



THE SECRET LIFE OF KZYX

Part 2

*A Contribution
To Community Radio
And Direct Democracy*

*King Collins
KZYX Board 2003-2005*

Published by

GREENMAC

2100 Road D • Redwood Valley CA 95470

www.greenmac.com

info@greenmac.com

707-468-5513

**Introduction to
The Secret Life OF KZYX
Part 2 - The Responses**

This pamphlet contains responses and reactions from members, programmers, staff and board to the original 2005 pamphlet, The Secret Life Of KZYX. The original pamphlet itself is available at www.greenmac.com (see below).

I feel it is important to put it out with all the responses to show that there is a real interest in these issues, There is good material here and for the most part it would be forgotten if not for this publication. There are a few reactions that probably should have been left in the trash bin. But in this case I thought it best to keep the chaff with the seed.

Looking over the original pamphlet, I find it stands up well even though it was written six years ago. The issues are still relevant because, unfortunately, not much has changed.

There are two articles, one by Lynda McClure and the other by Jim Tarbell that are of historical value, especially Tarbell's, which covers events and thinking at the station from the beginning through the mid-nineties.

There is much more to be said. For the moment, I am satisfied to put these contributions in one place, where they can be read and reread, by those who are interested.

*King Collins
April, 2011*

The Secret Life of KZYX is available for download at:
[http://www.greenmac.com/hiddenAgenda/report-PDF/SL1_KZYX_2005\(2010\).pdf](http://www.greenmac.com/hiddenAgenda/report-PDF/SL1_KZYX_2005(2010).pdf)



THE SECRET LIFE OF KZYX

Part 2

RESPONSES AND REACTIONS TO *THE SECRET LIFE OF KZYX*,

MEMBERS

Harold Enns	7
Vivian Power	9
Joe Louis Wildman	10
Mitch Zucker	11

PROGRAMMERS

Letter To Programmers	15
Todd Telfer	16
Greg Krouse	19
Janie Rezner	20
Jan Wax	21
Jim Tarbell	22
Jeffrey Blankfort	23
WDan, The Tree House	24

STAFF

Owen O'toole	28
--------------------	----



BOARD

Tony Miksak.....	35
Jane Futcher	38
Antonia Lamb.....	38
Mike Grady	39
Robert Crawford.....	40
Lynda McClure.....	42

TWO HISTORIES

An Insider View - 2001	47
5 Years On The Board 1991-1996.....	53

THE TRANSPARENCY PAPERS

I often wonder	63
Crisis of Transparency at KZYX.....	64
Open up the Board listserv	66
Transparency makes good radio.....	68
The Board is not the CIA	70
Collins repents.....	72
The last thread of democracy	73

MEMBERS

* * *

Harold Ennes, Vivian Power, Joe Louis Wildman, Mitch Zucker

Harold Ennes

March 2005

King Collins

I have read with some interest [and considerable bafflement] the material you posted on <greenmac.com> presumably reflecting your recent experience on the Board of KZYX & Z.

I say bafflement because it is so hard to tread among your many 'excerpts'. Frankly, the excerpts are so selective and declamatory —rather like Fox's "fair and balanced" — that it is quite difficult to find the facts on which you base your sweeping statements. Indeed, many come across as ad hominem attacks, and your "issues" have the quality of straw men — unfortunate, because KZYX does face pressing problems.

Now, before you toss aside my comments as bourgeois or (your term) "centrist", let me say that I bow to no one with my hard-earned progressive/liberal/"egalitarian" credentials — including being listed by the Dies un-American Activities Committee years ago, and service as volunteer, executive, board member of numerous NGO's, national and international — and, yes, as vice president [health-politics portfolio] of a very large international corporation.

Actually, I appreciate the initiative and energy you show. I am saddened, however, to see your time and effort being squandered, quixotic-like, when so much needs to be done to strengthen and support KZYX and other alternative media resources.

We do need to reach out to each other, in an egalitarian and democratic spirit. But we must try, at least, to acknowledge that there are other ways than the one we might conceive — truly, it is not your way or the highway. That's the totalitarian way, the Bush/Cheney fundamentalist way.

*Respectfully,
Howard Ennes*

Reply to Howard Ennes

Dear Howard Ennes,

The web presentation is incomplete. . . . Would you like to have a hard copy? (Now available as a PDF.) That would be minus one small part, "staff attitude" which I am not distributing beyond staff and board.

Or if you would take up one of the "issues" and ask for more detail then I would be happy to provide that. I can assure you that for every fact I included there are half a dozen more that I could have provided. The minutes and email are full of them and I have a good recollection of them.

Ad hominem? I think I have become rather an expert at reading ad hominem attacks, as that is most of what I've heard from board and staff. Can you give some examples of that in my writing. Really. I'm interested.

Quixotic? That would imply an impractical goal. I would ask you to keep in mind that the primary purpose, aside from establishing an "egalitarian" point of view, is to stimulate and maintain a dialog with members, and to establish permanent and effective means of communication between board and members: regular, honest reports to members or a member-board call-in show, for example. After a year of effort by a few of us, there was supposed to be such a show on Wednesday evening (March 16) but it was called off? By whom and for what reason? Who cares, it just another one of those anecdotes that shows how almost anything will do as an excuse not to talk directly with the public.

Thanks again for writing. I hope you have time to respond to this with a few specific questions that I can answer in kind.

King Collins

Vivian Power

March 2005

Hi King,

I think that your heart is in the right place. I have some differences of opinion regarding details and, to some degree, style. As an example of the latter, I would have left names out. That way you could have still said everything you wanted to say but, at the same time, allowed for those mentioned to save face.

Regarding confidentiality, I would check with some one like Barry Vogel. Non-profit boards do enjoy a degree of confidentiality, but the question is how much and whether confidentiality here is an excuse to cover-up rather than to protect privacy.

