Amy Goodman event this past week-end. Next Friday there is a special on Political Prisoners in the U.S. There is help needed for the May Day special on the 1st of May. The theme for the drive is 'Spring Into Action'.

Chris: There needs to be some sort of standardizing, in order to show a checklist to programmers, to improve upon programming. He is also working on specials for the drive. He is working with Andrew on thank-you gifts for the drive. The deadline for the guide is this Friday. The goal for each day of the drive is \$8,000 a day. He stated that the programmers need to work with pitchers to generate a response from listeners. He stated that at the NFCB conference it was stated that some stations hold programmers accountable, in terms of requiring commitments. There is a mid-year budget review; this year, there is a fairly large deficit. Chris stated that he is also dealing with personnel issues. This takes up a portion of his time.

Jay Bozich discussed the turntables in the air room being altered; neither John Mackey nor Toby (Dr. Zomb) Hardman were there to present proposals or ideas. The both of them are also involved with the changes in the air room. John is looking to move the first microphone in the air room; that microphone will be moved to where the turntables are. Toby wrote a narrative of what is going on in the air room. The turntables will ultimately move higher.

John Mackey wanted to state that there are possible failures in the wires when the turntables are moved; if a wire breaks, there will be a buzz. His concern also is if the turntables are moved constantly they will be out of balance. Chris added that a microphone is being moved in front of turntables, so a deejay could just announce while at the turntables. A fourth microphone may be added later. He mentioned that the money is in the budget; the committee is just to be asked to approve.

Jay continued: Toby is building the structure. Once everything is structured, it should take a couple of days during the off-hours (during public affairs, 'democracy now', etc.). John will be working on microphones. Jay and Toby are working on turntables. This change will not be happening during the drive. This change is also not going to affect the board. All the boxes and shelves on the wall will be moved to the back.

CONSENSUS: The committee has approved this project.

Bill Zimmerman asked if there was any real way to contact the board operator/engineer during public affairs. Steve Nassar has been looking into chatting with hosts on the computer.

In the Marilyn Pittman training, there was a question of the ability as a talk show host to drop a call. If there is a possibility of putting in a line selector unit, the host needs to be aware of what line is on.

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Regarding the timeline for the programming changes this year:  
Kathleen's sabbatical begins around June. We need to help her with any changes with the schedule by the first of June.

Should there be more or less public affairs programming, between noon and 4:00 pm? Arthur has asked to look at the talk strip from 8:00 - 9:00 am. Kathleen has gotten some new proposals. By the next meeting (after the spring drive) we may finally see how the changes have worked. Linda asked if there will be any Arbitron reports on how Democracy Now is doing. There is information from last quarter. At this point the committee made a request from Andrew to obtain Arbitron reports on the changes from last quarter, in particular Democracy Now.

The finance committee is getting freaked out by the deficit. There is the question of if the programming committee is going to prioritize anything by July. The response to the finance committee is that we are following the timeline. Chris also stated that during this drive, the morning shows may have problems due to the newest changes because people may not know when the shows are on. There was a question of the state of the economy, in relation to people being able to contribute to the drive. Jenka responded that the state of the economy was addressed at the NFCB conference, and it was stated that the economy usually does not effect how people give their money.

Kathleen mentioned that the configuration from 9:00 - noon should be given a chance to solidify. She does not have an easy answer to improve it, even though she knows it is not perfect. She would start with one show at a time. She asked if people want talk radio at all? Do they want it without calls, or fewer calls? Should there be syndicated programming instead? Rabia stated that the evening programming has significantly improved, now we need to look at the morning programming. She acknowledged how hard that was for Kathleen. The schedule improvements help listeners find us, but bad radio makes people turn the whole thing off. Jenka stated that we should go over what the new proposals are, and that it's a question of individual shows at this point, before June 1.

Linda stated that we should address Kathleen's general questions now, and **then** deal with Jenka's proposal/suggestion. She also said that she liked talk radio in general.

Roger wished for more opposing callers to the hosts. Bill Z. mentioned that call-ins disrupt the show sometimes. He stated that callers should be on point. Jamilah said it should be up to the host to encourage opposing views, and to keep folks to the point. Conch said that the topic should be interesting, but the guest cannot give the base arguments of what the point is. Both the host and guest(s) should be knowledgeable of the subject. Rich said that the host could compel people to overcome their shyness to call. Per wished for more debate and discussion. Bill R. wished the hosts would stay on topic. He felt that screening the calls was good. It is also a good idea to set up calls by people in order to stick to the subject.

Chris mentioned that there were technical issues, and the quality of the host needed to be worked on and solved by the first of June. Look at the individual hosts and look at how the content should be presented. He mentioned that listeners also like produced material. Rabia asked that working on a show takes a lot of time, but if you want a radio show why not work on it? The host needs:

- objectivity/neutrality, plus knowledge.
- the ability to control and steer conversations.

Jenka opined that talk radio is not working in her opinion. She does not know if we have the resources to make changes. She also mentioned that a lot of people listening to radio are getting ready for work, and for this reason talk radio is on at the wrong time. She suggested that Flashpoints could be on at 8:00 am, and

produced public affairs could be on at 9:00 am. She also suggested with that, there be no calls; the hosts could just do interviews. This could be better.

Chris suggested we keep talk radio on. There are systemic issues: professional and personally. Is there something else that will improve what already exists? He suggested looking at how many people call in, and how often people call in during the drive. Also, next month, do we look at presentation and quality for all of the talk shows?

Kathleen led a list of options, in terms of the possibilities of the morning schedule. Some of these were rife with issues and suggestions:

- call-in talk radio (alternative hosts?)
- newscasts (vibrant team)
- interviews
- syndication
- music
- silence
- debate (production team)
- lectures/readings (field recording crew/scheduling)
- commentary

Jenka mentioned that the strength of talk radio is that it could be flexible. Linda mentioned that screening could help with encouraging new callers..

Chris then led a list of 'immediate emotional responses', in terms of listening to talk radio:

GOOD:

- energy
- prepared for topic
- guests (live/phone)
- computer as a tool
- radical political perspectives
- materials available as needed
- directing the show
- articulate
- community connection

BAD:

- no topic
- rudeness
- axe to grind
- punditry
- filler

In terms of collectives, Jay responded that with them, you can't get a steady expectation of what's going to happen, but at the same time when they exist you de-personalize the time slot.

Conch mentioned that the point of all this should be about increasing numbers of listeners- those people just arriving in Portland.

We are scheduling another Retreat at Linda's house on Tuesday, April 28, we will send agenda and directions to the committee later.

The next programming meeting is on the 12th of May.

Jay made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm; Roger seconded.