

MINUTES OF THE WLRN

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB) MEETING

May 7, 2015

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by CAB Chair Jo Asmundsson at 12:08 PM.

CAB MEMBERS, WLRN STAFF AND GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE: Jo Asmundsson, George Braddock, George Early, Betsy Kaplan, John Labonia, Tom Hudson, Peter Maerz, Adrienne Kennedy, Terence Shepherd, Alicia Zuckermann, Tim Padgett and Alan Tomlinson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the March 12th, 2015 meeting. Members present accepted and approved the minutes as published.

NEWS IS OUR FUTURE – WLRN NEWS PRESENTATION:

Tom Hudson, VP of News: A few years ago a strategic plan was put forth that called for news as the future for WLRN and we are well on our way if not probably on pace to exceed what that plan called for by 2016. A couple of updates in that regard, on the digital space we will talk about some of the community engagement things that we are doing to expand WLRN out into the community in new and unique ways and some of the personnel changes that we have done for the past year or so.

Tom Hudson introduces three of his colleagues to explain updates that are going on in their particular departments.

Terence Shepherd, News Director:

The day-to-day operations of the station have to do with most importantly the people. We made three key hires in the past year. We hired Louis Hernandez to be our morning anchor, born Puerto Rico and raised in South Florida. He was hired from the station in Las Vegas. The second key hire we did was John O'Connor; he is a state impact education policy reporter, nabbed from WSUF in Tampa. The third is Nadege Green, recruited from the Miami Herald.

We have been fortunate enough to receive recognition from our industry peers in several journalism contests, first being the First Associated Press Broadcasters with 21 awards statewide. A few station overall best, best website statewide and best individual achievement. Nadege Green won two best individual achievement awards, one for a single story and another for a series of stories she did out of Miami. We won four Regional Murrow Awards, including best website. We are finalist in three Public Radio News Director Awards categories. We will find out next month. We are finalists in 11 categories in the Sunshine State Awards, issued by the Society of Professional Journalism. We have not yet received word on our Green Eye Shade Awards, which recognizes excellence in the Southeastern US.

NPR changed its programming clocks after years of studying and research, it would seem that radio listeners don't sit and listen to radio all day long. Current listeners tune in and out many times during an hour. So clocks were changed to accommodate this. Primarily we have, rather than just have one short newscast hourly, we have three. One at four minutes after, one at 20 minutes after and one at 30 minutes after. This is during morning drive time. So the thinking is if we don't get you at the top, we will get you in the middle or the bottom.

So this has been somewhat of a team effort. We use human center design tools to brainstorm the way we should handle these newscasts. It turns out that we want to handle them with the same elegance and quality that we handled them before. It is shorter at the top and we typically have two or three stories in the middle and the bottom newscasts. But we feel we have done a good job with adjusting to the new box and it does mean we have more time to give our features. Alicia Zuckermann will tell you about the features later. But this is probably been the biggest thing that has hit public radio in a long time. Now instead of 16 newscasts, we have 25 newscasts daily. This gives us another opportunity to share with the audiences what is happening in South Florida.

Finally, I will tell you about our partnership with the Miami Herald. I was with the Miami Herald for 14 years, then left. I have known many people at the Miami Herald. Many are good journalist, some of the best in the nation. So it is a bonus for us to have such a tight working relationship with the Miami Herald. We've worked with them on several big projects, most recently a project on the Affordable Care Act. This dealt with people who are not poor enough for Medicaid, but don't qualify for Obama Care. This is what they call a donut hole, where 832,000 people in South Florida don't have any form of medical care except going to an emergency room. This is one of the shortcomings of Obama Care.

We also collaborated with the Miami Herald on the Florida East Coast Railroad Police Department. I was not aware of this but the Florida East Coast Railroad has had a police department since the 1800's. Because of the history of having these remote locations out west, you need your own people to monitor these tracks to make sure there are no bandits rummaging around the tracks. Our reporter Wilson Sayre paired up with Miami Herald reporter to look at the police department that protects the tracks just east of here where they are making dozens upon dozens of arrests of people who are basically taking a short cut to get to work through the tracks. They were technically violating the law by trespassing, but you wonder how many resources are put into it. This is just another example of collaboration with the Miami Herald.

