Join us
SCPR 2016 ANNUAL REPORT
Southern California Public Radio builds a deep sense of community: whether you listen on the road, enjoy podcasts at home, read digital stories, engage via social media, or congregate at events in real time, SCPR creates a warm and welcoming environment that feels like home.

Come home to SCPR
Looking back on 2016, it’s become fashionable for news media outlets to say that their content “is important now more than ever.” Not at SCPR. Our combination of in-depth, fact-based journalism and inclusive civic engagement has always been important and it will always remain important.

SCPR’s audiences have always understood this. And, therefore, our audiences are among the most remarkable in all of media. SCPR’s audiences range from kids in the back seat of their parents’ cars to centenarians who were born before the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, from immigrants who are new to our country to people who can trace their ancestry to indigenous tribes that antedate the arrival of Europeans; across economic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and political lines. This disparate group of Angelenos shares a common set of traits: curiosity, a commitment to life-long learning, a deep respect for others, and a desire to improve the quality of civic and cultural life in one of the world’s most diverse metropolises.

At SCPR, we routinely remind ourselves that we must “hold up an accurate mirror to the imperfect paradise” that is greater Los Angeles if we are to fully realize the potential of our public service mission. On any given day, the exercise of our craft requires facility in dozens of languages, analysis of emerging economic and cultural trends, political acumen, command of legacy broadcast and emerging digital technologies, and a willingness to listen to you.

When you add your voice to the conversation — whether it’s calling into Larry Mantle’s AirTalk or posting a comment on our website or sharing a story we’ve done on social media or telling a co-worker at the water cooler “I heard this story on KPCC today” — you help us further a mission that is unique in Southern California. And, as other media struggle to remain connected to LA, the connection you make with us each and every day improves the quality of our journalism and strengthens the civic fabric of the community we share.

“Join us.” It’s a phrase you often hear during our programming, whether it’s asking you to tune into The Frame, attend an In Person event or check out something interesting on our mobile digital platform. “Join us” is an invitation, of course, not a command. But it’s more than just an invitation. When we ask you to “join us,” it’s an acknowledgment that your knowledge and your insights and your perspectives are integral to our understanding of Southern California.

When you “join us,” you help strengthen the bonds that unite us as Angelenos and as Americans. On behalf of the SCPR Board of Trustees, our employees and our audiences, thank you for joining us in 2016. We look forward to joining you in 2017 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Ana Valdez, Chair
Bill Davis, President

The mission of Southern California Public Radio is to strengthen the civic and cultural bonds that unite Southern California’s diverse communities by providing the highest quality news and information service through radio and other interactive media. We will be a public forum that engages its audiences in an ongoing dialogue and exploration of issues, events and cultures in the region and in the world, seeking to provide greater understanding and new perspectives to the people of these communities and their leaders.
At Southern California Public Radio, our public service journalism is built on a foundation of fact-based, in-depth reporting and community engagement — bringing individuals from diverse backgrounds and disparate perspectives together to discuss and debate the news and events that touch them every day. On air, online and at our frequent live events, SCPR asks our audience to join us in the conversation — and it is not just a figure of speech.

With the launch of the live events platform in 2010, we put front and center our emphasis on producing in-person content to bring audiences into the story. “Our goal,” says Jon Cohn, managing producer of forum programs and live events, “is to be a gateway to public media, engaging people from across the region in face-to-face conversation.”

Six years, 500 events and more than 60,000 attendees later, today SCPR is more committed to community engagement than ever before. KPCC In Person, the station’s events and engagement team, has doubled its original size and redoubled its commitment to producing events on subjects as varied as gentrification, homelessness, civic participation, and public education.

“KPCC In Person invites audiences into an ongoing dialogue and exploration of issues, events and cultures,” says Ashley Alvarado, SCPR’s manager of public engagement. Her position empowers Alvarado to develop strategies for involving new and existing audiences with SCPR across platforms (broadcast, web and live events) and, as she sees it, a critical part of her job is just listening. “Our audience knows more than we do. Getting to know the community not only allows us to share information people may find helpful — it also builds relationships that inform our coverage and generate compelling stories.”

Alvarado developed one such relationship with Sonia Kang, a multicultural activist and social entrepreneur she met at a community event. “Sonia is fantastic,” Alvarado says. “She has a wealth of wisdom” that has proven to be an asset to SCPR programs like Take Two, which invited her to join a segment focused on talking to kids about race.

For her part, Kang is equally enthusiastic about SCPR — not only what she hears on air, but also what she encounters at KPCC In Person events. “I’m mixed Mexican and Black, born in Puerto Rico, raised in Hawaii, and my husband is Korean. I literally make up 70 percent of the racial, ethnic and cultural composition of LA,” she says. “When I listen to KPCC or attend an In Person event, I feel a sense of belonging because I’m hearing stories about my struggles and my reality.”

