

THE SECRET LIFE OF KZYX

A MINORITY REPORT

By King Collins
KZYX Board Member, 2003-2005

Spring, 2005

The truth has to be repeated. It doesn't become stale just because it has been told once. So keep repeating it. Don't bother about who has listened, who has not listened...You've got to keep repeating different facts, prove the same point.

- Eqbal Ahmad. Pakistani scholar

The first draft of this pamphlet was given to board and staff only at the February 2005 KZYX board meeting. I hoped there would be some thoughtful responses from my colleagues on the other side of the isle, so to speak. By the other side of the isle, I mean the board majority, "the Centrists." Their main tactic was to not respond at all, however there was a lively dialog especially among the programmers.

Update - Summer 2011: I am sending copies to and requesting responses from a few KZYX programmers and board members with the intent to raise again the issues of organizational style and transparency.

Part 2 of the Secret Life Of KZYX includes responses to the original pamphlet from programmers, staff and bard.

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**The Changing of the Guard
at the April 11, 2005 KZYX Board Meeting**

Top row: Robert Crawford, Charlie Hochberg, Tony Miksak, Mike Grady, Jane Futhcher, King Collins (Me); **Bottom row:** Zack Zackary, Lynda McClure, Antonia Lamb, Johanna Cummings, Wendy Blankenheim. The 2005 election replaced Zackary with Lamb, and Collins with Futhcher. Want to know more about how the board works and the issues we discuss? Want to know what these folks think of the Minority Report? Read on.

Community Control : The Larger Picture

What is going on with public and community media—including television, radio, internet and print—is important for a lot of reasons. It is often said that a democracy requires that everyone have access to information and opinion. That has always been true. But at this moment, we stand on the brink of a breathtaking change in communication. Computer or “digital” technology is opening the door to interactive, back and forth, communication at all levels of government and social life.

Real popular control over community media is now technically possible. I don’t claim to know a lot about that technology, but “we” regular folks had better set up some structures (local media committees, perhaps) to keep us all informed about what is happening. Our city councils and the county board of supervisors are and will be making important decisions about our public media and communications infrastructure. Much of the infrastructure (telephone lines, fiber-optic, satellite, cable modem, DSL, ISDN) is beyond the scope of this publication except to point out that public control over communications requires some of us, at least, to think about it.

Popular control of local media is neither a Republican nor a Democratic issue, neither conservative nor liberal. The desire for more control over our lives crosses the usual political borders. Everyone wants it.

King Collins

Introduction

This pamphlet presents a vision for Mendocino's community radio station, KZYX&Z, in which **members** have greater knowledge of and control over the station's organization and programming than currently exists, and in which board, staff and programmers meet together to discuss and improve working conditions and the quality of on-air programming.

It also discusses events that have taken place at KZYX over the last two years. During that time, I have been a member of the station's Board of Directors. My term ends this spring (2005). In truth, my term on the board has been a trying experience. It's very tempting to just move on and put the whole experience behind me. But then I would feel that I have given up on trying to change things that very much need to be changed at my favorite radio station.

So I am going to run again for the board, but this time I am going to do so with a clear and broadly discussed agenda. My views and the changes I want to bring about are presented here. None of it is written in stone. I am going to do whatever I can to get feedback from anyone who cares, especially you who are subscribing members of this community radio station. This document reflects a lot of feedback already from friends and colleagues. Some have suggested that I remove references to individuals; after some reflection, I've decided to leave them. Better to err on the side of openness, I think.

What is written here is, first and foremost, my own opinion. However, in speaking for myself, I think I am also speaking for quite a few others. At any rate, I'll find out soon.

This pamphlet includes a discussion of the station's board of directors and some of the issues we have dealt with over the last two years. The primary purpose, however, is to put some proposals before the 2500 members of KZYX.

A Good Time For Change

As of February 21, 2005, the station has been without a General Manager (GM) for over 7 months, and it will be at least another three months before we can hire another. In fact, keeping a General Manager has been a problem since the beginning of KZYX. There have been a lot of GMs and most of them have quit or been fired within two or three years.

In this in-between-time we have an excellent opportunity to bring about positive changes in attitude and organization and establish new policies that we want the next GM to carry out. We need to figure out what we, the members, want from our radio station, and what style of leadership we expect before, not after, we hire the next GM.