I believe the strongest point in your arguments is how the elected board members really are the representatives of the membership and how it is, not only their right but also, their duty to have a say in the kind of programming and advertising policies of the station. You are completely right when you argue that the membership needs and wants to be involved.

I think that you should mention while on the air how the staff has said to you that members don't care. This a warning sign of being out of touch. The best thing to do is to choose one or two major points and stick with them. Other details can follow. I wouldn't send the pamphlet out until after the election and then I would send it regardless of the outcome.

I heard Zack (at the Candidate's forum) and think he did well, especially when he recognized the caller who asked for a different kind of music. Only Zack showed he knew what the caller was saying. Good luck, and thank you for your commitment.

Vivian

Joe Louis Wildman

March 2005

King,

A good read. Very diplomatic, which will be lost on those you are being diplomatic about, but which will put you in good standing with those who are not embroiled in this stuff.

BTW – I am a centrist regarding operations and an egalitarian about policy. The problem seems to be that the KZYX centrists take the broadest view of what falls under the heading of operations and the narrow view about what falls under the heading of policy. The station would benefit from reversing that bias. Part of the board's policy role and obligation involves seeing that operations conform to policy. Oversight and monitoring are parts of the policy role and are a board responsibility. The board should not micro-manage, but it should macro-manage. In avoiding micro-management and in avoiding overreaching by the board, KZYX has thrown the baby out with the bath water.

Good luck with your efforts. You would drive me crazy if I was on the staff or on the board, but that would not be such a bad thing. As a member/listener I appreciate your efforts.

Keep pushing, but please don't let it dominate the business of the board. Remember – FUNDRAISING – FUNDRAISING – FUNDRAISING!

Love,

Joe Louis Wildman

Mitch Zucker

March 2005

King,

You tell us that the station has been running for years, possibly from the beginning, with the centrist model. You don't mention that this model has been hugely successful---that is, a growing membership. I believe that the Centrist structure of public radio is, like capitalism, a growth mode, if growth is measured in membership dollars and signal strength and reach.

The centrist mode is definitely a fund raising mode, with big buck members always welcome. It's all about fundraising and promoting. This evening, for example, I heard a news piece by Sheila Dawn that was little more than free local advertising. I didn't mind it, but it caught my attention --- fundraising and promoting.

Your experiment with participatory democracy may or may not be successful, if success is measured by membership. It may not succeed for the simple reason that people who contribute, I feel, for the most part are comforted by their local radio, not necessarily inspired to influence it beyond their membership. If the sound is wrong, they'll tune it out; it's that simple. I am one of those. I love kzyx for the way it is. It comforts me. Some of the programmers are magnificent. I feel quite fortunate and tell people all over to tune in through their computer.

I personally agree with your egalitarian approach, but I also believe that the character of the station would change and would ultimately reflect the views of particular radio activists, who may not represent the entire membership. I believe the station could shrink as a result, to serve those members who appreciate the particular content created by the activists. I for one would not be against this if the programming content became more compelling for me and I did not lose the signal. But I can't imagine others wanting it to shrink. I recall years ago when NYC faced the problem of public radio being too broad trying to please everyone, and so began a listener sponsored jazz station, and news station, and religious stations, and ethnic stations and probably others. This is a form of decentralization, but each of these stations probably have strong centrist control.

You began your pamphlet: "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." This is an appropriate observation, but I don't believe you take it nearly far enough. If you were to utilize the technology that is there right now, in front of your monitor, the station in theory at least could be run by centrists and egalitarians, with the egalitarians handling the KZYX web and running it open source as the KZYX web-station, with streaming audio, and video, 24 hrs.

You could stream it with the egalitarian spin and grow it side by side with the station. You could be setting up an amazing alternative media with a reach to Alpha Century. You sound to me like the right person to get it going. I'm sure it's not hard to learn. It's such a simple solution---at least for right now. In fact, if you don't do it, you stand to lose the ability to ever do it. And NO, I don't know what I'm talking about. I'm just inventing. And NO I'm not interested in participating, I'm just being comforted. And, after the presidential election, I very much appreciate that.

Thank you for your considered thoughts.

Mitch

Reply to Mitch Zucker

Well, Mitch, that is a very interesting post. You have some ideas that I will follow down on. Just doing this pamphlet and organizing the responses has been a big job.

Yours is one of several offering some kind of compromise in which centrist and egalitarian models are combined.

Joe Wildman, a veteran labor organizer, writes that he was an egalitarian in policy and a centrist in operations.

I appreciate that you are conversant in the language of participant democracy. I wonder if you have checked out the literature on "electronic democracy." There's been some interesting experiments.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful comments.

Yours truly,

King

PROGRAMMERS

**Todd Telfer, Jan Wax, Janie Rezner, Greg Krouss,
Jim Tarbell, Jeffrey Blankfort, and WDan**

I heard that the pamphlet was being discussed on the listserve, and that some unkind things were being said about me. So I decided to clear the air by writing directly to the programmers. Below is the letter I wrote followed by responses.

Letter To Programmers

Excerpted from email letter Feb. 20, 2005

Dear programmers,

Thanks to those of you who have contacted me,,,I have not received much negative feedback on my piece. Board president, Tony Miksak, says he hasn't read it. But nonetheless knows it is going in the wrong direction ...Lynda McClure ... says she agrees with most of it but doesn't like being labeled, even as an "egalitarian." And, she thinks I'm arrogant for expecting other board members to read it. That astonishes me. I thought that was part of our responsibility as board members, or even as public persons of any kind. So that attitude from Lynda hurts my feelings. ... another question has to do with whether I, or any subscribing member, have an enforceable (legal) right to communicate with other members. To me this is a no-brainer in a community radio station whose "programming and operational philosophy is controlled by its membership." (KZYX/Z Mission Statement).