Fostering that sense of belonging, Alvarado says, is what sets SCPR apart. “We hear over and over about people feeling disconnected from or wary of the media,” she says. “At KPCC, we are actively working to deepen our knowledge of the communities we serve and to deserve their trust.”
Audiences turn to Southern California Public Radio to hear interesting stories showcasing the diverse makeup of our community. The same is true of our employees, whose backgrounds and experiences reflect the broad range of influences and identities shaping Southern California.

For SCPR newsroom producer Bianca Ramirez, the daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico and the first in her family to obtain a high school diploma and earn a bachelor’s degree, SCPR’s commitment to capturing multiple narratives is particularly meaningful. “Whether we are talking about education, immigration or the economy,” she notes, “I can connect to the stories we tell on KPCC because I’ve experienced them in real life.”

Roy Lenn, who works in corporate sponsorship, also connects with SCPR’s focus on global storytelling. “I think [reporter] James Kim’s piece on first language attrition, which he did for Off-Ramp and which won an APTRA [Associated Press Television and Radio Association] Mark Twain award, is a good example of why KPCC resonates for me,” he says. “My mom is from the Philippines and my dad is from India, and since English was their common language, that’s what my sisters and I spoke at home. We had a pretty all-American upbringing, but James’ story made me think of the things I might not know or appreciate about how hard my parents worked to give us the privilege of growing up in the United States.”

Take Two editor Joanne Griffith grew up on the other side of the Atlantic, in England, and remains a British citizen. Today, SCPR helps her make sense of her adopted country as she confronts the challenges of raising a daughter in America. “When I first got here, Steve Julian steered me around the freeways, Larry Mantle schooled me on local politics and John Rabe taught me about the Los Angeles beyond the Hollywood hype,” she says. “Now, as an employee, I get to help people better understand Southern California, whether they are new arrivals or lifelong residents. There’s so much to talk about and to share, and I get to be part of the conversation every day. As we say in England, ‘That’s not too shabby!’”

Sharon McNary brings a different experience to her position as SCPR’s infrastructure reporter. Originally from Los Angeles, she worked in journalism for decades before coming to the station. Prior to that, she had a career as a private investigator and a computer programmer, served in the military and even did a stint in the Peace Corps, in Bolivia. “I may be the only reporter in Southern California ever to have built a water system,” she says. “It was a great education for my beat — telling important stories about the things we build together to make life better, like bridges, sewers and water pipes.” McNary’s storytelling gets a boost from one of her other former lives, as well: Before taking a reporter job at SCPR, she launched the station’s Public Insight Network, a group of several thousand people who — by sharing their experience and expertise — help the newsroom cover Southern California.

“Whether we are talking about education, immigration or the economy, I can connect to the stories we tell on KPCC because I’ve experienced them in real life.”

No matter their individual paths to get to SCPR, our employees find common ground when they arrive. “If you want to collaborate with people who are working to the highest standards in journalism,” McNary says, “this is the place you want to be.”
In a competitive global economy, career success increasingly means securing an internship. For many interns, this means preparing for long days of drudgery answering phones and getting coffee, with the hope of gleaning a few scraps of insight from more seasoned peers. Southern California Public Radio has upended the traditional internship model, exposing up-and-coming reporters to the full breadth of experiences in journalism and giving them the tools vital to advancement in the field. “We see our internship and news apprentice programs as a crucial part of building the next generation of public service journalists,” says Melanie Sill, vice president of content at SCPR. “They do real-life work, and they do it at a high level.”

“My first day, a big story broke, and instead of pushing me aside to focus on doing their jobs, editors, reporters and hosts all welcomed me into their meetings, interviews and studios,” recalls Carla Javier, a Princeton graduate and former SCPR intern who today works at multimedia news company Fusion. “The next day, I pitched, reported and produced my first on-air assignment, and just a week later, I started on my first feature story. I’ve been an intern in a lot of other shops, and this is not how it usually goes down — KPCC is different.”

This difference was a critical aspect of what drew Javier to SCPR in the first place. A young immigrant to the United States, Javier says that her earliest memories include driving in the car with her father, the radio set to National Public Radio, as they got to know the topographic (and, through NPR, the political, social and cultural) landscape of their adopted homeland. As a college student in New Jersey, Javier tuned into SCPR to listen to features like “Make Al Care,” a series dedicated to engaging voters around local elections. “The station didn’t just make Al care, it made me care, too,” she says.

When she was a listener, SCPR fascinated Javier; when she became an intern, it helped her develop her voice as a reporter. “I got to bring my perspective as a young woman in Los Angeles to my work, and to raise issues and events that were important to me on the airwaves,” she says. Javier notes that training positions at SCPR are hands on and translate to real impact in the field — a common refrain among former interns and news apprentices. “My internship experience was much more beneficial than anything else I’ve ever done,” says James Kim, who later became an associate producer on The Frame. “I was able to go out in the field, produce and edit. I even won an award from the L.A. Press Club, beating out professional and senior reporters. That never happens, but it happened here.”