Who Am I?

My name is King Collins. I've lived in the Mendocino County since the mid eighties. I have raised a family in Ukiah, and lived and worked around the county as an electrician, a desktop publisher, a teacher at Mendocino College, and sometimes as a journalist.

I have been interested and involved in community media for a long time. I am an unapologetic agitator for public disclosure and free speech.

As a member/listener I always felt left out and poorly informed. So when I was elected to the board two years ago, I saw it as my responsibility to be open (transparent) and frank, and to keep in touch with the members who elected me.

The Purpose Of This Publication

This pamphlet is in part a report to the members on the state of the station. It is the kind of report that I, as a member-subscriber, would like to have on a regular basis. I hope you will stay tuned to my effort to explain what is happening at your community radio station. Beyond reporting, I hope to:

1) Clarify and broadcast a viewpoint held by a minority of the existing board members, and to show the consistency with which that minority has represented that viewpoint. To solicit feedback and to find out if a substantial number of other individuals among the membership, the staff, and the programmers agree with this point of view.

2) Stimulate a healthy discussion to bring forward a few clearly stated proposals. These proposals will be examined and discussed in front of and *with the participation of* the entire membership. The membership can vote for proposals by mail, as stipulated in the bylaws. (See Appendix.) Any proposals which receive majority approval become an “Act of the Membership” and a mandate for the board to follow. This would put an end to much of the isolation, confusion, and bickering, at the board level.

Cast of Characters

Many members and even some board members are not familiar with the basics of the station. Here, briefly, is a description of the physical plant, the legal form, and the people who comprise KZYX/Z. (At the date of this writing, Draft 1, the numbers below are approximate.)

The Physical Plant. Our main studio is located in Philo, California. In order to provide a signal for the entire Mendocino county area with its many hills and valleys, there are two major transmitters, one operating at 90.7 and the other at 91.5. A third smaller one on the coast transmits to the Fort Bragg area at 88.3 . The main transmitters are currently being

upgraded to provide a stronger signal and modernize the Philo studio. There are also two satellite studios, one in Mendocino and the other in Willits. The satellite studios provide production facilities for community members and programmers who live at a distance from Anderson Valley.

Mendocino Community Public Broadcasting. A nonprofit corporation, a “501(c)3,” set up 15 years ago to establish and maintain our community radio station. According to the mission statement (See Appendix.), the radio station’s “programming and operational philosophy *is controlled by the membership*, which is open to all.” These are the exact words of the mission statement. Keep these words in mind as you read on.

The Members. About 2,500 paid members who collectively comprise the largest membership organization in the county, all contributing money or volunteering time to our organization. During the recent pledge drive (Fall 2004), members contributed \$95,000 in ten days. These twice yearly pledge drives and other gifts, grants, and contributions from underwriters amount to about \$250,000 every year. The members are undoubtedly the station’s most valuable resource. There are, of course, even more people who listen to the station and make no direct contribution to it. The number of non-subscribing listeners is estimated to be at least 20,000. Our membership has not grown much, languishing between 2000 and 2500, for a long time.

The Board. Elected by the members *to represent their interests* and to uphold the mission of the radio station. How to do this is one of the big issues of the board. There are nine board members: two from Anderson Valley, two from the coast, two from inland, two “at large” and one elected by (but for the past half dozen years not specifically representing) the programmers. The next election of the board will take place in February, 2005.

The Staff. Approximately ten paid workers. (For a current list of paid staff, see Appendix). What are they paid? Well, I can’t tell you that because, according to some, there is a law or policy against disclosing an employee’s salary, even when the salary is paid by the membership. I believe this information should be available to the membership upon request, and, according to Joe Wildman, who negotiated union www.greenmac.com

contracts all across the county, there is no legal reason to withhold salary information from the membership of our nonprofit. You can get a pretty good idea of salaries if you look closely at the budget (Appendix).

The Programmers. Approximately 200 volunteers, who provide on-air programming for KZYX&Z.

The Volunteers. Approximately 100 local community people work for the station, mostly answering phones and helping out during pledge drive, coordinated by the Volunteer Coordinator, a paid staff member.

The Board of Directors and Its “Tendencies”

We on the board have typically divided over key issues. I will show that there is consistency in those splits that points to two “tendencies” on the board. I use the word “tendency” to describe two perspectives or leanings, and two distinct groupings.