More frequently, we have at least one Miami Herald reporter on Florida Roundup every Friday and we also collaborate with the ideation process and execution process on Tom Hudson's Sunshine Economy. The Miami Herald collaboration is much stronger today where both organizations do recognize the strengths of each other. We share our plans with each other, we are aware of what they are doing and they have access to what we are doing. There are no secrets between us and the Herald, but we do pick what stories we do based on what makes sense for radio or print. Of course on their end, they are more than happy to pick up our stories that we post on our website for their website or for their paper. It's a win win collaboration for us.

Tom Hudson, VP of News:

One thing I wanted to comment on Terence's very accurate description of our relationship with the Herald. It is strong and it is also more equitable today than it ever has been in the 13 years since the relationship has happened. It has all happened due to the leadership at the end of this table that our department has grown thanks to the additional hires that Terence mentioned in just the past year. It has really increased the level of quality and quantity of journalism we can do both on radio and online.

Another person who is extremely responsible for that is editorial director Alicia Zuckermann. She is also responsible for a number of different projects both ad hoc, as well as ongoing. Also,

her primary responsibility is what we call feature reports, which is our long form journalism that we do on radio and online.

Alicia Zuckermann, Editorial Director:

I am going to play an example in just a minute of our feature reporting, but first I want to talk about our relationship that we have with some of the national programming. That includes NPR Ed, we are part of the education team. NPR chose about a year ago, several member stations with strong education reporting happenings around the country. They came to us and asked us if we would join their education team, so we are a part of that. What that means is that every week John O'Connor and I are on a phone call with the editors and reporters all around the country, along with the leadership in Washington DC. We share ideas about the very station's common core which is major, major change in the curriculum. That is happening nationally right now, it's a very big theme. So it is interesting to have those reporters in Wisconsin be able to compare notes with reporters in Miami and kind of get ideas from each other, share ideas and in some cases share content.

Some of those stories end up nationally on NPR, NPR sometimes comes to us and says we would like to do a series about "X." Right now John O'Connor is doing a story that will air nationally, and for us of course, on graduation rates and what affects graduation rates.

We are also a part of the HERE & NOW Network out of WBUR in Boston and distributed by NPR. They come to us often. We probably have a story on their show once a week or so. Their editor will ask us what has legs and will have national appeal. We are also on the Takeaway with some regularity, Tuesday thru Friday at 9 am, on a regular basis. In fact, you might have heard our *Zip Ode's* contest. They adapted that for their national audience using our language, giving us credit for it. We locally received 3,500 submissions which in the end was judged by Richard Blanco, the inaugural poet from the second Obama inauguration. He grew up in Miami.

We are also part of Health News Florida, which is a relatively new initiative working largely with the station in Tampa and the station in Orlando, also with other stations. We also have weekly meetings, phone calls to talk about what we are working on. We work on projects together. We have an HIV series coming up in June. It's going to be a pretty major effort that NPR and the Miami Herald has already shown some interest in.

So that is all the various ways that WLRN content is getting out into the world beyond our region. Within our region, John asked me to talk about our internship program, but first I am going to play you some of the features that have been airing on WLRN. You will hear some of those three new voices, Luis Hernandez, Nadege Green and John O'Connor. Just a tiny little taste, each of these stories is normally four and half or five minutes.

ALICIA PLAYS RADIO SEGMENT

We are proud of our internship program. We devote time, energy and resources, which is preparing the future journalists of South Florida and of the country, and working overseas and just propelling them into careers that they have a lot of passion for and some of that same passion is why they get internships. Hopefully we can continue to fuel that passion and then send them out into the world and out into the workforce.

Several of our interns are up for major awards. There's the big national award, the PRNDI Award and the Public Radio's News Director Award. We have six interns coming in for our summer internship program, three are Florida students the other three are coming from University of Chicago, one from Princeton University and another from the Columbia School of Journalism and International Affairs. Six heavy hitter interns, they speak the following languages; Spanish, French, Haitian, Creole, Bulgarian and Hindi.