SCPR internships provide opportunities for college students and recent graduates, while news apprenticeships enable people to get an entry level job at the station, either part- or full-time, for up to a year. “These positions are highly competitive, and they are a great way to break into the news business,” Sill says. They also offer an essential grounding in what it takes to make it as a journalist, says former intern Lauren Osen, today the senior producer on AirTalk. “Internships at KPCC teach you to be resourceful and creative and to take ownership of your story, wherever your career ends up taking you.”
For These Donors, SCPR Delivers

For the owners of Rail Delivery Services, one of the market leaders in Southern California’s trucking industry, life on the road offers many rewards — including a chance to listen to KPCC. As important benefactors of the station, Greg and Judi Stefflre are grateful for the insight and stimulation Southern California Public Radio provides. “I drive 60 miles every day between our facility in Fontana and where we live in La Habra Heights,” Greg says. “Without SCPR to keep me company, it would be almost impossible for me to do.”

Judi took a leap of faith in buying Rail Delivery Services — she did not have a background in transportation — and immediately became one of the industry’s only female executives. She decided early on that her focus would be growing a company built on a promise of integrity, and she hears that same commitment in SCPR’s coverage. “Being honest and transparent is the key to this company, just the way it is at KPCC,” she says. “The programming is unbiased and exposes you to so many interesting things.”

That exposure, notes Greg, is essential to the value SCPR brings to the community. “When I was a kid, we had cohesive neighborhoods, and you would really get to know the people around you. Today, that’s the role KPCC plays, breaking us out of our isolated bubbles and introducing us to the world.”

Rail Delivery Services carries freight across the region, but as dedicated KPCC listeners, Greg and Judi broaden their horizons even further. “We don’t ever want to turn for news and information someplace that simply reinforces our own views because then we never learn anything,” Judi says. “KPCC offers incredible depth, and for us, it’s just a great place to donate.”

“The programming is unbiased and exposes you to so many interesting things.”

Fueling the growth of Southern California Public Radio’s dynamic news and public affairs reporting is a critical partnership with The James Irvine Foundation, one of California’s most distinguished philanthropic organizations. The foundation made its first grant to SCPR in 2000 and has contributed several million dollars during the past 16 years.

This year, the foundation provided funding for a unique collaboration between SCPR and three other public radio stations in the state: KQED in San Francisco, KPBS in San Diego and Capital Public Radio in Sacramento. Known as California Counts, the joint initiative enabled the stations to pool resources and share coverage related to the 2016 elections. “We did a lot of planning and coordination of stories on statewide races and propositions,” says Melanie Sill, SCPR’s vice president of content. “It’s been really terrific, and in the long term, it’s great for California to have these stations working together on big stories.”

The foundation expanded its relationship with SCPR via California Counts as an opportunity to empower Californians to understand public policy during an election year. “There’s a long history of quality journalism coming out of public radio, including SCPR,” says foundation Director of Communications Mike Smith. “With its tremendous reach, its commitment to audience diversity and its focus on informing listeners about issues that matter in our state, the station has been a natural partner for us.”

Smith points to various outgrowths of California Counts as an indicator of the grant’s success. “SCPR collaborated with MapLight, a nonprofit working to reveal money’s influence on politics, to produce an in-depth voter guide. They also hosted town hall events up and down the state,” he says. “At the Irvine Foundation, we’re proud of this collaboration and the ways it allowed voters to be heard.”
TRUSTEE PROFILES

TOM CASTRO

When Tom Castro listens to KPCC, he hears a changing world. “Southern California is where Latin America, the United States and Asia converge. Wherever the world is headed, our region is going to get there first, and KPCC will be in the center of it all.” He points with pride to the station’s growing news and public affairs presence. “With newspapers shrinking and TV newscasts emphasizing the sensational, many talented professionals have left those organizations to join KPCC.”

Castro’s life has been informed by change. He grew up in South Los Angeles and Huntington Park, lived in Mexico City and, for the past 18 years, he and his family have made Houston their home. His extended family and leadership commitments make him a frequent visitor to Southern California.

Castro is a trailblazing entrepreneur who has founded and managed four companies in the media and energy export sectors, including the nation’s largest privately held Hispanic-focused company. At age 25, he bought his first radio station, making him the youngest owner in the U.S. at that time. He points with pride to the station’s growing news and public affairs presence. “With newspapers shrinking and TV newscasts emphasizing the sensational, many talented professionals have left those organizations to join KPCC.”

