

Newsbreak



NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL FRIENDS OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING SPRING 2000

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"I would like to be remembered as someone who loved and was loved.... Live one day at a time. Try to make as much of yourself as you can. Of course, get an education. Don't be afraid; don't be afraid of life..."

Elizabeth Campbell, Founder of WETA

Public Broadcasting was founded and has survived because of the vision and passion of people like Elizabeth Campbell. Meeting the challenge daily year after year, public broadcasting professionals and private citizens have created an atmosphere for education that has been copied but rarely duplicated. For nearly forty years, television has been beamed into the public classroom to present instruction and education in keeping with the constantly changing times.

Realizing the need for lifelong learning, the Elizabeth Campbells of the broadcasting world saw the need for quality television programming to make its way into the homes of America. In her own words, "television is the window for the world." Because of this new venue, these same visionaries felt the need to partner with the private sector. Not only was private funding necessary but the entire idea of "public" television needed to feel the embrace of the citizenry.

Because of this need thirty years ago, in July 1970 the **National Friends of Public Broadcasting** was created and nurtured for the purpose of developing groups of community volunteers throughout the network of public broadcasting stations. A handful of volunteers representing eight leading broadcast-ing stations was the core with the mission to assist smaller stations in forming their own community volunteer support groups.

Through the years growing to meet the needs of the industry, **NFPB** established national awards (the only national recognition for PBS volunteers), an annual conference to train and cultivate volunteerism, and continues to offer assistance to stations wishing to develop volunteer support at the local level.

directed by a Board of Trustees elected by its membership. The duties and services of the group are carried out by these trustees and other volunteers. Sole financial support for the organization is the dues paid by members and sponsor stations. Annual gifts from underwriters are invested in scholarships for NFPB members, their volunteers, and staff who work with volunteers, to attend the annual conference for training, exchanging ideas, and encouraging continued volunteerism.

Thanks to the good graces of PBS we are allowed to share the annual PBS Development Conference. The generosity of the entire PBS family has provided the means by which we continue to function. Because of this we are able to continue serving public broadcasting and providing encouragement to the volunteer sector.

Thirty years for any relationship is a reason to celebrate. This year we hope to establish an additional means of honoring the spirit of volunteerism. In September when we meet in Palm Desert, we are hoping to have a luncheon named for the consummate volunteer of PBS **Elizabeth Campbell**.

This luncheon is quite an ambitious endeavor on our part, but we desire to honor her for the outstanding example she has been for each of us. Presently we are looking for an underwriter for the luncheon and for early **NFPB** members who were affiliated with Ms. Campbell.

We are also seeking names of thirty-year volunteers still associated with stations or at least still around. Public broadcasting volunteers are very much like old soldiers . . . and we want to honor them before they fade away.

Be sure to read the article "**Calling All Veterans**" — your help will make our Thirtieth Anniversary a very special event indeed!

— Carrie Cinnamond, Chair
NFPB Board of Trustees

The National Friends of Public Broadcasting is

SPONSOR STATIONS: America's Public Television Stations, The Friends of AETN (Conway AR), Friends of Iowa Public Television, KERA/KDTN (Dallas TX), KET (Lexington KY), KRMA/KRMJ-TV (Denver CO), KRWG-TV (Las Cruces NM), KVCR-TV (San Bernadino CA), Mississippi Educational Television, WDSE-TV (Duluth MN), WETA (Washington DC), WFYI (Indianapolis IN), WGBH (Boston MA), WNET (New York NY), WTTW (Chicago IL), WYCC-TV 20 (Chicago IL)

Virtual Pledging — good or bad news?

At the 1999 NFPB/Development Conference, a lot of attention was focused on the impact of virtual pledging on volunteer programs. Diane Papedo, APTS National Volunteer Coordinator, used the internet to invite comments on the proliferation of “Virtual Pledging” and its potential impact on volunteer programs. Here are some of the responses (unedited):

“I would like to see a deadline after which virtuals are not added. It is harder to schedule because they are always longer than a regular pledge program. There is difficulty in getting volunteers to answer phones, i.e., less recognition. We are losing our community involvement.” — EH

“We will be doing a pledge drive soon and I’m finding more and more ‘pledge events’ in the schedule. These are programs that come to us complete with recorded breaks from other stations, usually with one of the ‘stars’ co-hosting. I believe these events generate more money but my experience has shown that community groups do not want to staff the phones when they are not seen on television.