....The purpose is to bring about the member control promised in our mission statement. It is not a candidate's statement. I've done one of those, and that will be published along with the rest in the ballot mailing. Does anyone really think I would spend two months researching and writing just to get elected to this contentious board? Not!

....I appreciate the fragments of the programmer discussion that have been sent to me lately. Otherwise I would have no way of knowing what is going on. I do NOT think the discussion is a waste of time, as some have said, although the comments about me are mostly irrelevant.

If the discussion focuses on the content, it will be worthwhile.

King Collins

MCPB Board of Directors, Inland Seat

Todd Telfer

KZYX Programmer: "Rockin' Pneumonia"

Mr. Collins,

I don't believe we have met, but I am a music programmer on KZYX&Z with a show called "Rockin' Pneumonia" on Wednesday nights at 10 pm. I have heard you call in several times to "Phone Booth at the End of The Universe" while I was driving home to Ukiah. What you said there always made some sense to me, but I never got to hear your complete train of thought without interruption, so I was glad to read your recent email to the programmers (provided to us via Lynda McClure) and the online "Excerpts from THE SECRET LIFE OF KZYX: A MINORITY REPORT":

Some of what you have written sounds good - at least on paper: "Sharing information openly between staff and board" and inviting membership contribution to station policies, programming etc.

As I'm not on the board, I have very little way of knowing what the status quo is, so I have no business trying to defend it.

However, in my experience as an engineer in manufacturing companies, and in my limited knowledge of the workings of KZYX, I have formed an opinion that an organization works best when there is a hierarchy with one person being given final say. Of course it is important for the person in charge to take input from others in the organization, as well as to understand the final needs of the "customer". However, taking input is not the same as relinquishing decision-making power.

There are no doubt certain aspects of the way KZYX works that need to be changed. I applaud you for trying to identify those aspects and make them known to us all (the membership). Hopefully your concerns will be addressed and resolved one way or another.

I'd like to give you my 2 cents though about the "Egalitarian" approach you describe. Engineers often speak with derision about anything that is "designed by committee". The reason for this is that no one person is responsible for the end result, and it is possible for an entire project to be completed without any one committee member being

satisfied with the results. 100% democracy sounds warm and fuzzy, but when real results are required, it is seldom efficient or even advisable.

I personally would much rather have a strong hierarchy - program director, station manager, board, and board president, etc. than a nebulous programming committee, and an ever-filibustering, no-one-in-charge board. Of course, there needs to be a way to go up the hierarchy if, for instance, the program director makes an arbitrary decision about a programmer's show, but assuming everyone in the hierarchy is competent, that should rarely be an issue.

Incompetence is a very real possibility, but incompetent staff should be let go and incompetent board members voted out on first opportunity. If the board president himself is incompetent, or not acting with the best interests of the station in mind, I trust people on the board, like yourself would let us know fairly quickly.

I would love to hear more about how the board and staff can operate more efficiently, or can better meet the needs of the members and the general public, but I personally do not agree that making things "egalitarian" is the answer. I foresee endless discussions and very few actions if that approach is taken.

Thanks for your time, and good luck in your endeavors.

Regards,
Todd Telfer

* * *

Dear Todd Telfer,

Thanks for your thoughtful reply. You make the standard argument for the hierarchical style of organization. Since you are an engineer, I would ask you to approach the question of hierarchy (or not) as a scientist. You predict that the egalitarian style would not work. But where is the verifiable data? Actually there is a great deal of data in the social sciences to contradict your assumption. Even modern capitalist firms like Toyota and Apple use non-hierarchical structures in the workplace because they are more efficient.

And bear in mind, that we are dealing with a small radio station, not a big corporation. This station is run like a big bureaucracy as far as the board is concerned. Worse in a way. The board is isolated; it has no connection to anyone except the general manager. The board doesn't hear directly from members and it doesn't report to them, in any meaningful way. The only way a member find out what is going on is to go to a lot of meetings and spend a lot of time. Board members seldom bother to reply to messages posted by members from the web site.

We should also ask how other small radio stations are run. Like KMUD for example. Or we could check with the Electronic Frontier and see what they have to say.

Actually though, I agree with you that It might be risky to suddenly become totally egalitarian. But smaller steps could be taken, experimented with. I have suggested that the board allow members to listen in on the board listserv.

Mitch Zucker, another correspondent, has an interesting idea. He says:

You began your pamphlet: "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." This is an appropriate observation, but I don't believe you take it nearly far enough. If you were to utilize the technology that is there right now, in front of your monitor, the station in theory at least could be run by centrists and egalitarians, with the egalitarians handling the KZYX web and running it open source as the KZYX web-station, with streaming audio, and video, 24 hrs.

I think Mltch has a good idea, and it would be great, wonderful, if these ideas would be taken seriously and tried out.

*Thanks for writing,
KC*

Greg Krouse

KZYX Programmer: "Ecology Hour"

Subject: The King reaction

Folks, ...I will probably offend some friends from saying the following, but I think it is bad form to put this sort of stuff on this list. It is clearly damaging to King, which he may or may not deserve. I am sorry, Steve, I disagree with your logic around this. We have policy around one sided stuff that we must do on the air.

I thank those who responded with clarification of what started this. It is just as unfair to use this public space as it is to use the radio to rally for a candidate. I recommend that we have a policy around this, if we don't already.

As I understand, what happens at the board is not supposed to get here, unless it is a directive, which would come via Mary. Can the board members review this and clarify it for one another so it does not happen again. I am hoping that as many programmers can look into this text and not respond here although I understand the initial need to.

Thanks
Greg Krouse

Janie Rezner

KZYX Programmer: "Womens Voices"

Re. The King reaction

Dear Greg,

...I do agree is inappropriate to name-call and nastily characterize someone behind their back in a public forum such as this, or anyplace for that matter, without their having a chance to speak for themselves. I find that in poor taste and disturbing.