I have named the tendencies “Centrist” and the “Egalitarian.” In this pamphlet the word Centrist will refer to those who seek to concentrate power and control in governing bodies. In contrast, the word Egalitarian refers to those who believe individuals should have equal rights in all areas of social and political life. Here, of course, such words are applied to the social and political structure of KZYX&Z.

On the current KZYX&Z board, the tendencies are represented as follows:

Centrists: Tony Miksak, Johanna Cummings, Wendy Blankenheim, Charlie Hochberg

Egalitarians: King Collins, Zac Zachary, Lynda McClure

The remaining two board members, Claire Lobel, who recently resigned, and Robert Crawford, are less predictable in their votes, but they have often voted with the Centrists. Consequently, as the record shows, the Centrists have maintained the majority on key issues.

The two tendencies have often clashed during the two years I have been a member of the board. Former board members Lanny Cotler and Els Cooperrider say the same divisions operated in the years before my term began, with the Centrists dominating board decisions.

The Centrist Point of View

As the name implies, the Centrists want decision-making concentrated around a central authority. In their view:

- Board members should adhere to current ways of doing things, the *status quo*.
- The Board President should decide which committees exist and who will chair those committees.
- Board members are expected to keep out of “operational” matters and rely on the General Manager for knowledge of what is happening at the station.
- Board members are not to be involved in, *or even publicly discuss*, programming.
- The proper role of board members is only to discuss and act on “policy,” long range planning, fund-raising, and hiring or firing of the General Manager.
- Board members should maintain “confidentiality” about board discussions and support the majority view as if it were the unified opinion of the board.

According to the Centrists, board members should always project a rosy picture about what is happening at the station, never inquire into what is going on with staff or programmers. The ideal board members would also jump enthusiastically at every request to raise money for the station.

The Egalitarian Point of View

The Egalitarian board members generally support the following points:

- All aspects of our community radio station should be run in a democratic fashion, according to simple and clear protocols.
- At the board level, all board members are equals; the board president is a facilitator, rather than arbiter, in board meetings and other matters, including the selection of committees and committee chairpersons.
- Board-staff relations are direct (unmediated) and organized so that the ideas and concerns of each are shared. The GM, if there is one, encourages the sharing of information, so that the board is aware of staff needs and concerns, and vice versa.
- Staff and board meet regularly as a committee-of-the-whole in open, family-style meetings, so that board and staff have a better understanding of what is going on, and board members can make effective use of their skills in cooperative endeavors.
- Programmers have a voice and a consistent way of communicating among themselves and with board and staff.
- The membership is considered a valuable resource, not just for funding and volunteer labor, but also as a source of ideas and creativity. Therefore, it is a priority to establish permanent and effective means of communication between membership, board and staff.
- Board and station issues are regularly reported to the membership in a public forum, such as a monthly radio show. Issues are transparently reported on, and feedback from the membership is welcomed.

Major Issues For The Radio Station And The Board

Below is a list of major issues as I see them, and a description of the positions taken by the two sides on each. These interpretations are mine, but the two other “Egalitarians” on the board have indicated that they agree with most of what is written here. As for the Centrists, I await their input.

How should programming decisions be made? For many years, the Programming Director has been the sole arbiter of on-air programming. In response to long-standing agitation by members and programmers, the board established the “Programming Policy Committee” to discuss and make recommendations about how programming decisions should be made. In contrast to our mission statement, which says that “programming is controlled by its membership,” the Centrists want to keep the membership’s elected representatives, the Board, completely out of programming matters. The Centrists also generally agree that the Program Director should have the final say about the nature and the power of any kind of program “advisory committee.”

The Egalitarians feel that the board should at least be free to express its opinion on programming matters and that the staff should do what it can to accommodate those suggestions. More importantly, the Egalitarians have suggested that the board should set up a “Programming Council,” which would include members, programmers, board members, staff, and members of the Community Advisory Board (see below). The Programming Council would have a major say in important programming decisions, such as creating new programs, hiring and firing individual programmers, or anything that is controversial. The position of Program Director would better be called “Program Coordinator” whose job description would include doing the day-to-day work of *coordinating* on-air programming and developing the program schedule in cooperation with the Programming Council.

