

## “THE COALITION TO TAKE BACK WBAI”

### \*\*\* Newsletter \*\*\*

This news letter is brought to you by **The Coalition to Take Back WBAI**. We are a group of concerned listeners and producers who are disappointed and frustrated with WBAI's present programming and what is an apparent corporate driven direction. We have been meeting since the 2009 Coup to design methods and create strategies to defy the gag rule and get information to the public about what is actually happening at WBAI/Pacifica. We are motivated by a love for WBAI and the knowledge that much of what we have been told by WBAI's new management regarding the financial health of the station and the network is untrue.

### Here We Go Again!

According to information that has been widely distributed by the present administration the financial health of WBAI is on the upswing and premiums are getting out to subscribers in a timely fashion. However, we know that these statements are not true.

As concerned listeners and producers, we find it quite revealing that once again WBAI has been forced to go into fundraising mode. We also know that many listeners who subscribed over the last two years are complaining that after several drives they have not yet received the premiums they paid for. In response to an increasing number of complaints that have been flooding the pledge room, management initiated an anger diversion scheme. You may now call a phone number to log your complaint and let staff know that after many months of waiting and listening to on air pronouncements that all premium issues have been resolved; you have not yet gotten your premium. This new procedure is merely a pacification tactic and does not guarantee that subscribers will get their premiums any sooner.

Although the last drive was “marketed”

as a “mini-drive” a 19-day fund drive during the month of July with a four day extension is closer to an act of overt desperation than it is to being a “mini- drive.” Even the most novice fund raising strategist understands that the summer months are notoriously unsuccessful periods for on-air fundraising unless you are really desperate.

The projected goal of this past drive was \$650,000. As of Monday, July 25th the amount pledged was \$269,091. This amount represented a shortfall of \$206,909. In order to meet the goal the daily tally had to average \$34,210 per day. The actual daily average was closer to \$19,000 per day. Management and some producers are claiming that the final tally is \$530,000.00. Even with the four day extension that's **\$120,000** short of the goal. When you factor in the escalating cost of premiums the shortfall is much greater.

This shortfall strongly suggests that the program changes that were made are not working and that the financial information that we are receiving from the present management is at best incorrect.

## What's the Real Deal?

There are several issues that need to be addressed immediately if WBAI & Pacifica are going to survive. The station's present direction is based on a series of fundamentally unsound suppositions imposed by multi-millionaire Local Station Board member Steve Brown ([www.whoisstevebrown.info](http://www.whoisstevebrown.info)). For the past seven years Mr. Brown has been calling for the return of Gary Null as the answer to both WBAI's and Pacifica's financial problems. In order to achieve his goal's locally; Brown and the new board majority illegally fired the Program Director, Bernard White, and removed producers who publicly questioned their actions as well as all producers who were in the noon time slot. They also took the opportunity to remove progressive, community based producers, primarily those of color whose programming they deemed objectionable. The new board majority made these changes within days after the 2009 takeover.

## What Have We Learned?

### We have learned that this new direction is not working:

- Because so many locally based producers have been removed or moved to the periphery of the broadcast lineup, WBAI has lost its sense of immediacy and its organic linkage with its listeners. It has also lost many of its most loyal supporters who no longer contribute as much or listen as often as they used to.
- Most of the new programs are not holding their weight. They actually disappear during each drive and reappear once the drive is completed. The new producers have not successfully developed an audience base greater than those whom they've replaced. The new majority falsely believes that there are thousands of white middle-class listeners who are waiting to subscribe as soon as WBAI is reshaped into their image. This of course means the removal and marginalization of progressives and people of color.
- The fund drives have gotten longer, more frequent and are not achieving their modest goals. Although we have been informed that revenue has increased net income has in fact decreased.
- The new management and the present board majority have neither new nor viable ideas. That is why during many of the drives it's almost non-stop Gary Null, Gwen Scott, Healing Cancer from the Inside or Zeitgeist. The monotony and lack of creativity has driven thousands of listeners to seek out more relevant less grating media. In addition important breaking news frequently gets ignored.

WBAI is falling deeper and deeper into an abyss. Given its present course at some point in the not too distant future the damage may become irreversible. Now is the time to challenge the board and WBAI's management to organize intelligently, with community input to stop the destruction of our station. If you would like to keep informed about what is in fact happening at WBAI/Pacifica check out: [www.TakeBackWBAI.org](http://www.TakeBackWBAI.org).

As a former producer used to say, "Until next time, Stay Strong and Pay Close Attention."