I also think there is a hell of a lot going on these days in any area you want to look--and it seems to be here too. I was glad to read Tony's e-mail to King Collins (who I know not at all). I was at that board meeting. There is a lot going on at the station, and I want to be informed. King's essay, (which I haven't read) didn't fall out of the sky. There is a split; evidenced by some of the responses on this list serve. As Lynda, or maybe it was Alicia, suggested, instead of putting people down, it might be good to get some dialogue going. Perhaps Kings' essay, whether we agree with it or what to do with it, is serving as a catalyst to get this started--loosen things up a little bit.

I welcome some "shaking up" of form. I think many of us have outgrown hierarchal structure--and seek more egalitarian ways of relating and working with each other in our lives and at KZYXour very precious radio station. Disagreement certainly comes up--and to be able to work with it constructively and skillfully, hearing people out, allowing something new to emerge, is key....

Blessings,

Janie Rezner

Jan Wax

KZYX Programmer: Classical Music
February 20, 2005

Subject: Re: The King reaction

Dear Janie and all,

I think it's important to be able to say what we, the programmers, feel about KZYX business in this forum. I DON'T feel that it is professional to involve the listenership. I'm sure that the majority of listeners just want to hear quality radio - period.

My reaction to King Collins's "Secret Life of KZYX" was explosive and honest. Someone objected to my use of "egotist" - but what else can you call it when someone claims to know who and what we are and labels us as such? (i.e. egalitarian vs centrist). I resent being categorized. And, can ANYONE with the money write and print their own version of "The Secret Life of KZYX" and expect to be able to send it out to our membership under the aegis of KZYX?

It's also important to present a historical perspective regarding ongoing problems with individuals. There are conflicts that never seem to die. Should anyone who wants a program expect to be allowed to have one - or do we have a program director on staff for a reason? If someone loses his or her program for whatever reason, does that person have the right to repeatedly re-introduce the conflict, and their complaint, year after year, enlisting the support of any other disaffected programmers, board members, etc. and taking precious time away from other issues?

I want to see a stronger board that takes an active interest in fund-raising so that KZYX can operate at a higher level. Our equipment should be in good condition. Our staff should be adequately paid - and supported.

At least we are talking now.

Jan Wax

Jim Tarbell

KZYX Programmer: Corporations And Democracy

Jim Tarbell included a valuable piece that covers KYXX events from 1991 to 1996 when he served on the board (see HISTORIES) In it he covers a lot of important events, including the establishment of the satellite studio in Mendocino and the decision not to do so in Ukiah., and much more Thanks Jim!

Hi King Collins

Thanks for your work at KZYX. I served on the KZYX Board for five years in the early '90s. At the end of that experience I wrote a history of the developing governing culture at KZYX in response to a newspaper article. It may illuminate the origins of the decision making processes you see today. I will attach it for you.

It seems that rather than having your report included in the ballot packet, you could just refer to your webpage in your candidate's statement. Otherwise, I can see that all candidates may want the same consideration that you want which would no doubt be overwhelming for the membership.

As I read your excerpts it appears that you are mainly talking about changing the board arrangements which is purely a board matter, but no doubt of interest to a wider audience. As you can tell from the attached history, my experience over the years is that station decisions are made within the station culture and are rarely made unilaterally.

As you point out, KZYX is set up to be run by the listeners through the Board elections. It seems that the listenership has effectively expressed it wishes through the years in the electoral outcome. This is particularly apparent when various dissident voices have run for the board and either been elected or not as the voting members deem appropriate. Any other claim to speak for the listeners must be viewed with skepticism.

Of course what makes the listenership of KZYX so interesting is that KZYX is the only public radio station within the listening

area. This means that the station has to provide for the whole range of programming sought by the broad public radio audience. From my point of view, this is a positive aspect of the station in that it allows for the possibility that different interest groups may be tuning in to programs they may not usually hear, which means that we are not necessarily preaching to the choir

I hope this is of some value to you and let me know if you have any questions.

Jim Tarbell

See also KZYX History, 1991-1996

Jeffrey Blankfort

KZYX programmer: Takes On The World

After struggling for years to keep KPFA and Pacifica from becoming NPR Lite and watching with some hesitancy as the station and the network has gone through a painful and demoralizing “democratizing” process, I am loathe to see the latter occur here although it is clear that mechanisms need to be established in which the listeners are considered more than simply “cash cows” which seems to be the case with entrenched programmers still at KPFA. I have just read as much of King’s piece as is on his web site and while he makes some good points that I agree with, it seems like a personal statement and if it represents other members, as he writes, they should also have signed on to it. I also object to the personalization and categorization of the board, most of whom I don’t know although I do know King and Zack and respect them both. If a report is to be submitted to the members it should contain proposals that are clearly stated minus the negative personal references. That might be included in a mailing to the members, but as is, I don’t think it would be appropriate.

Jeff Blankfort

WDan

Programmer: Tree House

Hello, I'm W.Dan, a programmer. Thanks for the e-mail. My first thought, and I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but my first thought was "Gee, what a fucking pretentious asshole!" My following thoughts were right in line with the first. It has nothing to do with the content of your pamphlet but with the manner by which it was thrust into my lap. I have read it and had I been asked my opinion on it in a timely manner I would have gladly given it, possibly without a trace of sarcasm nor contempt and even without profanity but alas the issue has become Spam. You see I am assaulted daily by uninvited pleas to enlarge my bank account, my health, my I.Q. and dick. Daily the postal service drops off a small forest in my mailbox, all of which I did not ask for. I don't care if it is Luther's fucking precepts nailed to my cathedral door, if I didn't ask for it, I don't want it. That is my problem with you Mr.Collins, you seem to think that you have written some god-damned, solve-it-all tome that "if folks would just read, it would change everything!" (editors note: cue chirping birds, rainbow and gaily laughing children here.) And you want to mail it to everyone so everyone will see what a visionary you are and we will all fall at your feet and hail you the great egalitarian savior. Your throwing this out for debate too late. You could have brought this out months ago but no, right before an election and fund-drive is a perfect time for you to throw your little self-serving tantrum. You are a narcissistic little shit-head.

