

KJAJ – How ego gets in the way of progress

He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it. – Martin Luther King

Scott Cooper wanted to add three board members to KJAJ, all of whom were connected to AYA. Given Travis Hayer now worked for AYA the KJAJ board was already comprised of 30% AYA representatives. This was a huge concern to me because boards are not supposed to discuss or predetermine decisions outside of board meetings. Additionally, the makeup of the board can impact our ability to raise funds through grants. Scott was suggesting 67% of the KJAJ board would consist of his friends and employees from AYA. Of course, I was adamantly opposed and further saw no benefit to the station or to anyone other than Scott and Travis for even considering such a proposal.

Now I won't bore everyone with the gory details but Darlene Elliott, a secretary at AYA and Octavia Shafer an AYA board member were added to the KJAJ board. One of the major concerns is that there would obviously be times when we may have difficulty maintaining a quorum if members are forced to recuse themselves owing to conflicts of interest. In violation of the

bylaws, Travis

was able to install himself as president at the November 2017 board meeting but

by raising a ruckus I was able to show this was invalid and force a new election in December.

One of the first signs that I was right to be concerned about the AYA connection came when I nominated Geno Landrum to be the president and Knute Nemeth enthusiastically seconded the nomination. Darlene grabbed Knute's arm and warned him "to be careful" before realizing that she had revealed her bias and she glanced my way to see if I had noticed. Again, I think only because I had made so much noise about conflicts of interest both Darlene and Octavia recused themselves, (if I hadn't been present, I suspect they would have voted), Travis lost, and Geno was named president. Travis was clearly stunned.

Scott did not vote during this election because minutes earlier he had resigned, thankfully. Now this next bit reveals Scott's lack of character, how little he actually cared about KJAJ and how one strong personality can permeate the culture of a whole organization.

Upon arriving at the station for the board meeting I noted that several chairs had been setup in the "gallery" for guests. This was somewhat uncharacteristic and soon several young men whom I had never met before and Scott's girlfriend took seats. Scott had planned a show and to further bolster my concerns about AYA folks saturating the KJAJ board, all the AYA people and only the AYA people knew what was coming. The rest of us had been kept out of the loop.

Scott proceeded to read his "official resignation letter" and then proceeded to play to his assembled audience and try to eviscerate my character. He had actually prepared a power point presentation listing many of our disagreements most of which I have already mentioned and even included the quote from MLK's Birmingham Jail letter copied above. (Yes, he objected to me texting him that quote).

He was, he said, not used to being accused of things and when I pointed out that he stood by quietly while Travis accused Pattie and me he cut me off and said he was sick of me bringing up Pattie and that I was behaving just like a Republican... Go figure. His behavior did not become any more rational and any time I attempted to defend myself he shouted me down and said that he just couldn't be associated with me and that was why he was leaving the board. Then, further illustrating his low character quoted a twelve-year-old rumor started by a musician/metalworker that I consider to be a conman, (at least he conned me out of money), and made other baseless accusations.

Scott had determined that Pattie and mostly me were of no use to him and therefore it was perfectly acceptable to publicly humiliate anyone for daring to disagree with him. This says way more about him than it does about me. Now, I don't know who this audience was but I have wondered if he invited some of his students to observe so that he could show them how you deal with uppity board members but I have never seen a professional board behave like this and he gave no concern for how it upset the non AYA members of the board or how it reflected on the organization as a whole. After the meeting, Knute was so upset by the whole display he gave me a big hug.

As an aside, prior to this meeting I had finally decided to stop paying the KJAJ bills and when Travis texted me shut off notices, I suggested he turn to Scott who had promised to help with bills but had so far not done so. This may also have precipitated his desire to leave the board.

Despite being on the board for three plus years, Travis never raised any issues regarding finances until after all the money was spent and the station was broadcasting. It should also be noted that unlike other board members, Travis refused to contribute any funds to run the station even refusing to pay the required \$25 annual fee (\$2.08/month) that all board members pay. (Regrettably, Knute Nemeth agreed to pay Travis' fee for him). While all the board members volunteer their time, Travis was of the opinion that his volunteer time was worth more than everyone else's and therefore he shouldn't have to pay.

As I have demonstrated earlier it is arithmetically impossible for anyone to have stolen funds from the station because it spent 32% more money in verified capital purchases and expenses than it received in grants or donations but that didn't stop Travis from making accusations against both Pattie and me. What was more appalling to me was that the board did not reprimand his behavior and I was very vocal in an email reminding everyone that they were effectively complicit in this insult by timidly maintaining their silence.

