

The Coupsters: Dispelling More of their Lies; Exposing More of Their Tactics

Truth is the strongest weapon in the fight to Take Back WBAI.

Jamie Ross, who currently sits on the WBAI Local Station Board and the Pacifica National Board, and who is also one of the lead plaintiffs in a specious lawsuit against Pacifica, has proven himself to be quite adept at spreading rumors and propaganda to advance the agenda of the coupsters who have launched an ethnic and political purge throughout WBAI and Pacifica. For years, many of them have been engaged in a vicious propaganda campaign designed to make the management that was unfairly fired and removed look as incompetent as possible, while trying to give the impression that the programming was irrelevant. This article will show how Ross, who is the Chair of the National Finance committee, uses these same tactics and catches him spreading several HUGE fabrications. Let's see how many the readers can spot.

Recently, he re-posted a screed that he wrote in 2007 in response to the tremendous amount of activity with the WBAI online programming archive that I reported on. He is trotting this piece out now to try to regain ground after their propaganda about WBAI losing listenership was recently dismantled ([please see WBAI: Deconstructing Myths . . .](#))

In 2007, the stats for the online programming archive was showing over 6,000,000 annual requests for programming files. As of April 2008 - 2009, the annual number was over 8,000,000. Rather than viewing this as something positive, they immediately put out propaganda insinuating that I was too ignorant to possess even a cursory understanding of the data and that the information I presented about the programming downloads were way off and did not represent actual programming.

One would think that anyone sitting on a board of any radio station, or anyone that worked for a radio station would be excited to hear about such a high level of activity pertaining to programming. But that has not been the case with Ross and his allies on the board, who have at various times referred to themselves as ListProg/ACE/Indendendents.

Ross' canard, the entirety of which is posted at the bottom of this article, is a deliberate misrepresentation of the statistics from the programming archive. It is time to put an end to his propaganda, while exposing his unethical tactics. For starters, he begins his piece with a willful and deliberate misrepresentation of the facts. Ross writes:

"(Earlier in this campaign [the 2007 campagne] they [Justice and Unity] blithely reported that WBAI had 28,000 members, a claim that no one who knew anything took seriously. Now they have dropped it, in the face of the report from the current election supervisor that we have 15,518 members.)"

Dale Ratner, the local election supervisor for 2007, was the one who incorrectly told us that WBAI had 28,000 members and that we could go public with this information. However, after my colleagues and I did so, we were told that the membership information was incorrect. Dale Ratner apologized for the error and sent out an email to all of the candidates, including Ross, that was distributed publicly, explaining what happened. Below is the email:

Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2007 7:31 PM
To: votewbai@gmail.com
Cc: James Ross ; jassiken@yahoo.com ; Bernardo Palombo ;

Makemba X ; Lee McClure ; Carla C ; Sara Flounders ; Tibby Brooks ;
Bokeem Nyerere ; Wellington Echeguray ; Omowale Clay ; Rolando
Bini - Parents in Action ; Stefan Neustadter ; Seth Goldberg ; Robert
Gold ; Jennifer Jaeger ; Pat Logan ; Hobces
Subject: Membership Numbers and Carts

Dear Candidates,

Please do not accuse JUC of exaggerating the membership numbers in
your carts. They were given wrong information and it is was a
technical problem in the membership department. They did not do so
deliberately or maliciously.

Best,

Dale Ratner
Local Elections Supervisor-WBAI

PS: If you have not signed up for a time to record a cart; do so. Next
week is your last chance.

But Ross evidently lacks the integrity and honesty to acknowledge Ratner's email and chooses to
instead spread the rumor that Justice and Unity deliberately misrepresented the membership figures.
This is not true and Ross knows that. He knew it wasn't true in 2007 and he knows its not true now!

In this same vain he chooses to deceive the listeners by misrepresenting false information about the
statistics on the online programming archive. He presents information to make it appear as if the
Webalizer, which is the program that tracks statistics for the online archive, counts files as any kind of
miscellaneous activity on the website. Ross writes:

. . . It does give a "usage" number of over 600,000 "files" for September [2007]. However,
this does not necessarily mean downloads of audio files. According to webalizer's
definition page, (http://www.mrunix.net/webalizer/webalizer_help.htm): "Files represent
the total number of hits (requests) that actually resulted in something being sent back to the
user. Not all hits will send data, such as 404-Not Found requests and requests for pages that
are already in the browsers cache.