Now if you had paid for a bit of underwriting and offered this, your vision of the station and that you were asking to start a dialogue with other members about it, I would have been one of your first callers. Hell, a psa would have worked. I might have even volunteered to be in an action group to debate these ideas and see what could be done to make change. No doubt you are going to say that you had been doing that at board meetings, and so!?! Just because no one listened to you there does that mean you have to force this on me via the membership list? Pull back, stop forcing this mailing issue and I will be happy to tell you what I think of what you have written but until

then you are just wasting time and money, neither of which this station has an excess of. Hire your own secretaries, stuff your own envelopes and before all that ask if we are interested in getting it! I am telling all my friends to vote for anyone but you, how does it feel to be in George Bush's shoes? Here's a question for you, do I have the right to use my show to campaign against you? No, because my show is not the place for it and neither is our membership list your place to vent.

P.S. Rude is forcing this issue. Put it in the public forum for debate but do not make the station take the time, effort and money to do it for you. If I get to be a board member do I get to write out a manifesto and send it to everyone? Should everyone with a grievance have access to that mailing list? Over-the-top is forcing the stations back to the wall. Wait, I know, we could sell the mailing list to make money for the station! Now that will truly endear our listeners to us!

I find it interesting that you want to criticize my use of the language but you do not want to take issue with what I've said. So why not pay for some underwriting and ask the membership to request this holy writ? You could get prime spot. I promise not to laugh or comment in any way when I read it. Why are you so arrogant as to assume that just because it was written it has to be sent out to the membership? You true believers just don't understand how we the unwashed can not follow your glory path can you?

*Your meaningless platitudes mean so much to me.
Sincerely, .Dan W.Dan aka Instigator One*

Reply to WDan

You sound a bit like Lenny Bruce, but he's not on your side. I'll try to give you some straight answers. . I apologize for being puschy. Really. But look at it from another side. Consider that others, not just me, have been trying to bring about constructive changes for a long time and we have been blocked and thwarted in those efforts. After that happens over and over, some people just give up and go away.

I decided to get pushy. Maybe a better psychologist, a new age PC kind of person with a gentle manner, could adopt just the right positive, loving, constructive style. I can't seem to do that. Could you?

I believe you are also saying that I presented this in a way that made it hard to respond. And I think I agree. What I presented was a draft, and I

asked for responses and criticism and promised to make changes. Still it is difficult because it appeared suddenly, and I gave the impression that I was going to publish soon.

But think of it from the other side, Do you think it's easy to write something like this? It's not. It's time-consuming and it's hard. I am not just tossing out words that pop into my head. It takes a lot of care just to get the basic facts right. And I assure you, when I write something, I want it to be factually correct. It would be a lot easier otherwise.

The election? I can tell you, for sure, that the election and the pledge drive were not factors when I started writing about two months ago. It did have to do with my term ending, though. When folks asked me if I was running again, I told them I wasn't. I felt frustrated and unappreciated. It wasn't just a matter of losing to the majority. I could send you a pile of email to show you the nasty stuff that was said to me and about my efforts, and the efforts of others including Zac and Lynda. As for what we were trying to do, that is well covered in the draft I gave you and the staff.

So I thought, given the short time and what was going on at the station, the best thing would be to produce a frank report and pass it around. I thought that if I provided it first to the board and staff, I would give everyone a chance to challenge it, I was tired of Tony and Johanna and Mary (and whoever else) making decisions and excluding me and others from the decision making process. If you think I'm exaggerating, or mistaken, I invite you to look at some of the email and the nasty little skirmishes. Maybe you aren't aware of this stuff. Maybe you don't care.

Why send it to the members? Well, to start with, the idea is to actually get in contact with the membership, and to stay in contact. The board and staff need it.

Also, it's not too late for board and staff to discuss these things together. I am quite willing to remove some material, like the comments about staff attitude, but not unless the validity of those things is recognized.

King C ollins

STAFF

Owen O'toole

Owen is the only member of the paid staff who responded. He writes without using any capital letters, being an unconventional guy. Although he has moved on, he was once the chief engineer in training at KZYX. I wrote a few lines about him in the Secret Life.

Owen O'toole

Interrim Engineer

Hello.

i remain concerned about the swing of politics around KZYX, because i wonder how clearly anyone around there SEES. everyone thinks they (we) are working with the benefit of the station at heart, but we are each enmeshed in our own agenda. and even when you feel compelled to "go public," you may actually be acting out to a great degree. and is it done with others in mind or your own needs?

the Board needs to get its own shit together. that's before any roughshod attempts to reign over the staff or expressions of the like need be blasted forth. you don't understand how trying day-to-day work at KZYX can be, and your criticism is just another pile of complaint that makes burdens greater.

i am annoyed at proclamations that Staff have no right to express opinions on the air, particularly those of you who found time to criticize Loretta Houck for mentioning Board elections and her preferences. In my opinion, she has every right to comment on air, so long as she separates her statement from her activities as a patrol dog on the morning beat. or does so in a way that's human and relevant, which i would assume she did.

attempts to hijack Board elections by small groups of disgruntled persons is bogus. (certainly "unprofessional!")

You live in an amateur county, radio there will always be amateur. i think it's a double standard to expect "professional" behavior from anyone working in and around KZYX while you on the Board, community etc can lambast at every and any opportunity.

Loretta is an awesome asset to the station, and with slam-critics like you we'll lose her in no time, keep it up. make a mess of it as best you can. and then meet up at the brew pub for a few thousand beers and discuss the other ways you're going to save the world.

