

Don Bustany Candidate Statement

Having had the privilege of producing and hosting the weekly show, "Middle East in Focus," for eleven years on KPFK without hassle, it seems appropriate, and maybe overdue, that I contribute to our governance and policy-making processes. Therefore, I now become a candidate for the LSB.

I'm retired from a successful career in commercial radio and tv broadcasting. I've had twenty years of experience working with minority group inter-relations and in civil rights advocacy. I've been president of a number of organizations dedicated to such activity.

The two most important elements in the Pacifica Mission Statement, for me, are the emphasis on education and on building greater understanding among the many colors, creeds, and cultures that make up our overall community. Education is what our programmers do best. We are able to speak inconvenient and uncomfortable truths to a public that needs to hear them. The aggressors in the Middle East and the aggressors in Washington, DC, are not among our friends because the truths we deliver are not flattering to them. In this regard, KPFK stands out among public radio stations—especially among the commercial public stations. KPFK is known for its diversity. I was aboard. In 2002, when Eva Georgia came in as General Manager, she had programmers fill out a questionnaire. She asked about our views on diversity. I wrote: "We have too little race-based programming. We particularly need more Latino-oriented and black-oriented shows to begin approaching a proportion commensurate with the demographics of Southern California... ."

A problem that bugs me because it's so easy to solve, and has not been, is our "sound" — often ridiculed as sloppy and amateurish. There are simple solutions, radio fundamentals, that can be applied quickly and at no cost and which will raise our production quality to a professional level. All it takes is the will.

The staff, paid and unpaid, must have a positive atmosphere in which to work.

The public's perception of what KPFK identifies with and supports is vital. Does KPFK support the 9/11 conspiracy theory?

Institutionally, it should not—but individual programmers and their guests absolutely should have the freedom to support anything legal as long as they make it clear that it's their position and not KPFK's. Most importantly, for this station to even think about a future, it must start today to address people of college age whose intellects have been awakened and whose idealism has not yet been replaced by cynicism. A weekly one-hour talk show by college students, rotating every week, one school at a time, among the 20 colleges in our signal area is what we need immediately. Young people talking candidly about their issues — social, economic, sexual, political, whatever — appealing to listeners of every age because we all went through the same stuff. Without cultivating a young generation of listeners and supporters, KPFK will not last.

But it must! And I pledge to do what I can to see that it does.