As a special assistant city attorney for the City of Los Angeles, Capri Maddox serves myriad constituencies including the business community and unions, the courts and law enforcement, homeless issues, neighborhood councils and faith-based communities, to name a few. “Keeping it all in perspective can be a challenge. But when I listen to KPCC, it gives me a sense of people’s priorities. I gain insight.”

Soon after becoming a listener, Maddox knew she had joined a unique community whose boundaries extend in every direction. “On any given day, I feel like I have one-on-one time with someone from a different culture, country, or socioeconomic class.” Maddox has served her city in a variety of roles: as a Los Angeles deputy city attorney, she worked in Central Trials, the Neighborhood Prosecutor Program, and the Business & Complex Litigation and General Counsel Sections. Before returning to the Office of the City Attorney at the invitation of City Attorney Mike Feuer, she was president of the City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works.

As a public servant, Maddox values Southern California Public Radio, as a mother, she cherishes it. “I listen with my son. Years from now, he will be more curious about the world as a result. It’s priceless.”

At a time when disagreements and discord dominate the news, Maddox credits SCPR with bringing people together. “It’s more than a radio station, it’s a movement. Our listeners feel connected.”

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Steve Julian

Last April, SCPR mourned the passing of KPCC Morning Edition host Steve Julian, 57, due to complications from brain cancer. For 15 years, Julian was a loyal morning companion for tens of thousands of listeners across Southern California. He also had a busy second career in theater as a playwright, actor and director. “Steve was a singular talent,” recalls Larry Mantle, host of KPCC’s AirTalk. “He is completely irreplaceable.” Below, Mantle offers a look at an exceptional colleague and an extraordinary friend.

I met Steve in early 1983, after I was hired to anchor the afternoon drive-time news block at CBS-affiliate KPVO radio in Riverside. Steve was working there in production, and we hit it off right away. Noticing our easy rapport, the news director asked me if I would like to have Steve co-anchor with me. I thought it was a great idea, and though he had never done news before, Steve’s naturally strong radio presence allowed him to connect with listeners immediately.

We kept in touch when I left for KPCC. For a time, Steve took a break from radio, deciding to follow in his father’s footsteps and become a police officer. He graduated from the police academy at Rio Hondo College and went to work for the Baldwin Park Police Department.

Years later, Steve returned to radio as a traffic reporter on multiple stations including KPCC, ultimately taking on the position of local host of Morning Edition.

Steve’s personal characteristics were a significant part of what made him such a remarkable broadcaster and journalist. He was driven to master what he thought were the most important parts of his job — accuracy, clarity and connection with his audience. He had deep respect for KPCC listeners and felt a strong sense of responsibility to them. These traits complemented his superb news judgment and writing skills and an on-air delivery that was warm and polished.

I miss Steve on multiple levels. I miss hearing him every morning on KPCC telling me what happened while I was asleep. I miss our hours-long conversations about the art of radio over scotch and cigars. Most importantly, I miss his open, nonjudgmental way of giving me insights into my thinking. I’m only now starting to understand how much I learned about myself from our conversations.

My consolation for losing Steve is continuing his work to fulfill the promise of SCPR’s public service mission and all our terrific memories over 33 years of friendship.
Building The 21st Century Newsroom

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of those who have provided initial investment funding to expand in-depth coverage of the most pressing issues facing Southern California today. Thanks to the support of several dedicated individuals and foundations, SCPR is able to produce quality news and programming delivered on multiple platforms: broadcast, digital, social media and live events. Restricted funding towards coverage of these important topics is continually sought, and you can help: contact Nadia Ammar at (626) 583-5169 or nammar@scpr.org.

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Among the awards received for journalistic excellence in 2016

La press Club Awards – Regional
First Place Hard News or News Feature: Stephanie O’Neill, “How Doctors Die”
First Place Investigative: Debra Fernandez, “FARM At Home”
Second Place Investigative: Stephanie O’Neill, “Police and the Mentally Ill: LAPD Unit Praised As Model For Nation”

Edward R. Murrow Award – Regional
Best Investigative Reporting: Large Market Radio: “Officer Injured: A KPCC Investigation”

Golden Mike Awards – Regional
Best News Broadcast Under 15 Minutes: KPCC-FM 4:00pm NewsCast
Best News Story: Frank Stoltze, “In Wake of Public Outcry for October 1, 2015 Newscast”
Best Government and Political Reporting: Meghan McCarty, “Over Shootings, LAPD Training Focuses on Empathy”
Best Investigative Reporting: Karen Foshay, Paul Glickman, “Sex and the LAUSD Teacher”
Best Serious Feature Reporting of One Minute or Longer: Deepa Fernandes, “Missing Kindergarten Is a Big Deal”
Best News Special: “Take Two, “50 Years after the Watts Riots: A Look at the Community’s Past, Present and Future”
Best Government and Political Reporting: Meghan McCarthy, “IMakeAlCare: Taking Voter Apathy One Person at a Time”

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