

White Ash Broadcasting, Inc

Annual Report 2020-2021

April 13, 2021



*Expanding
your world
through
voices and
sounds that
inform and
inspire*

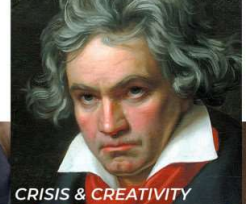


The Time
of Our Life

Reading William
Saroyan with Mark
Arax and friends



BEETHOVEN : 250



CRISIS & CREATIVITY



**Valley Public
Radio**
KVPR.org

April 13, 2021

Dear listener,

The last 12 months have been unlike any year in the history of our station. We have been tried and tested in ways that 13 months ago barely seemed possible.

We survived a global pandemic with multiple surges that upended every part of our lives, and forced us to reinvent how we do our jobs. We experienced unrest across the nation as long overdue calls for racial justice have reached a boiling point for much needed change.

We nearly lost our main transmitter site to the largest single wildfire in modern California history. We endured an unprecedented election cycle with bizarre twists and turns, including a violent insurrection in the halls of Congress.

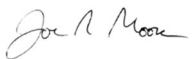
And here at home, we underwent significant programming changes, bringing more news and talk programming to the airwaves of KVPR, and the launch of a new all-classical music service, KVPR Classical – which has helped boost station membership revenue and audience to new highs.

At every turn over the past year, one thing is clear more than ever: our service to the community has never been more vital or important. We're reaching more people than ever before, new listeners as well as longtime supporters, who all value the power and impact of our news and information content, as well as our arts and entertainment programming.

Our station's work was also recognized beyond the valley. Our reporting on the Creek Fire aired nationally on NPR's Morning Edition and other network programs, and we collaborated with WNYC's Science Friday on content for national broadcast. We also launched a nationally recognized project funded by Microsoft to support collaborative journalism with our partners at Radio Bilingue and the Fresno Bee. Our news department was honored with its second consecutive regional Edward R. Murrow Award, and also won eight Golden Mike Awards from the Southern California RTNA. And for the seventh consecutive year, Valley Public Radio was awarded the prestigious "Four-Star" rating from Charity Navigator, which ranks community benefit organizations on their governance and fiscal stewardship.

As you peruse this report, I hope you get a sense of our accomplishments over the past year. They are all a credit to our incredibly dedicated, talented and resilient staff, and our donors who make it all possible with their support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe A. Moore".

Joe Moore
President and General Manager
Valley Public Radio

Financial Performance

Valley Public Radio has a forty-plus year history of prudent financial management. For the last seven years, the station has earned the coveted “Four-Star” rating by the independent website Charity Navigator, which evaluates the financial and governance policies and performance of not-for-profit organizations. Only 7% of non-profits nationwide have earned this distinction. The following information is drawn from the station’s audited financial report as prepared by Price Page & Company, CPAs in February 2021. A link to the complete report can be found on our website at [KVPR.org/financial-statement](https://kvpr.org/financial-statement)

Revenue:

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019 the station had a total revenue of \$2,088,585. As a non-commercial radio station, Valley Public Radio relies on individual and corporate donations for the bulk of the station’s revenue. Multi-year grants from foundation partners including the James Irvine Foundation, California Health Care Foundation, and the California Endowment helped support the station’s local journalism. The station also received an annual community service grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, with payments in the fiscal year totaling \$169,583. The station also received an additional \$75,000 in emergency stabilization funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Of note, the station did not hold its annual wine tasting event in 2020 due to COVID-19, which is typically a major source of station revenue. The station’s annual raffle contributed the bulk of station event revenue for the fiscal year. Also of note, in April 2020, the station received a Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program (SBA PPP) Loan for \$176,486, which was forgiven in full by the SBA in November 2020.