After resigning Scott sat down in the audience and Travis began to grill me on matters that had already been settled multiple times. Scott's girlfriend kept staring at me as if in disbelief that I was still in the room and hadn't run out in shame. In my mind I was thinking that if my significant other had behaved like Scott, I would have left the vicinity long ago and terminated the relationship.

Scott's departure was meaningless really because 1) he didn't deliver on his promises and 2) he had already installed his friends on the board.

Despite this amazing performance I tried to stick with the board and build the station. Travis persisted with his relentless bullying, harassment and accusations. Darlene Elliott claimed to have a background in human resources but she never stepped in to stop his behavior and along with Octavia sat quietly during Scott's theatrical display. This [email exchange](#) is just an example of what I was subjected to by Travis and the behavior the rest of the board tolerated. To summarize, Travis infected my server with a virus and rather than apologizing accused me of being destructive when I chose a solution of changing the theme. This is particularly ironic given he has now allowed the KJAJ domain to lapse.

Throughout I made numerous suggestions about raising funds, automating the station so that we could provide 168 hours a week of fresh programming and getting out into the community like a community radio station is supposed to but the board was frozen and incapable of acting.

Travis refused any help upgrading the station and locked everyone out of the computer. He claimed he couldn't automate the station because our computer was too old yet when I offered to buy the station a new computer to solve this problem all I heard were "crickets".

Finally, I gave up and resigned from the board because unless the board will act no one person can do anything. The AYA side of the board pretty much stopped any forward progress deferring to the limitations and whims of Travis.

Anyone who has ever served on a non-profit board knows that unless otherwise specified in the bylaws, no one board member has any greater authority than any other. Being named president or treasurer brings additional responsibility but does not imbue you with super powers or crown you a monarch. The reason I bring this up is because I am pretty sure Travis doesn't understand this.

Going against board wishes an anonymous complaint was submitted to the Oregon Department of Justice requesting that I be investigated for malfeasance. (We can guess who that was). Anonymous submitted bank statements which included reimbursements to me as well as deposits from me. Anonymous did not, however, include the breakdown available in Act 1 that I provided to the board on multiple occasions. Frank Najar, the investigator, unlike some of the board does understand simple arithmetic and quickly ascertained after seeing the breakdown no malfeasance had occurred. He did not argue when I pointed out that I was not only a board member but also a benefactor.

Naturally, because we are not dealing with quality people, I

received no apology from Travis, Darlene or the board for all the false allegations leveled against both Pattie and me.

Not long after I resigned they ran Geno off as well and installed Travis as president. He finally got what he wanted and now KJAJ is all but dead.

IF you think they couldn't possibly go any lower you'd be wrong. While there was a time when I may have considered donating the funds I advanced to keep the station afloat I was no longer of that mind. The board in keeping with their general lack of professionalism ignored my requests for repayment until I finally had my lawyer contact them. The response was totally in keeping with their poor character as you will see.

***From:** Travis Hayer*

***Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019 7:23 PM*

***To:** Nancy Shelton*

***Cc:** Julia Manela*

***Subject:** Re: Funds Owed to Mary Geddry*

Ms. Manela,

Thank you for your correspondence.

We are unaware of any loan arrangement between Coos Community Radio and its former treasurer, Mary Geddry. Further, her insufficient accounting practices during her term as treasurer prevent us from determining the source of the funds in question. As a result, we regret that we are unable to honor the demand for payment.

In addition, we have been reluctant to contact Ms. Geddry because of the abusive and harassing nature of her past contributions to our dialogue. It is for that reason that we request no further contact in any form directly from Ms. Geddry. We very much appreciate your efforts, and we would

agree to remain in contact with you regarding this matter, should the need arise.

Travis Hayer, President

Coos Community Radio

This decision to refuse to repay me was not a board sanctioned decision, this was a unilateral decision to cut off one's nose to spite their own face. After even the Department of Justice has told the board there is no evidence of any malfeasance and after all the crap they have put me through Travis and no doubt Darlene want to stick it to me one more time by tossing in an insult and then trying to steal my money even if it bankrupts the station. This is who is leading this organization now and the rest of the board if they really give a damn about KJAJ better stand up and pay attention.



Cut off nose to spite face

This is the end of Act 3. As my lawyer explained all I have to do is show my bank and credit card records to the court and petition for legal fees to be added. Stay tuned... (pun intended)

KJAJ – Community radio gone bad

As I mentioned earlier it is my opinion board members Scott Cooper and Travis Hayer ultimately destroyed the organization, but I should first acknowledge that during the crunch time it was Scott who got permission for us to erect the tower. Then Travis took the reins and worked with the volunteers to erect the tower, connect all the equipment and get the station on the air. He didn't exactly keep to his original budget, such as it was, but we prevailed.