John Cage: "Do Not Try to Improve the World, You Will Only Make Matters Worse"

Owen O'toole

Reply to Owen O'toole

Owen,

I found your messages so subjective that I didn't know how to respond. I have provided extensive evidence for my opinions. What part of that are you actually challenging?

You say: I wonder how clearly anyone around there SEES. everyone thinks they (we) are working with the benefit of the station at heart, but we are each enmeshed in our own agenda.

What the hell am I supposed to say to that, Owen? If you don't like me, or don't trust me, at least look at what I am actually saying and find some aspect of it to criticize, in some verifiable way with some objective criteria.

I definitely will publish your remarks, but they are discursive and confusing to me. I found it easier to respond to WDan's scatology. Did you see that exchange? That is the ONLY other response I got from staff, and that was not really from staff.

Are you willing to distill your comments into, say, one or two pithy statements and questions?

Is that too much to ask?

King

Owen O'toole responds

of course there remain points to address. while i respond to you as a person, i find it hard to respond to The Secret Life as a document. my generalizations in response come from finding it a difficult piece of wordage to accept at face value. and i would suspect that is why you get little staff response directly to the document, a response gives credence to the piece which some people don't want to offer (again, i suspect). The question arises over whether the tone of your piece is a good place to begin any larger evaluation of station policies and practices. Many don't think you've earned the role of solution bearer. Perhaps we're all waiting for the right person to come along, who can be trusted by the many individual point of view, who has shown respect and patience. It seems there have been some positive meetings with Conflict Resolution specialists.

a problem with such a wide-ranging “grand” opinion piece like yours is it supposes objectivity, and many people just don’t feel that you have had enough of an interior view to grant the attention you’re asking. there is a long history of activity at KZYX which your piece in many ways ignores or doesn’t show an understanding of; it almost seems like the work of someone new to the community wrote it.

there is a demanding tone to the piece which is a turn-off to anyone who has been working hard and quietly for the betterment of KZYX, which is not a few people. also, is your piece signed by anyone except yourself? a single author is not a minority, but an individual, and should be seen as such.

i believe your hostility towards Diane Hering was one of several factors in her decision to leave her job at the station. People don’t seem to understand it is a difficult place to work, a constantly shifting media environment mixing a constant flow of information from the world with local programs hosted by 100 different people.

the project is essentially successful, despite attempts to paint it black.

i don’t think you can demand use of the KZYX member mailing list to carpet bomb what is basically an opinion piece. Your best bet is perhaps the AVA, and if they published it you’d be on equal footing with any respondents.

you attended quite a few Board meetings and meetings of the Ukiah working group. the Board meetings (in my opinion, as all this is) entitle you to an understanding of a certain small portion of the functioning, or dysfunction as the case may be, Board meetings being a place where a certain nutty fringe go to try to force changes and wreak havoc. Which is one of the main problems: the insistence of a few to derail the station’s forward progress because--for whatever reason--they feel slighted. In my experience there, some of the main claimers of “abuse” turned out to be the most actively abusive. And this is where I think the region can be problematic: a remote, mountainous county where unusual people go to escape the rat race, but find themselves compelled to act out their personal demonologies on local communications channels. Perhaps we are paying an Insanity Tax.

At least Dan Hamburg goes to Ohio to put his body on the line. (I'm suggesting that he correctly perceives the adversary and bravely goes to the source.) I think a number of the local "activists" are misguided in their attacks on KZYX and simply have not learned non-warrior approaches to getting things done, effecting change. Everyone chooses to wear invisible armor! I don't get it. Must be something in the green beer up there!

War remains the paradigm we are all stuck living under and it sucks. I think it will take a visionary woman to lead us out.

Still waiting.
Owen O'toole

Response to Owen

You say you find my writing "a difficult piece of wordage to accept at face value. and i would suspect that is why you get little staff response directly to the document, a response gives credence to the piece which some people don't want to offer (again, i suspect). The question arises over whether the tone of your piece is a good place to begin any larger evaluation of station policies and practices."

OK, Owen, I'm trying to create "a good place to begin an evaluation of station policies and practices." I believe in the importance and effectiveness of community radio to foster awareness and community values, and for that to work there has to be open communication (transparency) between the Board, the staff and the members. I write to promote and support this idea and I welcome any ideas, criticisms and assistance from anyone who is interested in developing this notion of interaction and responsiveness among the currently very separated parts of our radio station.

King Collins

BOARD

**Tony Miksak, Jane Fatcher, Antonia Lamb,
Mike Grady and Lynda McClure**



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

Top row: Robert Crawford, Charlie Hochberg, Tony Miksak, Mike Grady, Jane Fatcher, 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 Fatcher.

Tony Miksak

KZYX Board President



Hello Ukiah People and others,

Looking at King's writings on his web site, I am listed as "responding" to his various documents.

I have not responded, and should not be listed as having done so. The quote King has for me (if you click my name "Tony Miksak" on his blog site) is a quote from a resolution the board passed. I was designated to read the statement. The meaning of the board statement is that while King has a right to say and publish anything, he has no right to say or leave the implication that his writings in any way reflect board thinking, or board policy, or the opinions of any official aspect of the station.

Since I have not responded to King's writings, I should not be listed on his site as having done so.

The board photo King is using to headline his work on his web pages is misleading. At the time it was taken board members King Collins and Zac Zachary had lost the board election several weeks earlier. Yet the photo is headlined "Who's Who on the Board." This is deliberately misleading. The text below, saying some individuals are "out" and others are "in" does not clarify this. The photo was taken to celebrate new and former and current board members. It was not intended to give the impression that King Collins is associated with the current board. He is not.

It's very frustrating to be personally misrepresented on someone else's blog, and just as frustrating when the organization I love and work for is misrepresented. There's no way I can directly correct King's mistakes or misstatements. My hope is that the author will immediately do so. I don't want my name anywhere on King's web pages; if it must

be there, at least my name should be there because it's something King said about me. I have nothing to say that I want posted there.
Thanks, Tony

Response to Tony Miksak

Dear Tony.