Community Advisory Board (CAB). The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) requires that our radio station set up a board of 5 regular members (unaffiliated with staff or board) called the

Community Advisory Board, which is to have, at least, advisory status in programming and other board/staff matters. Lynda McClure, in her position as chair of the Advisory Group Committee, has held several meetings in each of the five KZYX/Z areas (Appendix). According to the current plan, one CAB member will be elected from each of the five areas. But will the Advisory Board have any teeth (real decision making power)? In answer to that question, McClure has suggested that some or all the members of the Advisory Board should be seated on the Programming Council.

The Centrists have not yet spoken on the issue, but presumably they will line up against giving significant power to the Community Advisory Board.

Relationship between board and staff. This is a crucial matter to both tendencies. The Centrists, or “structuralists” as Wendy Blankenheim calls herself, argue that what is going on at the station, in the area of operations and personnel, is solely the concern of the General Manager. Board members, therefore, should deal only with the General Manager. If we don’t like what she or he is doing, then our only recourse is to fire her or him. We are not allowed to give direction to the General Manager, according to the Centrists. Not a great choice.

The Egalitarians are inclined to see our radio station, not so much as a nonprofit corporation with a lot of prohibitions on what we can and can’t do, but more as a bunch of people (some paid, some not, some elected, some not) all doing their best to run the radio station and live up to our mission. Therefore, rather than having a fire wall between board and staff, the station would be run more like a small cooperative or family business. Board and staff, including the manager, would meet together regularly in open discussion so that board members (those that are interested) would get to know more about the day-to-day operations of the station, and how each could contribute. The staff, likewise, would get to know more about board concerns, and the skills and interests of individual board members.

How to deal with the irate members at board meetings. One of my first experiences as a KZYX board member involved heavy criticism of

the board from the floor. Faced with nasty, aggressive, but sometimes well-informed people, some board members felt that the critics had gone too far and should be rebuked and thrown-out. How was this to be done? “Well,” said one board member, “we can hire an off-duty policeman.” I can hardly imagine a more ridiculous idea. Can you just see the headlines? Others, including me, thought that the officious and rigid board meeting style, set by well-meaning board president Adam Springwater, were as much a problem as the nastiness of the critics. Unfortunately Adam Springwater was offended that some of us did not jump to his defense. At those meetings, which were early in my term, the tendencies began to form, with the majority of the board choosing to circle the wagons and strike back at the critics.

How should board agendas and committees be set? The bylaws give wide latitude to the president in setting up committees and other work. When I first came on the board, the president, Adam Springwater, took it upon himself to set the agenda and sometimes rejected agenda items proposed by other board members. This was a departure from the practice of previous boards which accepted agenda items from all board members. The Centrists supported the president in preventing some agenda items from reaching the agenda. The Egalitarians wanted to allow any board member to put an item on the agenda. After Adam Springwater left the board, the issue came up again and finally the board voted unequivocally to let any board member put an item on the agenda. This is an example of a hard-fought battle to establish something that many boards take for granted.

Confidentiality of board email. In the periods between board meetings, much discussion occurs among board members via email. Board members belong to an email group called a “listserv” which enables each of us to conveniently email all the other board members at once. The Centrist position is that the content of these emails should be considered confidential. The Egalitarians argue that to keep our listserv confidential is inappropriate - that in effect we are holding a continuous closed meeting, which is probably illegal. According to the bylaws, closed meetings can be held only for specific limited purposes. The matter of

keeping all listserv discussions private (even those NOT dealing with budget or personnel) came up many times when one of us would reveal to the membership what was being discussed on the board listserv. Once I was accused of disloyalty to the board for revealing to the Ukiah Satellite Support Group that a matter concerning the studio would be on the next board agenda. This issue has never been formally resolved.

The problems of the satellite studios. Some of the difficulties encountered by the satellite studios are engineering problems. These should begin to recede as we learn to use the new digital technology that is currently being installed (see Engineering below). But there are also social issues. Many of the satellite studio workers and programmers (all of whom are volunteers) feel that they are treated like second class citizens by the station staff in Philo. They say their complaints about inadequate equipment, equipment failures, and technical glitches, have been neglected. One can hardly blame anyone in particular, but once again, if the board were brought into the discussion, we would at least be able to offer our skills and help find solutions.