Instead of rejoicing, however, Travis decided to revisit and question every decision made up to this point and suddenly decided that I was the enemy of the station rather than a fellow board member and benefactor. I will elaborate on Travis' relentless harassment later on but should mention here that Scott hired Travis to work for AYA prior to the station going live.

Let's begin with Scott and why I believe he triggered the downfall of KJAJ. Anyone who has met Scott knows he presents as very amiable, helpful,

enthusiastic and very self-assured. Scott joined the KJAJ board in 2017 and as I mentioned, had indicated that he would write grants to support our proposed youth-oriented work.

By the time Scott joined the board we had been paying utilities for the station for almost two years, maintained our annual state and federal reporting and fees to keep the organization current, paid insurance and mailbox fees and had purchased and installed all the equipment and the costs of erecting the tower. We had exhausted all the grant funds plus spent an additional \$5,000. The extra funds came from Pattie and me.

To be clear, what follows is in no way meant to be a criticism of AYA. To the best of my knowledge the organization fulfills its mission for the students it serves. It is with certain individuals within the organization that I have taken issue.

Almost immediately Scott and I found cause to disagree. As I have previously mentioned our understanding with AYA was the use of a house on the AYA property which included a kitchen, bathroom, living room and two of the three bedrooms in exchange for working with and developing programs with AYA students. Pattie and I were of the understanding that a lease had been executed so when Scott decided to reverse the arrangement and limit

KJAJ to only one room and therefore our opportunity to expand I asked to see the lease to which he replied there was no lease. He explained that he had delivered the lease, but no one signed it. Curious, but easily solved by getting all parties to sign. When I pressed him as to who hadn't signed, AYA or KJAJ, he deflected saying that AYA had been on the verge of bankruptcy when it offered KJAJ the space, (news to us), but now it wasn't. Make of that what you will be it was clear if KJAJ was to expand into a viable community resource we would have to look for a new location.

The next item of contention came when I learned after complaining that the electrical bills had doubled that Scott had setup an aquaculture program in a garage which ran large pumps off of our meter. Why he didn't bother to ask or advise the KJAJ board of this I don't know but since I was paying these bills out of my own pocket, I was obviously annoyed.

Throughout the course of KJAJ's existence Pattie and I pressured the board to assist with fundraising and I personally sent multiple emails to the board suggesting fundraising plans.

At one of the first board meetings Scott attended as a board

member I began my typical entreaty that we needed money. Scott felt that we first needed to establish how the previous money had been spent. While I don't see why one should preclude the other, I agreed to complete my reconstruction of the three plus years finances prior to my taking over the treasurer duties. Scott meanwhile agreed to cover the station's expenses during the interim. We estimated \$300 per month to which Scott said, "no problem."



Despite the fact that the organization had changed bank accounts three times during its existence I was able to provide the breakdown seen, [\(available on Act 1\)](#), by the next meeting. Despite his promise Scott did not help pay the bills nor did he write any grants and Travis was still sending me text images of shut off notices for our water and electric bills expecting me to pay them.

To put it mildly, Scott turned out to be *all hat and no cattle...*

Now to Travis. Travis and I got along fine in the beginning, but I detected a marked change in his demeanor after he began working with Scott at AYA. One day at a board meeting Travis was particularly cold and instead of pulling me aside and saying he had some concerns he decided to ambush me. He

announced to the board that I had made capital purchases he did not approve of and that I shouldn't be treasurer. He was accusing me of malfeasance.

Curiously, the only person who came to my defense was Geno Landrum, but it should also be noted that I was not the treasurer when these items were acquired but they were purchased with board approval. Rather than bore everyone with the details suffice it to say that Travis offered up no apology and I still retain the audio of his persistent bullying harassment and accusations at every board meeting.

Even though I had provided the board with copies of the expenses paid and capital purchases were all in the studio or on the roof, Travis was convinced I had misappropriated funds. Anyone capable of simple math calculations could see this is impossible but he was relentless. His behavior was so awful that he triggered my PTSD. Even though intellectually I know that bullies like Travis don't have the guts to take action, I was so disturbed that I invested in security cameras around my home, just in case.

Even worse than Travis' treatment of me was how he blocked the station from progressing. At some point, I don't know when this happened, he was appointed or self-appointed station manager and refused to let anyone help him or to automate the station so we could improve our programming.

