

Bernardo Palombo Candidate Statement

“Estamos todos en el mismo barco, pero el barco hace agua ... WBAI esta a punto de hundirse.” (We are all in the same boat, but the boat is leaking ... and WBAI is about to sink.) That’s not one of Dick Cheney’s phony terror alerts. WBAI really is sinking. The radio station on which so many of us have depended “ for so long “ and for so much “ is bankrupt.

How did that happen? Simple. The management we hired to watch the station (and the board of directors we elected to watch the management) did not do their jobs.

They drove away thousands of listeners (and their financial support). They engineered the firing of Robert Knight and Gary Null simply for exercising their free speech. They inflamed racial tensions by making African-American-, White-, and Latino staff members fight each other for scarce air time.

Even sadder, they did not know what to do “ except watch “ as our membership declined to a mere 16,500, and daily revenues fell by half. WBAI now owes more than \$200,000 that it does not have, forcing more staff layoffs and loss of services.

But this doesn’t have to happen. WBAI has a powerful transmitter, a powerful message, and a potential audience of 19 million listeners with a powerful need to hear that message.

I know how to reach them, and how to enlist their support for the station. My own cultural foundation, El Taller, which I founded 28 years ago, faces and solves similar problems every day. My years of experience in gaining community support “ and managing non-profit finances “ can help rejuvenate WBAI by showing management how to reach receptive new audiences, not only in the Latino community (which now comprises more than 30% of New York City’s population), but also in the multitude of diverse cultural communities in which El Taller has been a dynamic and catalyzing force for over a quarter century.

When I came here from Argentina in 1969, I did what most immigrants do, wash dishes and work in a factory. Listening to WBAI helped form my personal vision of a just and creative society. I want to repay that. I can get well known artists to participate in WBAI benefits. I maintain an ongoing dialogue with organizations all over Latin America and Africa who do similar work. A more active connection with them will create more vibrant and diverse programming “ which in turn will increase our membership and financial support.

No podemos permitir que la radio de todos desaparezca por la irresponsabilidad de algunos. (We cannot allow the radio of the many to disappear because of the irresponsibility of the few.) Please vote for me, and also for these very capable candidates: James Ross, Lee McClure, Jennifer Jager, Carla Cubit, Seth Goldberg, Stefan Neustatder, Ken Laufer, Albert Solomon, and Pat Logan.
Es hora que los dirigentes del fracaso sean reemplazados por

lideres competentes. (The time has come for the leaders of failure to be replaced by competent ones).