Expenses:

For the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020 the station had total expenses of \$1,961,864. Programming and production, including locally produced news and music, plus programming purchased from NPR and other program distributors, made up the largest share of station expenses. Broadcasting and technical operations associated with operating KVPR and KPRX also made up a significant share of overall expenses. Together these two categories account for nearly 75% of the station’s expenditures.

Endowment:

The station’s endowment includes both donor-restricted funds and funds without donor restrictions. Total net endowment assets were \$761,002 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020. This is an increase of 19% from the total net endowment assets as of September 30, 2019 (\$639,459).

Mortgage:

Valley Public Radio moved into a state-of-the-art 10,000 square foot broadcast center in May of 2016. The approximately \$4 million project doubled the size of the station’s production and broadcast facilities, and replaced a leased facility that was nearly 30 years old. As of September 30, 2019, the station’s mortgage with United Security Bank had an outstanding principal balance of \$966,467. The note is payable in monthly installments of \$7,429 including interest at 3.95%.

Journalism



The past year was an outstanding one for the station's news department. In late May 2020, the station won its second ever [Regional Edward R. Murrow Award](#) for excellence in broadcast journalism. In early 2021, the station was also awarded [eight Golden Mike Awards](#) from the RTNA of

Southern California, for division B categories including best continuing coverage, best investigative reporting, best feature news series reporting, and best public affairs program.

The COVID-19 pandemic was the focus for much of the station's local reporting over the past year. However, considerable attention was also paid to the issue of social justice and racial inequalities following the death of George Floyd in 2020, and later in the year, the massive Creek Fire that devastated local mountain communities.

The station partnered with stations in NPR's new California News Hub to create original content about the pandemic, which aired on The California Report, and within statewide broadcasts of Governor Newsom's COVID-19 press conferences. Our coverage of the Creek Fire also got national attention on NPR's Morning Edition and other network programs, and reporter Kerry Klein continued her on-going partnership with WNYC's Science Friday, which featured her and her reporting on valley fever on several occasions.



Reporter Soreath Hok

Other changes also took place in the past year. In late 2020, the station announced its participation in the new Central Valley Media Collaborative Lab, which will find the station working alongside other local media organizations to cover the pandemic. COVID-19 also resulted in a pause in the station's planned launch of The Other California podcast, which will resume production later in 2021. It also brought us new staff, with the addition of Soreath Hok as a reporter covering local government and other local news beats.



The past year also saw the birth of a new collaboration between the station and other local media organizations. Microsoft selected Valley Public Radio as one of the participants in a new pilot project to support local journalism taking place in Fresno, El Paso, Yakima and Jackson, Mississippi. The resulting Microsoft-funded Central Valley Media Collaborative Lab bring

together Valley Public Radio in collaboration with Radio Bilingüe, the Fresno-based Latino public radio network, The Fresno Bee, and Vida en el Valle, the Bee's Spanish-English language community newspaper. Together, the partners will collaborate on coverage related to COVID-19 and communities of color in the San Joaquin Valley. The Central Valley Community Foundation will administer the project's local funding.

Programming

The 2020/2021 year featured the debut of many new programs, both local and national, and a new programming schedule on our main channel bringing listeners more news/talk options during middays.

Local Content:

The station produced a range of new local broadcast and podcast programs in response to the pandemic:

Play On was a limited run series produced in conjunction with the Fresno Philharmonic, featuring conductor and music director Rei Hotoda with KVPR's David Aus, discussing the ways in which music deals with adversity, isolation, and connection. In addition to interviews, the series featured archival selections from the orchestra's recent concert recordings.



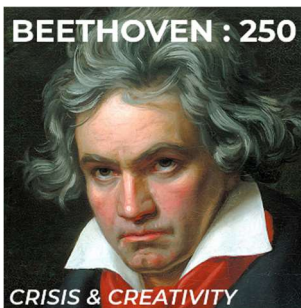
The Time of Our Life

Reading William Saroyan with Mark Arax and friends



The Time of Our Life was another limited run series produced and hosted by David Aus and local author and journalist Mark Arax. The series featured Arax and other local authors reading the short stories of Fresno's William Saroyan, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and playwright who in his day was spoken of in the company of Steinbeck, Faulkner and Hemmingway. The Saroyan Estate and Stanford University agreed to let the station use these short stories for this program, which also featured discussion segments talking about Saroyan's relevance to our times and the pandemic era.