In Ukiah, we encountered another problem. On December 9, 2003, Ukiah residents turned out in record numbers at the KZYX/Z board meeting to support the establishment of a Ukiah satellite studio. In the presence of so much support, *including a city councilman and a county supervisor*, the board voted unanimously to establish a committee, with me as the chair, to create a satellite studio in the Ukiah area as soon as possible. After the committee began to meet, we selected Doug Hundley as the coordinator for the Ukiah studio, and me as “board liaison.”

The Ukiah studio committee thought—as did everyone I know who attended the December 9 meeting—that we were expected to move ahead and begin to implement the board’s mandate to create the satellite studio. We soon discovered that our progress had to be *very* closely monitored by the GM, Diane Hering. We were not allowed to control the money (\$6,000) that had already been donated for the Ukiah studio; Any letters sent out for promotion had to be OKed by Diane. Doug Hundley entered into lengthy negotiations with Diane to get us underway, but finally he gave up. His lengthy reports are a study in great patience and frustration. Meanwhile, the board Centrist majority attempted to backtrack on its

agreement. When Tony Miksak became president, he discontinued the Ukiah Studio Committee, and therefore me as chair.

I raised the question of how and why a committee established by unanimous vote of the board (on Dec. 9) could be eliminated by the new board president four months later. Once again the board split: the Egalitarians supported the group acting to create the studio, and the Centrists voted as a majority to support the General Manager's delaying tactics and the board president's elimination of the Ukiah committee.

Faced with this situation, the leaders of the Ukiah Studio Committee decided to withdraw from the immediate effort to create a satellite studio. The studio activists instead invested their energy in the budding KMEC station, which recently began broadcasting to the Ukiah area from a newly-constructed studio.

What this series of events shows is how little support there is for independent activity coming from outside the Philo studio. The loss is not only to Ukiah residents, but to the entire membership. In fact, the Ukiah group includes individuals with great expertise who would be very helpful in dealing with the engineering problems we now have at Philo and the other studios. But the Philo folks have shown no interest in asking them for support.

I have described this issue at length because it shows quite well the schism between the Egalitarians and the Centrists.

Station grievance procedures. There is a long-standing problem of not having, and at other times not using, a proper grievance procedure. Staff and programmers who have complaints have not gotten a proper review and possible redress of grievances. The best-known instance of this is the case of Sister Yasmin, but there are others, including Toni Orans, whose childrens' show was cancelled. I think it is fair to say that Sister Yasmin's case was seriously mishandled. I don't think the board or anyone else is entirely to blame, but the Program Director's imperious style and the board's always-awkward attempts to deal with such situations are part of the problem. In respect for Yasmin, she has provided much useful information, especially about the way programming decisions are made at other stations. Indeed, our membership includes a number

of “counselors” who would have volunteered them time, expertise, and caring to help keep a valued programmer on board.

When to elect board officers. At this time, board officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) who constitute the Executive Committee are elected at the meeting at which new board members are seated. Consequently, board members may have little or no knowledge of each other. The Centrists, as usual, are satisfied with the way things are. Their majority will most likely select the “slate.” The Egalitarian position is that we should elect officers only after we have worked with each other for a while. A proposal to this effect is currently before the board.

Selection of the Interim Management Team. After GM Diane Hering’s resignation in July of 2004, an Interim Management team was established. The board as a whole had *no role* in picking that team, which turned out to consist of the president of the board, Tony Miksak, and two staff members. Obviously, the Egalitarians would have liked to discuss such an important decision and to participate on the team. The Centrists ask, “Don’t you trust Tony?” That’s a complicated question, but there is another more important point: by putting the station under the leadership of a Centrist and by discouraging other board members from being involved in management, the approach to running the station, once again, falls to the status quo. Only the chosen few board members are permitted at management meetings. The absence of a manager ought to be a chance for the board to be more involved, to get to know the staff, and to put their individual skills to work. It is also, as we have mentioned earlier, an opportune time for the Board to re-tune its policies and vision, thus making it possible for the next General Manager to follow new guidelines from day one.