So why would the board allow one person to so control or limit the station? The answer to that lies with Scott Cooper and his maneuvering to load the board with AYA staff and board members who apparently trust Travis' judgment and goals of mediocrity. Over my strong objections and in my opinion in violation of our conflict of interest policy Scott pushed to add Darlene Elliott, AYA secretary and Octavia Shafer, AYA board member "because we need money". In so doing and including both Scott and Travis 66% of the board would be associated with the landlord, AYA and two of them direct employees of Scott. Scott claimed that the adoption of the conflict of interest policy had not been documented in the previous minutes and therefore didn't apply.

Adding these individuals to the board did not provide any funding save for the small \$25 annual fee that Travis refused to pay. Again, Scott talks a good game but doesn't deliver.

Coming up in Act 3 – Scott reveals his true character and the plan to install Travis as president.

Rise and fall of a community radio station

Act One – The Beginning

If you are unaware of Coos Community Radio which operates at 98.1 FM, you aren't alone. Sadly, with the exception of Democracy Now and Economic Update, (both programs I brought to the station), and thanks to its current management Travis Hayer and Darlene Elliott, you also aren't missing anything.

In 2013 the FCC opened a window for the single largest expansion

of community radio stations in the history of the agency.

Non-profit or publicly owned organizations were invited to apply without fee for a low-power FM (LPFM) radio license. After

some encouragement from a fellow activist operating a full power station in

Florence, I applied for three licenses in Coos County.

Happily, all three

applications were approved and received what is called a "construction permit".

Each had a maximum of three years to build and begin operating a station. Winter

Lakes High School in Coquille, Bandon Community Radio and Coos Community Radio in

Coos Bay/North Bend all went live and received their full-fledged broadcast

licenses.



Now a little LPFM station may not seem like a big deal but keep in mind that [KBOO](#) which now has multiple translators operating at a combined 28000W covering the entire northern half of Oregon offering diverse national and local programming beyond began life as a 30W LPFM. [KJAJ](#), on the other hand is still looping 24 hours of programming first aired three years ago via Windows Media Player seven days a week, let its domain expire on June 3, 2019, is apparently delinquent filing required state and federal reports and is refusing to repay me more than \$4K forcing me sue the station which will likely force it into bankruptcy.

KJAJ began broadcasting in February 2017, mere days before the construction permit was set to expire. The path to licensing was a circuitous one and like all new organizations not without hiccups but could not have been accomplished without the help of my fellow founder Patricia Gouveia. The start of the construction period coincided with another project Pattie and I were involved in, the effort to establish a right to a sustainable energy future ordinance in Coos County. Pattie, in fact, did all the heavy lifting in the beginning for KJAJ while I focused on the campaign. She setup the bylaws, code of ethics, conflict of interest policy and paid the bills and much more. She also wrote and obtained two grants totaling \$11,700 to fund capital equipment purchases. Without Pattie, KJAJ would not exist.

Using her contacts from the time she worked at ORCCA, Pattie further secured a location for a station. Alternative Youth Activities, Inc offered an unused house on their property. This would facilitate one of our goals to work with youth which was a feature of one of the grants we submitted. Our only requirement was to cover the monthly electrical and water and allow AYA to use one room in the building. We were excited because this would allow us physical space to grow as the station became more involved with the community. We paid the utilities for about 20 months before we actually began broadcasting. In

addition to the grants, Pattie and I also provided in excess of \$4K to cover operational expenses to keep the station afloat until it was generating revenue.

Initially we planned to use a remote tower location but as time was running short and suitable towers were few and far between AYA's new executive director, Scott Cooper, agreed to allow us to erect a 36' tower on site. We considered this a temporary solution until a better tower location providing us with better coverage was found but happily KJAJ was borne and Coos Community Radio received its full-fledged broadcasting license.

As with many small organizations we struggled organizationally and please note that when I use the term "we" I mean the KJAJ board.

Board members and volunteers who have been there almost from the beginning include Knute Nemeth and Geno Landrum, (there were others in the early days who had to drop out for various personal reasons or because they moved, time constraints, etc).. Small start-up organizations require a working board meaning people willing to do the hard work of raising funds, filing state and federal documents and doing the day-to-day upkeep and maintenance, public outreach, etc...

At one point I invited Travis Hayer to be on the board

because he had actual experience operating a station having worked for Bi-Coastal Media and we eventually invited Scott Cooper to the board as I thought it would be reasonable to have a representative of our landlord and largest in-kind contributor, AYA. Scott Cooper also indicated he would help with grant writing taking some of the burden off of Pattie. These two choices would ultimately prove fatal to the organization.