StoryCorps San Joaquin debuted as a podcast series and a segment on Valley Edition, featuring stories recorded by local residents during the 2020 StoryCorps Mobile Tour stop in Fresno. The tour, which was cut short by the COVID-19 crisis, had over 100 local residents record their stories with StoryCorps.



Beethoven: Crisis & Creativity was a limited run series celebrating the composer's 250th birthday, while examining his role as an artistic revolutionary, amid a time of incredible change in society. By placing his works in historical context and examining their relevance to our present day, the series brought new vitality to his story, and featured archival performances from the Philip Lorenz Memorial Keyboard Concert Series and the Fresno Philharmonic.



COVID-19 This Week: San Joaquin Valley began as a weekly segment on Valley Edition, hosted by Kathleen Schock and featuring KVPR reporter Kerry Klein. It was later spun-off into a stand-alone podcast. Each week the series gives an update on the latest local COVID-19 news, and offers an in-depth look at a particular part of the crisis.

Format Changes & New National Programs

In September 2020, after considerable research and planning, the station made a significant change to its midday weekday broadcast schedule, with the switch to a consolidated news/talk schedule.

Prior to September 2020, the station's middays were a mix of NPR News and classical music programming, switching back and forth between formats five times in a span of eight hours every day. Over decades, the station has seen its news audience grow, to where it makes up the bulk of overall station listening, and is the primary source of new audience, while at the same time the station's classical audience has grown smaller. Increasingly, the profiles of news and classical listeners are divergent: classical listeners want to escape from the news of the present day and news listeners want to engage with current events. Attempting to serve both groups within one broadcast schedule on one channel has grown increasingly difficult.



Jenn White, host of 1A

To this end the station has pursued a strategy to serve the distinct audiences with dedicated programming. In 2020 the station launched KVPR Classical, a 24/7 classical music service on digital platforms and on HD-2 in the Fresno/Clovis area. The service airs content from the nationally syndicated Classical 24 service from American Public Media. In September 2020, the station debuted a new midday weekday schedule on the main KVPR channel, which features *1A*, *Here & Now*, KQED's *Forum*, *Think*, and *Marketplace*.

The changes were largely well received. While we did hear from many longtime classical listeners who were upset about the loss of the 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM classical broadcasts on weekdays, the overall response from listeners was positive. For those who did have concerns, the station worked to help classical listeners access the new KVPR Classical programming, either over the air or on streaming platforms.

Other new programs added to the station this past year include NPR's *Throughline*, and *It's Been A Minute* with Sam Sanders.

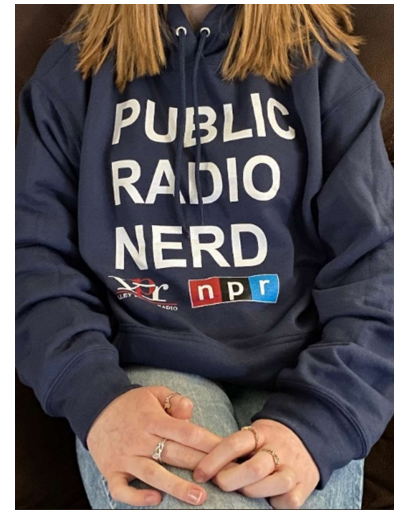
Station Audience:

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on station listening, though early reports about a dramatic decline in public radio listening nationwide beginning in Spring 2020 proved to be largely temporary. Valley Public Radio has access to detailed Nielsen ratings for spring and fall each year. After setting a new all-time station record for weekly station audience in Spring 2019 (77,400), the pandemic related shutdowns contributed to a decline of 12.5% when compared with Spring 2020 (67,000) as listeners who previously listened while commuting to work stayed home. However, those listeners quickly returned to their normal habits with the reopening economy, the new program schedule, and the presidential election, all contributing to the strongest fall ratings book in the station's history for Fall 2020 with an estimated 73,200 weekly listeners. The station's digital properties saw significant growth for the 2020 calendar year, highlighted by a 20% increase with total unique users of KVPR.org when compared with 2019.