Style of leadership at the station. Under Diane Hering, the previous GM, the station was managed tightly, and in general the board was not privy to much of what was going on. Our only source of information was the GM’s report at board meetings, and we were discouraged from obtaining information in other ways. As an illustration, I once sought to discuss some disturbing rumors I had heard about staff relations. When

I asked Diane about those rumors she said “It’s none of your business.” The Centrists would probably agree that my inquiries were out of order. Johanna Wildoak says that the GM should be a “hub between board, staff and programmers” and, I would add, a filter, which sanitizes the information passed on to the board. The Egalitarians want a GM to be, not primarily a hub, which implies control, but a facilitator who encourages frank communication between board, staff, programmers, and members

Engineering and the change to digital technology. The board and staff have been slow to react to the gap created by the retirement of our chief engineer, Ron O’Brien, a professional RF (Radio Frequency) engineer, he has provided faithful and dedicated service to our station since he set up the Philo studio and the transmitter 15 years ago. In addition to many other contributions, he set up the production facilities at our two satellite studios in Mendocino and Willits. After he retired, Diane Hering, the station manager, hired Owen Otoole as the chief engineer. Owen was not a trained engineer, but agreed to work with Ron (who stayed on as a part-time contract worker) to learn the trade on the job. I have been impressed with Owen’s intelligence and good will, and even more with his ability to get along in the difficult and demanding work situation in Philo and at the studios. But whatever his merits, he has decided to move on, leaving the station with an engineering void.

Fortunately, Ron has returned to help, but only on a very part-time basis. The board needs to concern itself with the situation, not only because it needs a full time engineer, but also someone who understands that the new digital technology is both a challenge and a major opportunity. Considering how well the station is functioning without a GM, I believe that finding a new engineer is a higher priority than finding a new General Manager.

Communication with members. Since I’ve been on the board, I have brought up this issue many times. A community radio station ought to be an example of interactive communication. I’ve put forward several ideas, including a special board-listener call-in show. Tony Miksak and

I, working together (at the beginning of our term before he became president of the board) tried to set up a board call-in show.

Tony and I finally convinced GM Diane Hering, a self-described “control freak,” that the board should do its own call-in show. But when the Program Director (name deleted) was contacted to find a place on the schedule, she wouldn’t give us the time of day. “Our listeners would not be interested in that,” said (name deleted). And that was that. Even elected board members who want on-air time to communicate with listeners have no recourse when the Program Director doesn’t like the idea. Lots of luck if you’re a mere programmer or a lowly member.

The newsletter, *Radio Waves* is another way to communicate with members. There was a time, a few years ago, when it was a pretty informative and interesting publication. However, at this time the newsletter is nothing more than a programming schedule with a few puff pieces. In fact, most of us on the board were not notified or invited to participate in any of the recent newsletters. Why shouldn’t the board help produce the *Radio Waves*? Well, of course, the real reason is that be that “some people” (like me) cannot be trusted to keep to the Centrist line?

A good newsletter could provide substantial content. Some of us on the board have the skills to make that happen. Would you, as a staff member, programmer, or subscriber like that?

For the moment, the only way to talk to the board directly is to call, write or email individual board members. However, as of the publication of this pamphlet, some other means will be available. Please see contact information.

Staff attitude. The board has discussed staff relations and in particular the way some staff members have been abusive toward board members, programmers and volunteers. I think this is the kind of thing the board should most definitely deal with.... [The remainder of this section on staff attitude was deleted by the author according to an agreement reached in closed session. The closed session was called in response to a grievance against me by a staff person, who felt his or her reputation was being damaged by what was written there. I immediately offered to remove the passages in question and did so, with the understanding that the deletions

are done as a courtesy to the individual involved and in no way impugns the truth of those statements.]

Fund-raising. If ever there was a mantra for board members, it is that the board should concern itself with fund-raising. “FUND-RAISING, FUND-RAISING, FUND-RAISING!!! This needs to be on the top of our agenda. We need to come up with between \$30,000 and \$60,000 before the end of the business year (July, 2005). This will take ALL of our creative time and energy!” says Centrist Cummings.

One might ask, if fund-raising is the most important board issue, why hasn't one of the Centrists taken charge of the fund-raising committee? Could it be that other committees, the more political ones (like the Programming Policy Committee, which Johanna Cummings chairs) are actually more important to the Centrists?

Fund-raising is obviously an important part of board work. Furthermore, it is quite clear that the success of fund-raising depends greatly on several things, including the vitality of the programming, the attitude projected by the staff and board, and other factors. It follows that improvements in these areas are as important as fund-raising alone.

