August 2020

Quotes

“Thank you for such wholesome family content!” – James

“We started this week and my son loves it. Thank You.” – Monica

Friends of Idaho Public Television Inc. Annual Board Meeting

The Friends of Idaho Public Television Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting on August 10, 2020. At the meeting the board will welcome the following new directors from throughout the state: Trent Clark, Jenny Emery Davidson, Jennifer Henderson, Liza Leonard, Con Paulos, Troy St. Pierre, and Heather Stegner. The board will also welcome back to the board the following Emeritus directors from throughout the state: Pat Costello, Byron Defenbach, Jerry Evans, Ron Graves, Roger Grigg, David Hill, Katherine Moriarty Elisabeth Ratcliff, Robert Schreiber, and Gayle Wilde.

In the Community

IdahoPTV Screening and Discussion of Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time”

Join us for a free online screening of Idaho Experience “Ahead of Her Time” on OVEE, an interactive platform that allows viewers to join in on the discussion, August 11 at 8 p.m. Mountain time/7 p.m. Pacific time.

The online screening will feature a Q & A session with the filmmakers. Find more information on the OVEE screening at http://www.ovee.itvs.org/screenings/laiq.
Boise Teacher Katie Mason Named 2020-2021 Idaho Public Television Digital Innovator

Idaho Public Television is delighted to announce that teacher Katie Mason has been named the 2020-2021 IdahoPTV Digital Innovator. As a first grade teacher at Koelsch Elementary in Boise, Mason takes her students to new technological heights.

The Digital Innovator program recognizes Idaho teachers who enhance learning by integrating technology or digital media into their classrooms. Each spring IdahoPTV selects one educator who will serve as Digital Innovator for the following school year.

“We are so excited to welcome Katie Mason to the IdahoPTV family of innovative and inspiring educators. Katie was nominated for this by a parent, which speaks volumes about her,” says Kari Wardle, IdahoPTV Education Manager. “She was chosen because of her ability to ignite in her students a love of learning and technology, which is no small feat since she teaches first grade. I am looking forward to working with Katie during the 2020-2021 school year and in the years to come.”

“Katie Mason is a true go-getter. She serves in various leadership roles at Koelsch and does so honorably,” says Koelsch Principal Pam Dietz. “When Katie is presented with a situation she is solution driven and does what is best for her students and family. She is mindful of the various needs of her students and addresses them with care and compassion. She is a valuable professional at Koelsch and is respected by staff, students and families.”

Mason will have many opportunities to explore new teaching strategies and share her knowledge with other Idaho teachers. Throughout the year, she will partner with IdahoPTV education staff on professional development trainings for teachers around Idaho.

Mason will also receive an expenses-paid trip to the Northwest Council for Computer Education conference in Seattle (March 2021) as well as a classroom innovation kit from IdahoPTV.

Idaho’s First PBS Media Literacy Certified Educator

We are excited to announce that Elizabeth Faddick from the Boise School District has recently completed all of the requirements to become the first teacher in Idaho to be a PBS Media Literacy Certified Educator. This is what she had to say about her experience:

“The PBS Media Literacy Educator Certification provided me in-depth, essential lessons with opportunities to practice, expand, and strengthen my skills in creating and evaluating media. Most importantly, I now feel confident and prepared to teach students how to produce high quality media and to think critically when engaging with media. This is an outstanding professional development opportunity, and I recommend it for all teachers interested in deepening their media literacy skills.”
The PBS KIDS Writers Contest is still receiving entries! The contest is open to children in grades Kindergarten to 3rd grade. Please make sure to read the rules and complete the entry form at idahoptv.org/kids/writers/.

All entries must be postmarked by August 14, 2020. The judging will take place in September, and winners will be notified October 1. The awards ceremonies will be held virtually this year.

“Ahead of Her Time”

– Airs Thursday, August 13, at 8:30 p.m.

In August, America celebrates 100 years of voting rights for women with the anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. By 1920, women in Idaho had already been voting in and winning elections for 24 years. How Idaho became the fourth state to grant women voting rights is the subject of this program. “The fact that Idaho granted women the right to vote almost a quarter of a century before the rest of the nation is a pretty remarkable story and one that isn’t part of the national narrative about the history of women’s voting rights,” says independent documentary producer Jennie Sue Weltner.

“Ahead of Her Time” explores how and why it happened in Idaho and shines a light on some of the remarkable women who made it possible. In late 19th-century America, the idea of voting rights for women was radical and considered the most extreme social experiment since post-Civil War reconstruction. “That Idaho was so ahead of the nation on women’s suffrage is a source of pride for our state and a cause for both celebration and exploration,” says Weltner.

Most of the history about women’s voting rights focuses on the East Coast. However, Western states were leading the way. Wyoming granted women the right to vote in 1870, followed by Colorado (1893), then Utah and Idaho, both in 1896. Utah and Washington state granted women the right to vote earlier, then revoked the privilege.

After Idaho, it took another 14 years for a state to grant suffrage to women. The reasons Western states granted women the right to vote are complex — and Idaho is no exception. Religion, race, politics, paternalism and prohibition all factor into Idaho’s decision.

“Ahead of Her Time” features the region’s top historians and scholars on the subject and digs deep to uncover lost history. The documentary is a partnership between Idaho Public Television and Idaho Women in Leadership.
In the News

PBS at 50: ‘In Deep Service’ Amid Coronavirus Pandemic

By Daniel Holloway

PBS’ 50th anniversary wasn’t supposed to be quite so interesting.