Are other stations finding this to be true? If so, I’d be interested in hearing some of their solutions. The only thing I’ve been able to do so far is rely on our individual volunteers who don’t care if they are seen but that may not continue to be an option as we increase our pledge events.” — CW

“If, in fact, it is true that (1) virtuals increase the yield and (2) virtuals decrease community involvement, then a cold-hearted business decision must be made. I love my station and I love working there, but I respect business realities.” — FB

“We make sure the phonebank knows ahead of time that we will not be live in the studio. Whenever there is any activity in the phonebank, we have a cameraman ready and cut away from taped break and show them. But it is true we cannot give the group as much on air recognition or interaction as we would like to.

“For this drive only one virtual is planned during prime time. We are only using them during daytime on the weekends and using a phone service to answer phones. We are very fortunate to have a great company help us with this.” — JE

“Virtual pledge does present a double-edged sword. While the virtual pledge shows raise money successfully with less overhead expense, they also compromise the community buy-in that we all work so hard to cultivate.

As others have noted, it is difficult to secure groups of volunteers to answer telephones when there is no reward for their commitment. Individual volunteers help fill the empty slots but soliciting them is more time intensive. There is a place for virtual shows certainly, but they should be used with discrimination. Live, local pledging should always be the mainstay.” — PS

“For the first time in 30 years I’m having a problem getting telephone volunteers for Pledge, due to virtuals. We always had a waiting list with groups begging to volunteer. Now they say “Sorry, but no!” They are putting their time into other volunteer efforts.” — JK

“KLRN has started to do this a lot. It makes my job that much more difficult. Last drive there were last minute changes and sometimes hard feelings for the volunteers. I would hate to think we would get to the point where we do not have any volunteers. We need to keep these people active.

Pledge Drives are how we participate in the community. We need to be more noticeable than just what is seen on Channel 9. I truly believe we must keep that interaction.” — PM

“West Virginia PTV plans to continue to use local live pledge as a method of generating new members as well as ‘keeping in touch’ with current members. The ‘local face’ is absolutely important. It conveys a sense of concern for the local viewers and acknowledges their importance in the PUBLIC + TELEVISION partnership...

WVPTV has taped virtual events for their own use. They did not do well. They continue to consider the matter, and to experiment with it — using local talent. The cost savings potential is certainly attractive. But experience with past virtual pledging isn’t terribly promising.” — DR

(Continued on Page 3)

Congratulations to the 1999 NFPB Award Winners. . .

Elizabeth Campbell Outstanding Public Broadcasting Volunteer Award

- **Shirley Larowitz, WNET**

Elaine Peterson Distinguished Service Award

- **Patricia Korrick, KAET-TV**

Charlotte Hill Volunteers in Fund-Raising Award

- **The Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting**

Jan Mitchell Community Development Award

- **Fran White, KCPT**

Dorothy Kemps Achievement Award in Volunteer Management

- **Jan Mullaney, KET**

Elaine Peterson with award winner Patricia Korrick



Virtual Pledging (continued)

“First, let me say we are one of the stations that are now more virtuals than live. And at first I was very upset for all the same reasons I have seen on your list from others. But sometimes changes are good.

Are virtuals a fad, like Pledge Free was? (Boy, that was great while it lasted!) Will virtual last? I don’t know but I gave up burning out my regular volunteers and have switched to an answering service. This gives new options, like you can have talent and no phonebank, phonebank and no talent, or you can be “live” half the shift and half virtual.

Don’t be afraid of virtual pledging. Our jobs are not going away, and the volunteers can be shifted to do other things. Or you can just use the cream of the crop, or you can sell the phonebank now that they are a Premium item. Switch food donors to another event.

Virtuals do have good points: it gives your staff a break during long drives, they have great talent and are well produced (most of the time). Some virtuals leave station cuts always in (we used this format for the Spirit Dance show and used the local Indians for talent and phonebank — this was one of our best nights).” — KC

New NFPB Officers Elected

At the 1999 Annual Meeting of the **National Friends of Public Broadcasting** elected the following officers to lead us for 1999-2000. Our best wishes for a very successful year!

NFPB Board Chair

Carrie Cinnamon,
KET (pictured)

1st Vice Chair

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Especially for Managers of Volunteer Programs . . .

Consider adding your e-mail address to your voice mail greeting for those who may prefer to send you a note instead of calling again. *Source: Customer Service for Dummies*, 2nd edition by Karen Leland and Keith Bailey, IDG Books Worldwide.