Tom Hudson, VP of News:

Tim Padgett is our Americas Editor. He has been with us for two years. Tim spent many years with Time Magazine and Newsweek, covering Latin America both from Miami and inside Latin America. He was brought on as part of our growth as *News Is Our Future* looking at the kinds of stories that we wanted to tell as an institution and knowing full well that if we wanted to serve our audiences properly we needed to tell more and deeper and richer stories about the Latin American experience really from a South Florida perspective. With Tim, what we've got is somebody who can effectively go toe-to-toe with the President of Colombia, on the heels of a speech in UN, to a wonderful, personal essay about the impact of a 400 year old Spanish novel on his own life. So we are able to put those to kinds of things together with Tim and greatly expanded Latin America coverage not only with the weekly segment that Tim does, but also more often than not, it comes in our Friday program

Tim Padgett, Americas Editor:

Well the Chinese said "may you live in interesting times" and starting December 17th we have been living more interesting times than we could have even imagined regarding Cuba. The last time we were here talking about our Latin American coverage, everything was about Venezuela. What happened in December has changed not only the whole face of our world in the Florida Straits, but really the whole face of this hemisphere. As I can tell you that's what we all felt at the Summit of the Americas Panama when I attended last month, when President Obama and President Raul Castro from Cuba shook hands and had the first meeting between two U.S. and Cuba heads of state in 56 years. It gave you the feeling that maybe there was a chance for inner-American cooperation.

I have been doing this for over 30 years. I have become very cynical. I was at the point of really giving up hope that inner-American relations were really a reality, that it was really sort of an illusion. Then all of a sudden this summit happened. I have to admit that my faith in this hemisphere to have the ability to work to get problems solved now is revived. It looks like getting this U.S. - Cuba problem out of the way, which we seem to be on track of doing, could really just change the whole nature of the hemisphere itself.

When the news that President Obama wanted to normalize relations with Cuba hit, we realized that our big job here, since this is such an intensely Cuban community, and not only just because this is an intensely Cuban community, but a community that whether you are Cuban or not, is very much focused on Cuba. Whether it is culturally, businesswise, etc. Our big job was really to explain to people what this was and what it wasn't. There just were a lot of myths, a lot exaggeration about what reestablishing ties with Cuba really meant.

Starting day one, Tom Hudson, to his great credit, put together an hour long show the very same day that President Obama made the announcement. I really do think that I can say that because of that, we were the first ones in this market to just get out ahead and start explaining to people what they most vitally needed to understand about the nature of this historic, catatonic change

that was suddenly happening after a half century of frozen relations. We have been moving on since then, finding a variety of ways to tell this story of this new relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. A lot of it is focused on business and what I wanted to do is just encapsulate the sort of thing we are trying to do in terms of not just telling the Cuba story, but how the Cuba story and the South Florida story are all interconnected.

Yesterday, I spent a couple of hours in Wynwood and there were two Cuban entrepreneurs. You are seeing a private sector start to grow now in Cuba as a result of all this. These are fledging entrepreneurs. They came here this week so that they can get some consul from entrepreneurs here about how to start a business. One of the things that they are most interested in is the internet, because they can't get it yet. They will soon. There is no way that Raul Castro can shut them out of the internet for much longer.

So they came here this week. One is a bikini maker who sat down with a young woman, Cuban-American herself, in a restaurant in Wynwood. Which is kind of symbolic since this the tech capital of our city, right? So they are sitting out and she has her laptop out and she herself owns a bikini business here in Miami. She shows him how to construct a bikini business website, how to sell online and how to use the web to look for trends and fashion. His eyes were as big as saucers, because he is living on this island that has no access. Now suddenly he is seeing the world outside Cuba, what the possibilities and the potential is and all because of this Cuban-American woman, whose parents are exiles and she is of the generation that wants to re-connect with Cuba. So, you have this confluence of this Cuban entrepreneur who wants to encounter the outside world for the first time in a half century and Cuban-American woman in South Florida who wants to reconnect to the island of her parents. That to me encapsulates to me what we are trying to do with our Latin America coverage here at WLRN.