What the public broadcaster had expected was a forward-looking celebration of a half-century of service. But as with any other organization, PBS was forced to change plans in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, PBS has seen its mission made as clear as ever as it has spent its 50th year doing exactly what it was created to do — serve viewers of all ages with an array of programming designed to educate, enlighten, and yes, entertain.

“In many ways I feel that everything that we’ve done over the last 50 years has prepared us for this moment, for everything that we’ve done,” says PBS CEO Paula Kerger. “And so in a strange way, I can’t think of a better way to mark our 50th anniversary than to really be in deep service.”

Every institution in American life has had to pivot since the U.S. onset of the pandemic in March. PBS has pivoted in particularly PBS ways. Its first significant programming move proved to be one of its most important when, shortly after schools shut down in Southern California, Kerger fielded a call from the Los Angeles Unified School District superintendent.

“We worked with some teachers and some programmers,” Kerger says. “And we put a core schedule together, which we offered up as at-home learning.” That lineup, first implanted on PBS SoCal, became a template for public television stations across the country as communities nationwide entered lockdown and schools closed.

PBS’ longstanding association with children’s programming — from “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” and “Sesame Street” to “Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood” and “Odd Squad” — is baked into its identity. “We started as ‘educational television,’” says Kerger.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, television was still a relatively young medium — and the power of broadcast consisted of only three commercial networks dominating the airwaves. The act created the Corp. for Public Broadcasting, which paved the way for PBS and NPR. Johnson said upon signing the act, “It announces to the world that our nation wants more than just material wealth; our nation wants more than a ‘chicken in every pot.’ We in America have an appetite for excellence, too. While we work every day to produce new goods and to create new wealth, we want most of all to enrich man’s spirit.”

Most viewers’ earliest associations with PBS come from exposure to children’s programming. But it also has long since established itself as a leader in a type of thoughtful programming that has difficulty finding a home on commercial television — even in the peak TV era.

The documentarian Ken Burns debuted his first film, “Brooklyn Bridge,” on PBS in 1981, 11 years after the broadcaster launched. He has since become as closely associated with the PBS brand as the late Fred Rogers.

“Public television is exactly what it says it is,” Burns says “Remember PBS’ initials. It’s not the Public Broadcasting System. The ‘S’ is for ‘Service.’ That’s the word — ‘service.’”

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Burns’ programming has played a key role in PBS’ service to its viewers in recent months. Shortly after the pandemic shut down Major League Baseball’s regular season, Burns called Kerger to propose that PBS rebroadcast “Baseball,” the filmmaker’s series about the history of the so-called national pastime. But the conversation soon shifted to another Burns’ landmark film, “The Civil War,” and the role it might play in serving high-school age students and adults living in isolation during quarantine. That conversation led to a reconfiguration of PBS’ schedule, with Thursday night reimagined as a home for historical documentary programming.

Another, more current documentary project, “American Portrait,” had been set to serve as the centerpiece of PBS’ 50th anniversary celebration. Hailing from producer Radical Media, “American Portrait” was intended from the outset to be a multi-platform experience — with an emphasis on the digital platform — that would document how Americans are living now, by asking them to respond to questions such as “What does it mean to be an American today?” The material gathered from users would live first and foremost on the “American Portrait” digital platform, and some of it eventually processed into a documentary series.

But in spring how Americans were living changed radically, and PBS realized that “American Portrait” could be the ideal vehicle through which to address the pandemic. In May, PBS aired “In This Together: An American Portrait Story,” a documentary that relied on material submitted by everyday people to tell the story of the onset of the pandemic.

“The platform that we’ve built is allowing us to crowdfund everybody’s story across the country,” says John Kamen, CEO of RadicalMedia.

“American Portrait” has become a potential new addition to the stable of PBS programs that have themselves become institutions. For PBS and its long-running franchises, credibility has been a watchword. As misinformation moves freely and trustworthy sources of news are attacked routinely by no less than the president of the United States, PBS enjoys an exceedingly rare, broad public trust. That trust extends to shows from “PBS NewsHour” to “Nova,” but is also derived from them, too.

“PBS is absolutely essential to ‘Frontline’ — our brands are symbiotic,” says Raney Aronson, executive producer of the WGBH-produced documentary series.

Focusing on current affairs “Frontline” has tackled not only COVID-19, but also, through digital extensions such as podcast “The Frontline Dispatch,” moved quickly to address even more rapidly evolving stories such as the reemergence of the Black Lives Matter movement after the killing of George Floyd and others.

“PBS has never shied away from us telling those important stories,” Aronson adds.

But just as Johnson hoped that public media would “enrich man’s spirit,” PBS, 50 years on, is doing more than informing — it is providing viewers something more substantial, more curated than is often available from commercial platforms via its arts programming, its science and nature programming and its enduringly popular “Masterpiece” dramas. And as it diversifies its platforms beyond broadcast, it is increasingly sourcing its relationships to its local member stations for content and ideas and more.

“People contribute to their public television stations locally because they trust them,” says Kerger. “They trust them, that they’re going to provide accurate information, that they’re going to play an important role in the life of their community. And so for us, trust has been very much at the heart of how we’ve stayed rooted all these years. Really, trust is something that is very carefully earned over time and can and can be lost in a moment if one isn’t vigilant.”