Fund-raising is also closely related to increasing the membership, which, as previously noted, has not grown significantly for some time. Currently, our membership includes a large number of politically progressive, ecologically minded folks. According to our mission statement, we should reach beyond our current membership and find ways to engage the rest of the population. However, this is a controversial idea, since many of us, Centrists and Egalitarians, feel that it is fine for the station to cater to the progressive subculture.

If we choose to broaden our base, we need to analyze the existing social structure and determine what circles (people who associate with each other regularly) do not listen to us, and find out what we can do to pique their interest. This doesn't mean changing our views, it means opening our airways to opposing points of view. Some people think that bringing in new and different voices makes more exciting and compelling radio.

Our major fund-raising operations, aside from pledge drives, have been on-air auctions, the Wild Iris (folk) Music Festival, and special

speakers, like Amy Goodman. Some of these events are extremely labor intensive and not worth much in the way of income.

There are also the major donors—the large givers who have to be cultivated and maintained by the GM or fund-raising Board Members.

As for the current \$30,000 crisis, I have suggested that we should increase what we raise at pledge drives, work on increasing membership, and look at a big fund-raiser within the larger society that will bring in new members from the missing circles. For example, blue-collar workers and young people might be brought in by a country music or rock-and-roll festival (with big names, like Willie Nelson or Jackson Brown).

These are just thumbnail sketches that will require a lot of discussion and work if they are to succeed. But it seems obvious that our chances of raising serious money, would be greatly increased if we mined the membership for ideas.

Obstacles To Change

Manipulation and fear of conflict. The changes in attitude and structure proposed here are designed not to eliminate differences of opinion and reduce conflict, but to make them transparent to everyone, and to invite interested parties to give their opinion. In this open environment, conflicts can be resolved and solutions found. When direct conflict is avoided and ideas are not discussed in a balanced way, manipulation takes root. Even progressive folks, who believe they have the station's best interest at heart, resort to finagling and personal attack.

Anderson Valley clique. A few Anderson Valley residents, most of whom have been involved with the station for a long time, control the atmosphere and operations of the station. These folks are wary of any change that would cause the center of gravity to move away from them, either politically or geographically. They don't represent the interests of the coast or the inland areas of the county. Even in Anderson Valley, many who live there feel excluded. One former member claims that 2/3 of the creative people in Anderson Valley feel excluded from the station.

Inefficient Process. Ragged, sometimes irrational rules, still limit the ability of board and staff to work effectively. Among those are the rules for the annual membership meeting which requires a quorum of one half of the membership plus one (about 1250 people!). Under those rules there will never be an annual membership meeting where business can be conducted. There are many other examples, including the fact that new board members must elect board officers at their very first meeting, when many are not even acquainted with each other.

Official board meeting policy (adopted September 8, 2002) states that decision making "generally follows" a particular book called *Roberta's Rules of Order*, by Alice Collier Cochran. I found the book, when I finally read it, to be full of useful guidelines and specific methods for conducting democratic meetings. It could really help create a efficient and responsive process. In fact, Ms. Alice Collier Cochran is an Egalitarian. Tony Miksak, board president, has said that he doesn't think much of her book.

Conclusion

In case you are wondering, the purpose of this publication is not to get me elected to this contentious board of directors. In fact, when I began to write this, I had decided *not* to run, but to leave this pamphlet as my parting shot. I felt hurt and I thought to myself: OK for you, you mean ol' Centrists, I'm just going to quit and you won't have King and his ideas to kick around anymore.

And who needs all the work and commitment. If the job is taken seriously, it takes a *lot* of volunteer time, and I was kind of looking forward to not having to come to so many meetings and work parties, and not worrying about making good on-air pitches at pledge time.

But then, as I wrote, I decided that it would not be responsible to quit without offering the membership a clear shot at realizing the democratic, cooperative model that is proposed here. So I will campaign on that model.

But most importantly, the success of this publication depends on whether it engenders clear, understandable proposals which are put to the entire membership. Then if the answer is that the membership likes the Egalitarian model. Great. It's up to the board and staff to deliver. And If the members don't like it. Fine. I'll fade away.