It's not just Cuba. Venezuela is still very much a part of our coverage, because things are still in an absolute mess there and at the end of this year, things are going to get very nasty there when we see parliamentary elections come and the economy is imploding. Haiti is finally going to be having its parliamentary and presidential elections. We have some projects, Nadege Green is Haitian-American, so we are discussing about doing some stories around that. Tom mentioned Colombia. We are hoping that we could even see a peace agreement there after a half a century civil war.

Since I spoke with you last, we did have an interview with Colombian President Emmanuel Santos and he knows the importance of talking to us because we have such a large Colombian-American community here and in the United States. I remember during our interview, he made a point of giving answers that were directed in a focused way to the community here. The heads of state in Latin America understand that local media outlets like us are a very important conduit. Our coverage, we keep expanding, we are helped by the fact that we are living in very interesting times with Latin America.

Tom Hudson, VP of News:

That gets us to the other general story that we continue to cover and it leads well beyond Latin America. It is the immigration story. The executive actions of the President has taken, even some of the legislative action that have been taken on the state level to allow in-state tuition for undocumented students. Of course, there was last summers story regarding the children migrants. While Florida is clearly not a border state per se like Arizona and Texas, New Mexico

or California, Florida did receive a significant number of those migrant children. Tim, along with an intern, did some really strong coverage on that last year.

Tim Padgett, Americas Editor:

Just to set this up, this was a Honduran migrant family that while I was about to go on vacation, this intern, Coco Gallardo, was very enterprising and she really wanted to get involved with the Latin America coverage that we were doing. I had this family, and the intern said I will do it for you. Here is he excerpt.

TIM PLAYS EXCERPT OF HONDURAN MIGRANT STORY

Tim Padgett, Americas Editor:

As Tom pointed out, immigration never used to be a story we cared much about in South Florida. We didn't have to because Cubans were the Latin America story. They didn't have to care about immigration, because they had all the immigration privileges. That's now completely changed, because the Latino community here is so much more than just Cubans and those groups care deeply about immigration.

Alicia Zuckermann, Editorial Director:

In fact, that is one of the things we are going to talk about on the Florida Roundup is the Cuban Adjustment Act, otherwise known as wet foot/dry foot and how that is going to be implemented now and some of the possible changes now due to normalization.

Tom Hudson, VP of News:

As you can see this was a quick tour of the projects both externally and internally. I want to pick up on two additional projects in terms of community engagement. This was the third O,Miami poetry Fest. Our project with O,Miami has been encouraging the community to write poetry. The first year we got 350 submissions, the second year we got about 700 submissions and this year we got over 3500 submission. An exponential increase. We did a final live event at Viscaya, it was standing room only and the parking lot was packed. It was a wonderful engagement and folks were there because of WLRN. This year we were getting emails from people in February asking when the poetry contest was opening up. The legacy is already being set there.

Another project, which is a poetry project, we have wanted to build a deeper relationship with the Miami Book Fair International. For a long time WLRN has had a relationship with Book Fair. This past cycle, we really wanted to do something deeper and more community oriented. We collaborated with the Book Fair on a project called *Six Words Miami*. We did an ask to the audience to write a six-word story about South Florida and Miami. With the Book Fairs reach and our reach, we got more than 7000 submissions over the course of six weeks. We did on-air and in person engagement and we have already had an initial meeting again for the next cycle to do something even deeper and have a richer experience there.

When you take those kinds of projects which are not tradition news-kind projects and marry them with the kinds of reporting that you heard earlier from Terence, Alicia and Tim, what we think is that it continues to create this space both either virtually on the radio or an actual space for this community, for thought leadership, for ideas or for storytelling. That is what we are really after. That's where we really see this unique space at WLRN continuing.

On the virtual side, last year we did launch our WLRN app. We continue to build out a deeper and richer digital experience as much as we can. And the website has gotten recognition from both Florida Associated Broadcasters Association and also the Radio Television News Directors Association as best website. We think that is something special.