I interpret this as anything sent from the archives server to another computer - text, a little
instruction, a web page, anything . . .

However, the information that Ross presented here is slanted and very incomplete. What he
neglects to tell the reader is that the Webalizer makes a clear distinction between hits, files, and
pages. It clearly defines "hits" as being the total amount of all requests being made to the server
and gives a separate accounting of all such requests. In 2007, it lists the annual number of hits as
over 9,000,000.

From those requests, it then breaks down the total number of files, which are hits that result in
something being sent back to the user. In 2007 it reported the number of files as over 6,000,000.
Hence, the reason I reported that there were over 6,000,000 files, instead of over 9,000,000 hits.
I clearly understood that the "files" were a truer indicator of programming activity than "hits."

Moreover, the Webalizer gives a detailed breakdown of the file types that are requested and the shows they are linked to. The files are of two types – MP3 (audio files) or RSS feeds (xml), which indicates podcast usage. Instead of dismissing this information, shouldn't WBAI be excited about the strong indicators that people are linking to these programs with their ipods, etc? Both of these file types, mp3 and xml, are directly related to programming! The webalizer specifically shows that there are hundreds of thousands of these files downloaded every month! And it gives the breakdown of these files, showing the audio programs they are linked to.

One other point that needs to be discussed briefly is kilobytes. Ross surmises that the kilobyte usage for the reported 6,000,000 downloads is too low. However, when the file requested is an mp3 file, the kilobyte # is very high. But when it is a file linked to an RSS Feed, the kilobyte number is comparatively lower.

For example for the July 20th Wake Up Call Show, the mp3 file link read 8,020 hits, and 24034290 kilobytes. But for the xml file associated with the Out FM Show, it shows 8,196 hits, but only 15,434 kilobytes.

It is absolutely preposterous for Ross to act as if all of those request for files are inconsequential and NOT related to programming. The programming archive site is not the same as the general WBAI website. People specifically go to the archive site to hear PROGRAMMING! There are no heavy graphics on the site, nor are there lots of text or links to other websites.

Additionally, On November 5, 2007, after our on air debate, I showed him a detailed report of over 10 pages of activity that the Website generated with the breakdown of programming files. We both acknowledged that although this was not a definitive science, that there was a lot of activity going on. I said to him that there needed to be more of an in depth analysis to help the station better interpret this activity. Ross agreed. (I readily acknowledge that I do not possess the expertise to provide this kind of analysis). But of course Ross reposted this without any mention of our discussion or of the fact that I showed him the detailed report. Again, his intent is to try to make me look uninformed, while giving the false impression that the files were not referring to programs.

But this is not the only time Ross has employed such deceptive tactics. Earlier in this article I mentioned that he is a lead plaintiff in a fraudulent lawsuit that was filed against Pacifica/WBAI in 2007. That is relevant here in establishing a pattern of behavior that Ross exhibits. Just as it was pointed out that he ignored an important email from Dale Ratner explaining the error in membership numbers, he did the same thing upon filing his lawsuit. On November 16th, he succeeded in getting a judge to halt the elections of WBAI under the false pretext that WBAI was going to close the election on November 16th which would be unfair to the many people that still had not received their ballots. Part of the relief that he requested read:

... A declaration that if the opening and counting of ballots is allowed to go forward notwithstanding the failure to provide ballots to staff and listener members entitled to vote and other violations of the PACIFICA bylaws, the election will be unfair to plaintiffs and all other qualified voters who will be disenfranchised if the balloting is permanently closed on November 16, 2007 and the ballots are counted on November 17, 2007;

However, on November 15th, 2007 Dale Ratner sent an email to the members of the Local Station Board and all of the candidates stating that the elections were going to be extended until November

23rd. Below are excerpts from that email (It should be noted that Justice and Unity were also concerned about people not getting their ballots and we asked that the elections be extended):

Date: Thu, 15 Nov 2007 08:13:09 -0500
From: votewbai@gmail.com
To: votewbai@gmail.com; pacifica@mail2casey.com
Subject: Election Extended: Unofficial Statement

Dear Candidates and LSB members,

This is an unofficial statement as soon as Casey Peters gives me his written up ruling, I will send it to you. . .

People on both slates have been asking for a deadline extention in the election. After consulting with Dan Siegal we have agreed to a one week extention. . .

