

Members & Supporters

of WPFW - 89.3 FM

dedicated to protecting our community treasure

WPFW Mission Statement

The purpose of WPFW-FM Pacifica is to provide outlets for the creative skills and energies of the community, to contribute to a lasting understanding between individuals of all nations, races, creeds and colors, and to promote the full distribution of public information.

Programming on WPFW will principally be a mix of jazz, Third World music, news and public affairs.

The airwaves at 89.3 will be an accessible media outlet for Blacks, Hispanics, cultural groups, women, seniors, youth and other ethnic and non-traditional groups.

WPFW programming will make the concept of community radio real by providing the local majority population with important and relevant education, information and entertainment. Through its programming the station will act as a networking agent for the community at large.

WPFW's air will be commercial free and in conformance with Pacifica Foundation resolutions prohibiting commercial underwriting of programming.

Programming will lend itself to on-air listener participation, will strive to exemplify journalistic integrity, and will work toward being engaging and intellectually stimulating.

Jazz, a major American art form which grows from the African-American experience, will be the major music programming. WPFW will act as archivist, educator, and entertainer on behalf of this underserved national cultural resource.

WPFW is dedicated to programming which reflects progressive social change and democracy. The station will continue and further a global, humanistic, and futuristic approach to news, public affairs, the creative arts and cultural programming. Internally WPFW will work to upgrade the quality of work at all levels.

Our continued use of and high regard for volunteers will provide an opportunity for individual skill development in radio broadcast techniques, and broadcast management. Volunteer opportunities will be available in most areas of program administration.

Michelle Price-Johnson
Interim General Manager
WPFW 89.3 FM
1819 L Street NW, Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20036

October 7, 2013

Dear Michelle,

Thank you for your warm welcome on the airwaves and by letter to the listeners and programmers of the station. In turn, the Concerned Members and Supporters of WPFW—comprised of hundreds of listener- and staff-members of DC's jazz and justice station—welcome you to the DMV.

We are also eager to move forward past the issues of our recent general manager and put the station back on firm footing. WPFW has a proud 36-year tradition of being a self-sustaining beacon of progressive programming in this region and we want our mission, as well as the fact that we know our market and listeners, acknowledged and respected.

With this spirit of mutual respect, we would like to offer the following concerns and recommendations as we move forward.

—The 2012 Programming Grid Must Be Restored

Much of the current financial slide and low morale at WPFW occurred after the former general manager forced a unilateral grid change in late 2012, eliminating much of our jazz programming and removing or moving several popular public affairs shows. While we recognize that some changes were needed, we ask to you to work with us to restore our program grid, even if temporarily, so that our shows can be properly evaluated and our station can maintain its mission.

—A 'WE ARE BACK' Campaign

In the same vein, we support the motion put forward by our Local Station Board representative Jane Gatewood that WPFW will not be able to regain its listenership without a campaign announcing that WE ARE BACK—WE LISTENED TO YOU—AND WE ARE MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER. After the grid change, many listeners made protest pledges that would not be honored until John Hughes was removed and the grid was restored. By mounting this campaign, which can also include the fact that we have regained full broadcasting power, we can welcome back longtime listeners and their dollars. To be most successful, this campaign will include media beyond our own airwaves, with paid advertisements, social media and press outreach.

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—The Mission of WPFW for Local Programming Must be Maintained

We thank you for your interest in supporting and encouraging our beleaguered volunteer programmers to continue to do their best. To that end, we want more station resources prioritized for production and engineering support for shows from our community—per our mission. While some exceptional programming maybe imported, our mission is for programming that comes from and reflects our metropolitan area. Until recently, when fund drives became more frequent, longer and marred by unfulfilled thank you gifts, our local programming was generously supported by the community and we want that tradition respected and upheld. Importing or airing canned programming disrespects our programmers and listeners. We do not agree that importing other programming is a winning strategy for regaining our financial and community footing. While we understand the emergency nature of the Fall 2013 fund drive, we need to confirm that the shocking, constant airing of imported pitches for health food and supplements, meditation CDs and other products is not planned for a permanent place on our grid. Disturbingly, some programmers were told by the interim program director that they were being pre-empted because they failed to raise x-amount of dollars in the previous week, as listeners still have not returned to the station and as imported programming raised no more money than the shows it replaced. Contrary to some reports from your office, this extended fund drive has not exceeded the successes of our past drives.

We also take exception to the role of Gary Null in continuing to disrespect the entire radio community with disparaging on-air comments. While all other programmers are banned from making such comments, Null reserves unto himself a place of privilege. He announced several times on-air that if John Hughes was removed that he would leave as well. Having so firmly entrenched himself with the former failed management, we wish that he would either keep his promise or refrain from his attacks and make an on-air apology. Null must be held to the same standard of conduct and, even though he is a millionaire, be given no more rights than any other programmer. He should be returned to three days a week as per the former grid.

—There must be transparency and wise use of station funds

In order to maintain support of listeners and programmers, who supply the monetary lifeblood of the station, there must be transparency about the station's budget. A budget/treasurer's report could be posted monthly on the station website and a special update could be provided after every fund drive. Every dollar must be prioritized to enhance programming and fulfill our mission. Unnecessary, crony staff positions, such as an 'HR director' and "program coordinator" need to be eliminated. All staff needs to be evaluated in a fair and transparent process in which each employee can explain what they do and how well they do it for the benefit of the station. Staff that has been working at less than full-time must be restored to full-time. The development department must be completely revamped.

—Relocation, Infrastructure and Communications

While the immediate financial emergency is, we are sure, all consuming, WPFW needs to continue to search for a permanent home with the proper studio, office and community space. We need equipment that programmers can use to do more creative shows and segments, including on-location interviews, community events and concerts. The overall communications structure of the station, from email, to the phone system, to the website, needs overhaul.

As long-time members and investors in WPFW, we look forward to working with you in the coming weeks. We welcome your prompt and timely response.

Concerned Members and Supporters of WPFW

www.thepeopleforwlfw.com

email: thepeople4wlfw@gmail.com

snail mail: c/o 1526 Locust Road, NW
Washington, DC 20012

Cc: Summer Reese, Tony Bates, Pacifica National Board, WPFW Local Station Board

Email: thepeople4wlfw@gmail.com