King Collins
February 8, 2005

The Next Step For This Publication

The current draft of this pamphlet is being distributed to all board members and staff. The comments and criticisms from these two groups may result in some changes in the document, and will also provide the groundwork for the proposals that are to be put before membership, by mail, as described above.

After board and staff have reviewed this document, and their comments noted, *The Secret Life of KZYX* will be made more widely available, in time for the discussions at the forthcoming board elections.

* * *

EPILOG

As stated in the Conclusion “The success of this publication depends on whether it engenders clear, understandable proposals which are put to the entire membership.” Unfortunately that has not happened yet. The election process became a game of trying to discredit the author and his friends. Very little time was spent talking about the content. In fact the primary tactic of the opposition---most of the radio station staff and board majority---was and is to simply ignore the pamphlet. Tony Miksak, the president of the board went so far as to say that he had never read it.

The election pitted me against Jane Futhcher. Jane is a very nice person and at the time it of the election, she made very complimentary references to it. She won the election.

Thereafter, I sought to have this pamphlet mailed to the membership at my expense, but was turned down. To date, no proposals regarding egalitarian organizational structure have reached the members.

However, a lively dialog about the Secret Life has taken place and can be seen in Issue 2 and 3 of the *Mendocino County Media Forum* at www.greenmac.com

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For more about KZYX and responses to this pamphlet

**SEE WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID
AT
WWW.GREENMAC.COM**

* * *

Appendices

Appendix A: KZYX/Z Mission Statement

Appendix B: Paid Staff

Appendix C: What We Pay For Programming

Appendix D: Board of Directors

Appendix X: KZYX Broadcast Range

Appendix A

KZYX&Z Mission Statement

KZYX&Z, 90.7 and 91.5, is the community non-commercial radio station of Mendocino County, serving several counties in Northern California. Its programming and operational philosophy is controlled by its membership, which is open to all. Through its dedication to balanced, excellent programming, Mendocino County Public Broadcasting will reflect the rich diversity of the county, while promoting a sense of community across such a large and varied area. The finest in national public radio programs will be made available, as well as local programs that will be creatively and professionally produced, responding to the needs of the community.

KZYX&Z pledges to be a responsible and responsive county-wide medium for news, information, music, performing arts, entertainment, and local features. KZYX&Z sees its programming as a complement to the work of Mendocino's commercial media. The station will seek to foster increased communication among all groups in the county and will make access available to all points of view.

* * *

Appendix B

Paid Staff

General Manager: Vacant (Diane Hering resigned July, 2004. She had been in the job for about three years). The board conducted a search, Fall 2004, but was unable to find a replacement as of February, 2005.

Chief Engineer: Vacant. Ron O'brien resigned about 3 years ago. Replaced by Owen Otoole who recently went to temporary part-time status.

Operations Manager: Burton Segall, kzyx@kzyx.org

Program Director: Mary Aigner, mary@kzyx.org

News Director: Annie Esposito, annie@kzyx.org

Bookkeeper: Gwyn Smith. gwyn@kzyx.org

Underwriting Coordinator: Christina Carpenter, underwrite@kzyx.org

Membership Director: Jacqueline Migell, membership@kzyx.org

Volunteer Coordinator: Loretta Houck, volunteer@kzyx.org

Appendix C

What We Pay For Programming

NPR	
Morning Edition and All Things Considered	\$20,194
Fresh Air.....	\$3,017
Car Talk	\$5,373
Piano Jazz.....	\$ 664
Total for NPR	\$29,248
PRI	
BBC World Report.....	\$1,700
This American Life	\$1,700
Total for PRI.....	\$3400
APR A Prairie Home Companion	\$4,064
PACIFICA Membership.....	\$3,630
FREE SPEECH NEWS (FSN).....	\$1,800
WINGS	\$ 0
FAIR.....	\$240
 TOTAL FOR ALL PROGRAMMING	 \$42,382

Appendix X

KZYZ/Z FM Signal Areas

KZYZ - Proposed
Latitude: 39-19-35 N
Longitude: 123-16-10 W
Power: 1.70 kW
Channel: 218
Frequency: 91.5 MHz
AMSL Height: 1021.0 m

60 dBu COVERAGE

KZYZ
Population: 84,219

KZYZ
Population 68,429

KZYZ - Proposed
Population 84,219
First Public Radio Service
Population 3,023

Census 2000 Data



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