Build an effective filing system by always thinking “Where can I *find* this?” not “Where can I *put* this?”. *Source: Taming the Paper Tiger at Work*, by Barbara Hemphill, Kiplinger Books.

When you have to call many people in a short time, relieve stress by squeezing the phone handset after each call. *Source: Selling Power*, Personal Selling Power, Inc. PO Box 5467, Fredericksburg VA 22403

Increase the shelf life of photos you take for your in-house or promotional materials by eliminating cars, electronic equipment—even phones. *Reason:* Today’s high-tech might look dated in a year or two. *Source: Freelance Writer’s Report*, CNW Publishing, PO Box A, North Stratford NH 03590

Deciding that your longtime volunteers could use some training may cause them to think you’re not happy with their work. To head off any possible complaints:

Involve them in planning and creating the training sessions.

Show them — with specifics — how it will benefit them, the organization and the people you serve.

These ideas courtesy of **communication briefings**
1101 King St., Ste. 110, Alexandria VA 22314

Dear Editor:

I wanted to share with you about our recent volunteer recognition luncheon. The New Frontier Hotel of Las Vegas offered the use of *Gilley’s* (the hotel’s country western style restaurant) for our luncheon. They generously provided all the food and beverages for the event. We dressed in western wear, had more than 150 volunteers in attendance, and everyone had a great time!

One of our local entertainers donated his time and performed on stage for us. He included a segment in his show that involved bringing three ladies from the audience on to the stage to “compete” for the title of Miss America (he had sung for the Miss America pageant for ten years) . . .

The Friends of Channel 10 provided plaques and certificates for our volunteers . . . based on the number of hours worked. Because I wanted EVERY volunteer to receive a certificate of appreciation so they would have something to display proudly regardless of the number of hours worked during the year. . .

I divided the number of hours into categories: 50 hours or more received a plaque, 25-50 hours received a special certificate noting specific number of hours donated, and those who worked less than 25 hours received a certificate of appreciation for volunteer service.

When the luncheon was over, everyone had a smile on their face, especially me! The best part is the volunteers are excited about coming back to Channel 10 knowing they are needed and appreciated.

— Karen Manning, KLVX Las Vegas

It soon will be time to nominate your best volunteers and innovative community programs for the 2000 NFPB Awards. Watch for information in early summer!

National Friends of Public Broadcasting

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Special Funds Provide NFPB Scholarships

The NFPB Board of Trustees is grateful to the **J. Seward Johnson Sr. 1963 Charitable Trust** and the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**. Their generous contributions provided scholarships for nineteen volunteers and volunteer-related staff to attend the Annual NFPB Conference held in Miami FL in conjunction with the PBS Development Conference.

David Baker (left) a special consultant to the Board of Trustees, and Louis Ruiz, newly elected NFPB 1st Vice Chair, smile for the camera.



Plan to Join Us

for the 30th Anniversary of NFPB at our 2000 Conference, September 20-23 in **Palm Desert, California**.

What Do You Think?

At an informal meeting of the NFPB Board of Trustees during the 1999 Annual Conference, approval was given to a motion to present to the full membership for approval a name change for the organization.

A growing concern among many of our members is that the term "Friends" in our organization's name no longer communicates adequately who we are. The name "Friends" is widely used but not always in reference to volunteers of public broadcasting. While "Friends" carries a long history, newer staff do not easily grasp what we are about.

It is proposed that we become the **National Volunteers of Public Broadcasting**. This describes our current membership of volunteers, managers of volunteer programs, and stations who utilize volunteers to achieve their goals in their respective communities.

The Board would like to hear from you on this proposal. Send your comments to NFPB Chair Carrie Cinnamon via e-mail at <carriec@se-tel.com>.

Calling All Veterans

We're not referring to those who have served in the military — we're searching for 30-year veterans of public broadcasting. Please send us names of your **volunteers** who have served public broadcasting for 30 or more years. We'd also like to know about **stations** who have used volunteers for 30 years or more.

Send names (along with current mailing addresses) to the NFPB 2000 Conference Chair **Kitty Conners** at <kitty_conners@kixepbs.org>.

Wanted . . .

Let others know about successful volunteer-related efforts at your station. Send information for printing in the next NewsBreak to Editor Judy Dunson at <jdunson@earthlink.net>. News and comments welcomed!