Development

Just as the pandemic disrupted our programming and operations, it also made for significant changes to our development activities. The pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the 2020 Wine Tasting, an event which usually generates around \$80,000 in profit to support station operations. The event will also not be held in 2021, though we are optimistic that a return the following year will be possible.

Despite the overall challenges in the economy, 2020 was a record year for membership revenue, which for the fiscal year topped \$991,000 for the fiscal year, an increase of 14% compared with the prior year. Corporate support suffered the most, as sponsorship spending evaporated in the early months of the pandemic, followed by a slow rebound for the remainder of the fiscal year. Corporate sponsorships totaled \$348,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, off around 9%, compared with the prior year.



The pandemic also changed the way the station raised money. We developed a process to produce a fund drive remotely from home studios, and adapted it several times throughout the year as we expanded from a one-day drive in April, to two days in June/July, three days in October, and a week in December.

With the cancellation of the wine tasting, events looked very different in 2020. However, we did have the most successful \$10,000 drawing in the station's history, which was a sellout for the first time in 10 years. We also held a successful online event in February 2021 with NPR's Tamara Keith, discussing the presidential election.

Major philanthropic support continued to be an important part of the station's funding. In the fiscal year ending September 30, the station received grant funding from the James Irvine Foundation, California Humanities, the California Arts Council, The California Endowment and the California HealthCare Foundation, all to support local content creation.

Operations

The pandemic resulted in a major shift in station operations. For the last year, virtually all station staff have been working remotely. Production and Operations Manager Don Weaver has done a remarkable job keeping the station on-the-air and sounding as good as ever, amid changing programming and a completely different method for on-air fundraising in our membership drives.

The station has also taken steps to upgrade the facility in the past year. Our backup generator project was completed and is now online, to ensure we stay on-air in the event of a power outage. We have also made upgrades in anticipation of our staff returning to the broadcast center. A new studio space has been built out to



better accommodate social distancing for our employees, and upgrades to our HVAC system are underway. Other upgrades including outdoor patio seating are planned as reopening nears.

The biggest operational challenge of the past year however came during the Creek Fire in September 2020. The blaze, which became the largest in California history, threatened our KVRP transmitter site. Ultimately thanks to the heroic efforts of firefighters, the transmitter site at Meadow Lakes was saved. However, many of our neighbors in the area were not as lucky. In order to ensure our

continued service to the community, the station deployed an emergency transmitter kit and made arrangements to broadcast from an alternate site should the main site be damaged.

The station is also continuing with its goal to reduce its carbon footprint and hopes to obtain approval to install photovoltaic solar panels at the broadcast center in the near future.

Valley Public Radio

By the Numbers:

4,775	Active members (as of April 6, 2021)
2,256	Sustaining members (as of April 8, 2021)
724,495	Unique users at KVPR.org (1/1/20-12/31/20)
1,216,939	Pageviews at KVPR.org (1/1/20-12/31/20)
73,200	Weekly listeners (Nielsen Fall 2020 Fresno + Bakersfield)
96	Vehicles donated to VPR (CY 2020)
\$59,703	Net proceeds from vehicle donations (CY 2020)
5,166	Facebook followers (as of April 8, 2020)
528	Local reports posted at KVPR.org (CY 2020)
50	Hours of original Valley Edition content
\$966,467	Outstanding mortgage balance (as of 9/30/20)