

Prometheus Radio Project  
Katie Jacoby  
Summer of 2003

As a media activist, I encountered an exceptional opportunity this past summer to work with the initiators of a low power radio service. The Prometheus Radio Project are dedicated to the democratization of the airwaves through the proliferation of non-commercial, community based, micropower radio stations. Thus I spent the entire summer immersed in the exciting world of LPFM.

For those who have grown up ears tuned to the FM dial, it must be difficult to envision any other way the spectrum should be managed. In our generation where most radio stations are mass produced and programming is often piped in from other areas of the country. The cry for localism has largely been silenced by the top twenty hits.

LPFM is easily captured as community radio; stations inspired by a community or organization broadcasted only to those community members. The station's programming is usually centered on localized affairs and retains an educational purpose. I became involved with the Prometheus Project at a few pivotal moments in existence.

On June 2, 2003, the Federal Communications Commission ruled that the current regulations overseeing media ownership were too strict. By a 3-2, party-line vote, the Commissioners dramatically relaxed the controls the government uses to protect the public from monopoly media markets. The common ownership of newspapers and television or radio stations in the same town — previously banned in all but a few special cases — is now permitted in markets that cover 98% of households. We have yet to see the results of this however, Prometheus along with their other media alliances have been working vigorously to roll back these disastrous new regulations.

Specifically concerning LPFM, an independent study was done to verify if LPFM station's signals interfered with full power stations. The MITRE study was released on July 13<sup>th</sup> after two years of waiting. It proved to be in favor of LPFM and actually encouraged the expansion of the service. This began the string of victories for LPFM this summer. Prometheus jumped on this opportunity to urge their supporters to encourage their representatives to reconsider open the application window, enabling the thousands who were denied radio licenses to obtain one.

As I was finishing my internship a small victory Prometheus had been waiting for finally arrived. Michael Powell chairman of the FCC came out in support of LPFM. This change of heart has the potential to mean wonders for advocates of community radio.

As most internships go, my duties ranged from menial office labors to massive database mail outs; to personal letter writing to supporters of LPFM and various research projects on obscenity regulations for low power stations. I encourage anyone who is interested in observing legal means of media democracy building to work with

Prometheus. You will walk away from the experience learning much more than just about seizing the airwaves. Much thanks to the Human Rights Project and in particular Thomas Keenan for making this experience possible.

Visit : [www.prometheusradio.org](http://www.prometheusradio.org) for extensive information concerning LPFM .  
If you have any questions please feel free to email me at: [Katie@mediadiversity.org](mailto:Katie@mediadiversity.org)