We are competing in those categories not only as a radio station, not as a TV station, not as a public media station. We are competing as media website against all of the commercial and non-commercial news websites that are out there as well. What we think, given the resources that we have, we have far exceeded the expectations digitally when put up against those kinds of resources that we know are deeper and bigger.

John LaBonia, General Manager:

Like with all departments within this station, I am so proud of the work these people do. When people come up to you and tell you how the station changes my life, you have impact and I can't live without you. Rarely do I ever go anywhere and hear a bad word about either of these stations. The love that the staff has created through the wonderful work that they do really can't be measured, because it has life-changing impact on South Florida.

As Tom mentioned earlier, we had this strategic plan in place call *News Is Our Future*. It was at three year plan and we achieved that plan 18 months early. It was supposed to be 2016. We are done. We have over achieved the plan. The next plan is to become the public media enterprise of record for South Florida, arts, culture, news, investigative reporting and public affairs. That is a bold vission, but with the team that we built with the resources that we are investing, I think it is possible.

There is a company that came into town that is called Capital Analytics. What they look at different markets around the country and they decide what markets are worth investing in. Miami happens to be one of those markets. It was through Terence that these people came to see me to talk about media and entertainment in the South Florida market and what kind of role we play. They came out with a book that will be released next week that is \$199 a piece. They managed to talk with every business mover and shaker in Miami, how to do business in Latin America, how do you make a transition to Miami. So I have got a book for each of you.

What intrigued me about what these people came to see me about was they sent me prior to the meeting all the people they had been talking to. I had to wonder how they were able to get to all these people. So you will see in here in the section of media that there are 80 radio stations that are licensed to this market. When you look in there, you will see that are one or two sentences that talk about the other 79 and then a paragraph that talks about us. That's just about radio. Then you flip to the next page and you have television and there is a short paragraph that talks about them. You will see WPBT and WLRN. They had asked WPBT how many viewers they had and their response was uncertain. When they asked me, I said 500,000 people tune into television and it also talks about the vision of television as being South Florida's storyteller. So here we have all these movers and shakers and here is WLRN as an institution that's worth investing in. What a compliment. That is really special! It's telling me that all the work that these people at the station are doing is working. Their hard work is having an impact.

We opened a bureau in Key West. With the timing with Cuba, we will have the closest media bureau to Cuba! We have a small bureau in Tallahassee and I don't think there is any electronic

media organization that spends more time reporting on the legislature, boots on the ground in Tallahassee, then we do.

Now where do we go from here? The radio station has such a large footprint, Key West to Palm Beach. My vision is to put a bureau in Boca Raton. I am hearing it on a very steady basis now, “We love you guys! You have great coverage! We invest in you, membership and underwriting, but you are not covering the stories where we live.” They feel we are not doing the investigations that we do further south. They need it up there. They know what it is like to be without NPR. They need our help. We have had discussion, and This will be a part of the plan moving forward.

Your input as the Community Advisory Board, taking the time to come and hear our plan and give us feedback on our plan, is vitally important. We appreciate it, but Alan, Adrienne, Alicia, Terence and Tom. These are the people that make it happen. These are the people that execute the mission. They are the ones that take the risk. They are the ones that train and mentor.

You know, I asked Alicia to talk about the internship program, because the future of any good community is the ability to provide education. We see our vision of educating and bringing up Journalists. Teaching them the right way to write stories, the right way to convey history, investigations, art...that’s the only way! We tell people that. This is the best investment in town are these stations. Pound for pound, dollar for dollar, what we turn out, the impact we have to me, nobody in town does what we do other than the school system. We educate and enlighten everyday on radio and television.

NEW BUSINESS:

John Labonia introduced a new board member Keary Wan, graduate of New York University School of Law with Stearns Weaver Miller Weissler Alhadeff & Sitterson, P.A.. Mr. LaBonia encourages board members to recommend new board members. Term limits are two, three year terms. This year we will lose 3 or 4 members alone. We are always looking for members that have a passion for public media.

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 10, 2015

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting was adjourned at 1:24 PM.