In addition to the time constraints set by the FCC we were also under other time pressures. Our foundation grant of \$9,000 was meant to be spent within one year and to be used for capital expenditures, not for operating costs. Because we had so much difficulty solving the tower problem it took us nearly two years to spend it. We had planned to reapply for more funds but until we spent the first grant this would not have been appropriate and so we opted to make some purchases that we hoped would be useful to the station in an effort to meet the original deadline or **risk having to return the money**. This was freely discussed at a board meeting unfortunately, the only people who showed up were Pattie and me and Geno Landrum who at the time was a volunteer and not yet on the board. We bought some Barix boxes, a small FM transmitter, a microphone and some odds and ends knowing we could always sell these assets if necessary. Even then we still hadn't

spent enough money to justify reapplying and we were even more concerned because of the lack of input from the rest of the board. After Pattie and I held a yard sale, (mostly organized by Pattie), with no help from the rest of the board, Pattie decided she was done and understandably decided to resign.

This was a critical time for KJAJ because it still did not have its broadcast license and time was running out. At my request Pattie stayed on as the "paper" president temporarily while I took over the chores of president and treasurer and was added as a signor on the account. Included in the treasurer duties was tracing back over the previous three years to determine how the money was spent. The board was provided with the breakdown below. In summary, we raised \$11,700 in grant funds and by the time we went on the air had spent in excess of \$15,500 in verified capital purchases and operating expenses. As mentioned previously, the difference between what we received in grants and what the station spent, almost \$5,000 by the time I too gave up on KJAJ, came from Pattie and me.

☐☐

MRG	9000
Williams	2700

Total Grants	11700
TX 300	3295
tx 100	1695
Barix	715
Mic	79
EAS	2395
Tower	840
Cabling	149
MegaSeg	199
Engineering	547
Total	9914
Organization	
501 C3	850
Dept of Justice	320
1170	
Net Funds	616

Operating Expenses	
Utilities	2860
Insurance	950
Accounting/QB	408
Miscellaneous	219
Total	4437

Shortfall = \$3,821

Since I did not have a debit card for our bank, I used my own bank and credit cards to make the purchases or pay the utilities, etc. This

was made clear up front to the attending board and I further made it clear that I would reimburse myself for these purchases and expenses.

In addition to paying the bills and making the equipment purchases I prepared and filed the required state and federal reports and hosted the station website, KJAJ.org on my own server. All of this was because I firmly believed the station could be a valuable community asset to help counter the conservative commercial radio that permeates the area.

Pattie and I are deeply disappointed after all our hard work to see the state of the station now. What a waste of our time and effort. Stay tuned for Act Two to learn how Scott Cooper took power from the station without asking, (I was paying for it), how he decided to change the lease terms we had previously agreed upon and helped stack the board with AYA sycophants including Darlene Elliott and Octavia Shafer. Learn how he tried to publicly shame me in front of his friends and girlfriend for having had the audacity to privately disagree with him via email. Then read how KJAJ is trying to steal my money.

Forgive the hiatus. Here is

an update

Yes, I know it has been awhile since I have posted anything. This summer I have been up to my neck working on the community rights initiative, a statewide initiative as well as getting kids enrolled in college, remodeling and earning a living. At



least on the remodel front, things are starting to wind down and the kids are starting or continuing at their respective colleges this fall. Phewww!

Here is a quick, down and dirty update on what's going on in my neck of the woods. First, [KJAJ-LP FM](#), the community radio station I helped start with my fellow board members at Coos Community Radio has gone from just being a dream to having a studio at 591 S Main Street, Coos Bay. We have published some podcasts and raising funds for equipment so we can start on air broadcasting. KJAJ holds an open house and barbecue every Thursday beginning at 6PM at the studio. Be sure to stop by and meet the team and hear about our local music plans.

Coos Commons Protection Council has a new logo and will soon have an updated website focusing on sustainability and why community rights is so important to Coos County. The Coos County Right To A Sustainable Energy Future Ordinance will be gathering additional signatures at the Fun Festival and the Cranberry Festival as well as providing educational materials related to the community rights work being conducted here in



Coos County as well as Douglas and Columbia Counties.

CCPC will also be hosting [Thomas Linzey](#), Esq. Executive Director of Community Environmental Defense Fund in October. Linzey speaks all over the country and the world and was a keynote speaker at the 2013 PIELC in Eugene. You will not want to miss this opportunity as he is a very engaging and entertaining speaker. The tentative date for this event is October 6 but we will update as details are confirmed.

KJAJ-LP FM Garage Sale Fundaiser today

Help kick start the county's own public radio station by stopping at the KJAJ-LP FM garage sale today and tomorrow. Located across from Ashworth's Market in North Bend you will find tools, bikes, clothes and much more.