The whole thing of misrepresenting you or the board or myself is contrived. The pamphlet is what it is: a report, done to the best of my ability, of what I observed while I worked with you on the board. By calling it a Minority Report, I thought it was clear that it is not endorsed by the whole board.

I realize that you and I disagree on the style of organization: you more centrist; I more egalitarian. Clearly in your mind and many others there is a belief, a prejudice, against the egalitarian style. So much so that it's hard to even talk intelligently about it. In the face of repeated 5-4, 6-3 votes, I decided that the only way to get these ideas out was to write them down in the context of our discussion and our practice, which is what I did.

It was naïve of me to think that doing a good job of writing would be enough and that my effort would be treated respectfully by the board. But, even so, I was astonished when you told me you hadn't read it didn't intend to.

Ok, I admit it, I was upset, my feelings were hurt; and I vented my frustrations by making the cartoon about you and President Bush.

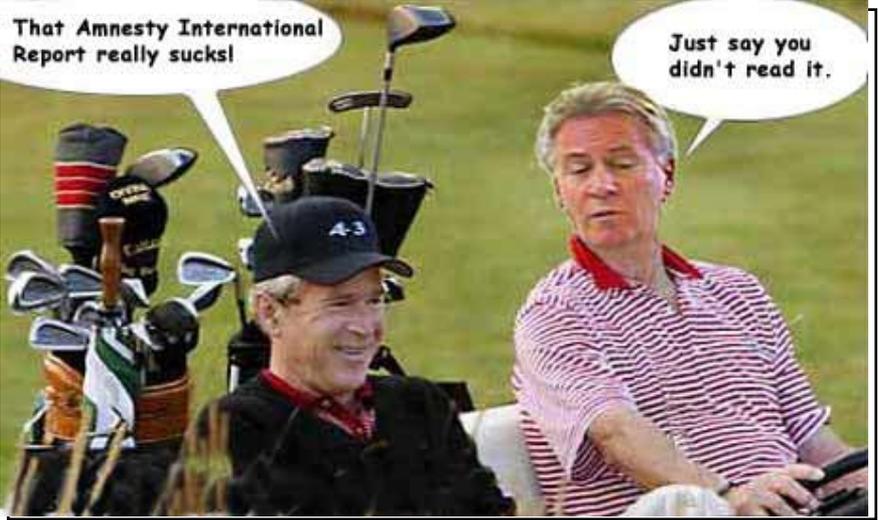
That was a mean thing to do.

Sorry.

King Collins

That Amnesty International Report really sucks!

Just say you didn't read it.



Jane Futcher

Newly Elected Board Member
2005 - 2008



(Statement made at KZYX Candidate's Forum:)

I think it (The Minority Report) is extremely well written. Very caring and thoughtful. And this is obviously a man who cares a great deal about the future of the station. Because I haven't spent a lot of time around the station, I don't know about the accuracy of everything he says but clearly it comes from a sincere, concerned heart and mind.

Antonia Lamb

Elected Board Member in 2005

(Statement made at KZYX Candidate's Forum)



Mr. Collins is a kind hearted, well meaning man who goes on and on and on... He's said some very interesting things. I appreciate Mr. Collins' caring, and his insights and his intellect.

Mike Grady

Newly Elected Board Member
2005 - 2008



I feel that a mailing of the Secret Life (Minority Report) to the membership would be damaging to the station and also to intelligent liberal thought in the community.

Reply to Mike Grady

This is an extraordinary statement, Mike. To think that a pamphlet could be so subversive that to merely make it available to the membership would be harmful to the station (for some reason) AND “damaging to intelligent liberal thought.” Is liberal thought really so fragile?

Consider this Mike: The suppression of discussion, in this case the suppression of a report written for the membership, is against right of free speech.

Isn't this denial of free speech, which is a fundamental liberal concept, even more “damaging to intelligent liberal thought?”

King Collins. June, 2005

Addendum 2012 *I am happy to report that Mike Grady did a valuable service in 2006 -2007 by establishing a comprehensive committee system including provisions for the members to participate in those committees. This was a high point in the integrity of the board and its interaction with the members. However, Grady's committee system was ignored after John Coate was hired as General Manager (2008) and David Hopmann became president of the board.*

Robert Crawford

Board Member 2003-20



I'm pretty sure my colleague Zack Zackary and I are the bores referred to in this piece. Whatever its merits, it's the only verse submitted.

A Tale About Our Radio

A tale about our radio
I hesitate to tell.
How some would rise to Paradise
while others sink to Hell

Some bloom like flowers sweet perfume,
some raise an awful smell
The first I speak of proudly,
the others bode not well.

Some learn the rules of etiquette,
grease the skids of protocol
Be it difficult or tedious,
they're working for us all;

No need to tout their attitudes,
with rude ways make us fall,
No need for skulking cowardice,
agendas bull and gall.

But one waves laws beneath your nose,
their meaning he don't know.
Another pamphleteers to bring
suspicion, doubt and woe.
Some chide and bitch and criticize,
to those who work say "no,"
One wraps the flag around his rags,
as loudly he does blow.

A gout of good intentions,
and passion never cools;
Unworkable conventions,
like rusty broken tools,

Like frozen blast, a twisted past,
tries to replace our rules,
Mistaking this for progress
would make us bloody fools.

The way to fix the problem's
in the air and all about.
To feed the weeds there is no need,
it's time to root 'em out.

Beware our Board elections,
if it's negative you shout--
The sneeze you called
a breeze has failed,
Our ship's coming about!

