

## I. Introduction

After a successful battle to recover the Pacifica Foundation from an almost complete takeover by corporate interests, the Foundation Bylaws were rewritten and approved in 2003. These new Bylaws provide a democratic governance structure, with multiple levels of elections intended (among other things) to make hostile takeovers extremely difficult. In the largest class of elections, the Listener-Sponsors elect Delegates in each of Pacifica's five signal areas – WBAI in New York, WPFW in Washington D.C., KPFT in Houston, KPFA in Berkeley and KPFK in Los Angeles. The Delegates of each station area elect Directors to the Pacifica National Board (PNB). These elected Delegates also serve with the station's General Manager and any associate station representatives as members of Local Station Boards (LSBs), which are standing committees of the PNB.

There is a separate membership class for paid and unpaid Staff, who elect Staff Delegates. Staff elections may see one or two hundred ballots returned, while Listener-Sponsor elections typically have anywhere from two to five thousand participating voters.

Each LSB annually elects its own officers, its delegate representatives to standing PNB committees, and its Director representative to a Committee of Inclusion. The LSB officers typically also serve as officers for local Delegates' meetings. As dictated by the Foundation bylaws, all of these elections are conducted using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method, when more than one office is to be filled, and the Instant Runoff Vote (IRV) method, when just one office is at stake. With IRV there is always only one office to elect. Consequently, IRV elections are much simpler to tally, and should never require a computer in small elections.

IRV can be thought of as the simplest form of STV, so henceforth when STV is referred to in this handbook, it is to be understood that the same basic rules and theory apply to IRV. When IRV is mentioned, it will be as a specific form of STV.

The STV electoral system allows voters to list multiple candidates in order of their choice (hence it is sometimes referred to as "choice voting"). If a voter's first choice is defeated, her votes transfer, according to specific rules, to second or subsequent choices. This abbreviated description may sound simple enough, but STV is complicated to tally, just as it may be complicated to understand in detail. Still, lest these words of caution deter you, be assured that hand tallying can be learned with a bare minimum of effort, once the will to do so is applied.

With this in mind, the KPFK Elections Working Group (EWG) concludes that STV warrants a definitive written guide for use in smaller Pacifica elections. We have also come to believe that computer tallying is not appropriate for these small elections, as the available software ultimately may introduce needless complications, which may be beyond the scope of this manual to explore in detail.

Because general LSB elections involve the participation of thousands of Listener-Sponsor voters, tallying the results will typically require numerous transfers of sequentially ranked votes, according to STV rules. Transferable votes, at times, will be divided into fractions, and those fractional votes, often enough, will be divided further into fractions of fractions. The only prac

tical way to carry out operations with this level of mathematical complexity in large elections is indeed by computer. In fact, as of this writing, the specific way in which Pacifica carries out its large elections precludes any thought of hand tallying.

To date the software used by Pacifica and its various stations, has been a line of products from a company called Voting Solutions ([www.votingsolutions.com](http://www.votingsolutions.com)), and in particular a ballot tally program called ChoicePlus Pro (CP Pro). CP Pro is the only currently available software acceptable for tallying Pacifica elections. The curious may be intrigued by an open source STV program called pSTV, available at [stv.sourceforge.net](http://stv.sourceforge.net). pSTV is in its beta development stage, which indicates it may not be sufficiently robust for elections within Pacifica at this time.

The first Pacifica elections (Winter of 2003-04) were directed by National and Local Election Supervisors, essentially temporary hired specialists, with assistance from numerous volunteers. The volunteers were largely responsible for the keyboard data entry, which translated ballots into files the software could understand. For the second series (Fall and Winter of 2004) the National Election Supervisor employed the services of a commercial election management firm (TrueBallot, Inc.) that introduced specialized ballots and ballot scanners, along with other time saving equipment.

After each major election cycle, the National and Local Election Supervisors complete their employee status and depart. This leaves the lion's share of "institutional memory" about elections to the volunteers. As of this writing no staff person at Pacifica has any designated responsibility concerning the elections of (and by) its governing boards. For now it might be hoped that the hard working Elections Committee of the PNB may be drawn into filling this void.

As a consequence of the transient nature of election supervisory staff, there tends to be adequate technical knowledge about STV on hand only during the scattered occasions of major elections.

To provide a relevant and detailed reference for computer tallied STV elections, we are preparing a companion handbook *STV by Computer*.

By contrast, *STV for Small Elections* is written specifically to provide a reference and guide for small elections, which may be tallied by hand. In these small elections the LSB Delegates, numbering no more than twenty-four, or the PNB Directors make up the electorate, and neither an Elections Supervisor nor TrueBallot, Inc. is anywhere to be found.

These small elections are typically held as part of an LSB meeting. They may be hand tallied (sometimes with a computer crosscheck). There may even be time pressure and the unforgiving scrutiny of observers.

The seemingly simple process of hand tally has some finer points – areas where the proper procedure may be unclear. Given that elections are potentially contentious spectacles, an authoritative guide, focused specifically on Pacifica's particular application of STV, would seem a useful item. Pacifica's rules for tallying STV elections are laid out in detail in the Pacifica Bylaws, Section 15, Article 1, *Voting Methods*, which we will refer to from time to time for guidance on how exactly to proceed with various aspects of the tally.

Because there is an evident, real need for voters, candidates and observers to have confidence that election operational procedures are valid, consistent, and unbiased, we are presenting the results of our experience and research into this compact manual.

Oddly enough, considering the vast number of documents published worldwide in English about STV, there has been nothing that could serve as a Pacifica STV handbook available “off the shelf”. This handbook (along with the related volume dealing with computer tallies) is intended to play a dual role in Pacifica and member station elections. It can be a useful tutorial for those persons planning and conducting elections, or simply interested in the Proportional Representation election process mandated in the Bylaws. It is also meant to be a practical guide for anyone who conducts or oversees small elections where the electorate numbers a few tens of voters and the tally may be conducted without the aid of a computer.

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The copyright for this document belongs to the KPFK Local Station Board Elections Working Group.

The KPFK Local Station Board Elections Working Group was formed as a unit of the KPFK Governance Committee in March, 2005. Current members of the Working Group are Fred Blair, Art Stasney, Jack VanAken, and Roger Zimmerman.

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### **Special Note for Pre-release Version**

This release of *STV for Small Elections* is the first distributed version, and is considered by its authors to be a preliminary text. It should be assessed accordingly.