

Hi everyone,

It's official: on Monday, February 28th, I start work at KPFA again. Legally speaking, Pacifica management is throwing in the towel. After three months of stonewalling, they have given our union a "make whole" offer for my grievance: that means they'll be putting me back on payroll, with back pay. Pacifica has basically conceded it can't win the pending arbitration over my dismissal. This is a victory for our union in enforcing its contract, and I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to CWA rep Christina Huggins for getting us this far.

This is not, however, a sign of sudden good will from Pacifica management. Pacifica has not offered to reinstate Morning Show co-host Aimee Allison--the grievance related to her dismissal is still headed to arbitration. Pacifica is also unwilling to let KPFA's management return The Morning Show to KPFA's airwaves--I'm to report back to work as a reporter in the news department, not part of the Morning Show team.

Now, I have no problem working with my friends and colleagues in the News Department. . . but I am in solidarity with Aimee, and with The Morning Show's unpaid segment hosts--like veteran labor journalist David Bacon.

Pacifica assured us, multiple times, that the only reason they took us off the air was for financial reasons. "If we had the money," Pacifica's counsel told me during an abortive seniority negotiation in December, "everyone would have their job back." Now they've been forced to put me back on payroll, and SaveKPFA has raised nearly \$63,000 in conditional pledges to support the return of the Morning Show--more than enough to pay Aimee's salary and benefits for a year. There is no longer any financial excuse for keeping the show off the air--by doing so, Pacifica is literally leaving money on the table.

Which exposes what is actually happening: not a necessary-but-painful budget-balancing move, but Pacifica's most significant national intervention in local programming since 1999. The move to replace The Morning Show's paid and unpaid programmers has completely sidelined KPFA's workers (who proposed alternatives to cuts), KPFA's elected local station board (which endorsed the workers' proposals), KPFA's local managers (who opposed the cuts, and quit over them), KPFA's listeners (who sent Pacifica over 2300 emails protesting the decimation of the Morning Show), and KPFA's new local management (which Pacifica has stripped of any authority to resolve the grievances from KPFA's workers and listeners).

This can't stand: we have to bring back Aimee, David, and the rest of The Morning Show.

We have a limited window in which to accomplish this: Pacifica's first-quarter financial results show KPFA is outperforming its budget by \$290,000. That's partly because Pacifica low-balled the budget it used to justify layoffs, and partly because of heroic fundraising efforts in December we should all be proud of. Right now, there's more than enough money to put Aimee back on payroll too.

But it won't necessarily last. During the present fund drive, pledging has plummeted in the mornings. If current trends persist, 6-10AM will raise \$130,000 less than it did during the same fund drive last year. Keep that up for a couple fund drives, and KPFA's surplus will be wiped out--which will provide Pacifica management a pretext for more retaliatory layoffs. Meanwhile, Pacifica is poised to burn through the money we have managed to raise: management's forcing all the other grievances from our union to binding arbitration, which means Pacifica will be paying its attorneys at Folger & Levin somewhere in the ballpark of \$400/hour to fight the \$20/hour workers who raise the money that's paying their bills. I don't think that's what our listeners have in mind when they pledge.

Luckily, things are starting to break our way. Despite the efforts of the Pacifica National Board faction that backed the gutting of The Morning Show to illegally extend their own terms, there's a saner group of people taking seats on this year's national board--hopefully, they don't want KPFA's money wasted any more than we do. That means we have two tasks in the coming weeks:

First, ramp up pressure on Pacifica management to restore local control to KPFA, and to restore The Morning Show to KPFA's airwaves. If you haven't already, sign up for campaign updates from [Savekpfa.org](http://Savekpfa.org).

Second, step up support for KPFA: we need to keep the station strong enough that Pacifica has no more excuses to make retaliatory layoffs. If you haven't already, pledge generously during a program you support this fund drive. (I've been unemployed for ten weeks, and I managed to cough up \$100 during David Gans's remarkable marathon last Saturday.) Better still: Come to one of the KPFA fundraisers organized by Bob Baldock--like the Russell Simmons event that Davey D is hosting tonight--Pacifica doesn't take any percentage of the dollars raised at KPFA events.

In solidarity,

Brian Edwards-Tiekert