The new deadline for ballots is Friday, November 23rd 2007 . . .

If people would like a ballot sent to them in the mail, they must give me their name, address, and status (listener-sponsor or staff) by e-mail or calling my number 212-209-2828 by Monday, November 19th at 12 PM EST . . .

Dale Ratner
Local Elections Supervisor-WBAI

Again, Jamie Ross, along with several of the plaintiffs, including Mitchel Cohen, and Alex Steinberg (who both are now seeking re-election), were members of the Local Station Board to whom this email was addressed. Later, they amended their lawsuit and among other things, asked that the election NOT be extended and that all of the ballots of those who applied for waivers be null and void. They are also attempting to get the personal mailing information of the WBAI members. This lawsuit is still going on and to date has cost the Foundation well over \$150,000.00.

Truth is the only remedy to the rumors, propaganda and unethical takeover of WBAI by the Grace Aaron and LaVarn Williams coupster.

Speaking Truth to Power

Lisa V. Davis.

Listener Representative of the WBAI Local Station Board

**VOTE FOR THE JUSTICE AND UNITY SLATE IN THE UPCOMING 2009 WBAI
LSB ELECTIONS**

Nia Bediako
John Brinkley

Carlos Canales
Russell Dale
Myriam Decime
Sister Betty Dopson
Wellington Echegaray
Terrence Podolsky
Sharonne Salaam
Berta Silva
Lynne Stewart
Camille Yarbrough

For more information please visit: www.justiceunity.org

Two other very good candidates who are also running are:

Sarah Klepner and Gil Obler.

For more information please visit www.takebackwbai.org

Jamie Ross' Propaganda piece that was originally written in 2007 and Reposted on July 23, 2009.

You asked about downloads. Below is something I wrote in 2007 when the same issue came up. The short story is that you need a knowledgeable person to interpret the usage data for the archives. So far we haven't had that AFAIK.

The greater issue is, of course, that we are not making ends meet, whatever our listenership is, and that if we don't make ends meet, we have no future ...

Posted By: Jamie Ross (68.161.76.160)
Date: Monday, 5 November 2007, at 12:50 a.m.

The recent claim by Lisa Davis and other "Justice and Unity" candidates that there were 600,000 downloads of sound files from WBAI's audio archives in September [2007] is not true. It is another example of their willingness to broadcast statistics that have not relation to reality for the purpose of making themselves look good and winning the election. (Earlier in this campaign, they blithely reported that WBAI had 28,000 members, a claim that no one who knew anything took seriously. Now they have dropped it, in the face of the report from the current election supervisor that we have 15,518 members.)

Anyway - about the downloads - I was curious about it, and after a couple of phone calls, last week I was directed towards the administrative page on the archive website where the web log stats are presented for easy viewing. The numbers are worked up by a free program called "webalizer." The page shows "usage" in terms of hits, files, pages, sites, visits and kilobytes. I was cautioned against over-interpreting it, because the software that works up the stats may not be the greatest, as well as other issues.

It does give a "usage" number of over 600,000 "files" for September. However, this does not necessarily mean downloads of audio files. According to webalizer's definition page, (http://www.mrunix.net/webalizer/webalizer_help.html)

"Files represent the total number of hits (requests) that actually resulted in something being sent back to the user. Not all hits will send data, such as 404-Not Found requests and requests for pages that are already in the browsers cache."

I interpret this as anything sent from the archives server to another computer - text, a little instruction, a web page, anything.

The webstat page also shows usage in terms of kilobytes. The definition page says; "A KByte (KB) is 1024 bytes (1 Kilobyte). Used to show the amount of data that was transferred between the server and the remote machine, based on the data found in the server log."

The total Kbyte usage for September is recorded as 510,961,136. This many kilobytes of data were sent from the archives computer to someplace else.

Since the 1 hour sound files on the archives are around 10.4 megabytes (10,400 kilobytes), one can calculate the MAXIMUM number of sound files downloaded by dividing total KByte usage by this number:

$510,961,136 / 10,400 = \text{maximum \# downloads in September} = 49,000$

That's about twelve times less than what Lisa Davis has been reporting. The number of ACTUAL downloads of audio files is certainly a good bit lower than that.

On a more functional board, we could ask an expert to come talk to us, so we can get up to speed on the new digital world and learn how to use the archives for the benefit of WBAI. That won't happen here, unfortunately.