

Don Mathisen Candidate Statement

Some say I was born a radio studio. I've held every radio job you can think of - disc jockey ... weatherman ... news writer ... police reporter ... investigative journalist ... news anchor ... executive producer ... Program Director ... even General Manager of a station with over a million listeners. I've worked in "commercial" radio at Bloomberg Multi-Media, NBC, WMCA, and WINS (ever hear Shadow Traffic?). And I've worked in "public" radio at WNYC, NPR, the BBC, even Gary Null's radio station.

So I know radio. And as a listener for 25 years, I know WBAI. That's why I'm running for the board. WBAI is in serious trouble. It is \$200,000 in debt. Membership has fallen to just 16,500 (in an area with over 19 million radio listeners!). The staff is fighting among themselves. And some of our best programmers - Gary Null and Robert Knight, among others - have been fired by for no apparent reason. According to official tallies, we lost 20% of our membership in just 12 months. The station is bankrupt, with no cash reserve. Can it be rescued? Absolutely! WBAI possesses one of the most powerful transmitters in the metropolitan area, and a potential audience of millions who are eager to hear and support its unique message and programming. But WBAI has been prevented from reaching out to this audience and has driven away a good part of the audience it used to have by a management (and a station board) that have not allowed WBAI to be WBAI.

Please understand that I do not know the management of WBAI personally. Nor do I know any of those who have controlled the governing board for the past 4 years. This faction, which I believe calls itself the JUC, probably means well. But as anyone can see, they do not know how to operate, manage or finance a public radio station.

But I do. I am neither a wizard nor a genius. But I have 30 years of solid experience in radio management and radio finances at stations of all sizes. I want to put this experience to work for WBAI as a member of the board. This election is especially important because WBAI has reached the "tipping point." If we fail to elect new board members who can bring fresh ideas and real-world radio solutions to WBAI's problems it may be too late, and WBAI could be lost. For the past 4 years, other Pacifica stations have paid our losses out of their own pockets. But they are now staggering under our burden, and we are dragging the whole network under. This is not fair, and it is not sensible.

Please elect me to a board seat, so I can give something back to the radio station that has given so much to all of us.

I hope you will also vote for James Ross, Bernardo Palombo, Lee McClure, Jennifer Jager, Carla Cubit, Seth Goldberg, Stefan Neutstatder, Gerald Sider, Bob Gold, Ken Laufer, Albert Solomon, and Pat Logan. Thank you.