Reply to Robert Crawford

Dear Robert, I often enjoyed your jovial well-oiled presence at our meetings. You deserve an A for creativity if not for coherence. *Your work is the only known response to the KZYX Minority Report from the "Centrist" majority. In view of its historical importance, I hope you will make a CD for our archives.*

Lynda McClure

Board Member 2005-2008



Lynda is a long-time friend and colleague. We voted the same way on almost everything that came before the board, but as she says below she disagrees with my "tactics." This is an important point and I leave it to the reader to decide. As far as I'm concerned, there's plenty of room for both of our styles in this debate.

She has said that she agrees with "some" or "most" of the Minority Report. Actually, she had a draft before it was presented to the board and she made several suggestions which were incorporated. I rejected only one of Lynda's suggestions: that I remove references to individuals. I wrote back to her that I could not write understandably about the subject without mentioning names. After the draft was circulated in limited number, we held a closed meeting of the board to discuss the matter further. As a result of that meeting names of staff were removed, but those of board members, whom I consider to be public persons, remain.

Lynda also said that it was "arrogant" of me to expect other board members to read the report. That remark greatly annoyed me, and still does. I consider it highly inappropriate to defend the deliberate know-nothingism of our fellow board (and staff) members.

Isn't it a responsibility of board members to be accountable to each other? It is one thing to have a difference of opinion. It is quite another to ignore and refuse to discuss matters that are relevant to the functioning of the station.

In this somewhat hostile environment, I wrote to Lynda asking her whether she supported the "egalitarian" principles or not, to which she responded:

From Lynda McClure

King;

I do not feel at all uncomfortable being asked these questions...or held to account, in your words

I have always supported open dialogue between members, staff, programmers and other volunteers, and the board. I do not waiver from that position. I believe a process and venue for this needs to be established. I agree with a number of your points, including developing a way to communicate with members; I would add.. who want to participate in the discussions.

The main way I separate myself from you is in your approach to the issue, your tactics. I think they incite disagreement rather than facilitate inclusive, creative solutions. You are like some others on the board, staff, and volunteers, who pick up the language swords and war attitude, looking to cut down the enemy...the one with a different opinion.

You have told me you think your contribution to the dialogue is more important than certain other board members. I do not agree with that. We each bring something valuable to the board. You're angry when you feel dismissed by some of the board, yet you dismiss their work and opinions.

Your either/or approach, "real open, honest reports from board to listener" or puff pieces, doesn't fit for me. You call Tony's report a puff piece; Tony calls it a report. Just because it's not what you think it should be doesn't mean it's bad or wrong. Just as your piece has validity, though not everyone will agree on that.

I know this is very important to you, but as I've told you already, I feel imposed upon by the time and energy you demand, and your bull-dog aggression. Would like you to keep a perspective that includes consideration of others' focus and priorities, as well as your own. I believe you would find less resistance if you didn't push so hard.

Lynda
April 2005

Reply to Lynda McClure

Dear Lynda,

You don't seem to have much disagreement with what I wrote. In fact, I don't think there's anything you disagree with. You say you disagree with my style but I really think you should consider that our approaches, though different, are both valid.

When it comes down to it, even the critique of my style is lacking in any substance. What exactly is it that I do that so upsets you? As far as I can see, you are offended that I had the audacity to reveal the actual dynamic---the split---within the board, to demonstrate that split in a host of important issues, and then, most outrageously, to demand that these views be mailed to the membership.

Given the current organizational culture at KZYX, which you so aptly described four years ago (see below), I doubt that you or anyone else could come up with a style that would make these ideas palatable to the staff and the majority of the board, who treat critics like traitors and drag their feet in every effort to be more transparent with the members .

*Sincerely,
King Collins*

Quoting from your 2001 report to KZYX board and staff:

I am concerned about the response to criticism....When it comes from community members, they are put down as crazy or disruptive or whiners. Their opinion is delegitimized When it comes from one of the staff or board, that person is attacked, marginalized, and discredited. Criticism is met with defensiveness and denial of a problem. I witnessed and experienced this. It is important for everyone in the organization to understand that no matter how hard you work, or how much responsibility you take on, the station and programming does not belong to any one person, or exclusive group of people. (See Lynda's full report in the HISTORIES section.)

TWO HISTORIES

The following reports deserve our attention, one written by my board colleague, Lynda McClure and the other by Jim Tarbell, veteran KZYX programmer and board member.

An Insider View - 2001

By Lynda McClure

Five Years On The Board

1991 - 1996

By Jim Tarbell

An Insider View of KZYX

By Lynda McClure

2001

Lynda wrote this document sometime in 2001 in a period when the station was between general managers. She had been working as a programmer and paid staff member and as such she was, and still is, an insider. The criticisms of the board and staff in this letter corroborate my own observations. And Lynda perfectly predicts the cold response to those observations when I compiled them into the Minority Report. As she says: "When criticism comes from one of the staff or board, that person is attacked, marginalized, and discredited. Criticism is met with defensiveness and denial of a problem."

Note also that Lynda's suggestions from four years ago, are similar to the "egalitarian" principals.

* * *

To: The Board and Staff of KZYX&Z

From: Lynda McClure

Re: My employment and relationship with KZYX&Z

I apologize for not getting this in writing and to you sooner. I've thought about and made pages of notes about my relationship with KZYX&Z, and the station's relationship with the county. I come from the perspective of initially a member, then a programmer, then paid staff with intent to apply for the station manager's position.

I started working as staff in October 2000 when Lili first went out on leave and the station needed some fill in. I was unemployed, so it worked well for me, too.

The short answer to why I left the employ of the station and did not apply for the station manager position is that I was offered a job with Service Employees International Union doing what I have enthusiastically done in the past, on a campaign organizing the working poor

and doing hands-on redistribution of public wealth. I've been with that just over two months, and don't regret my decision.

One of the factors of the decision was the nature of the work. In many ways it is similar to the work I'd been doing at the Mendocino Environmental Center for several years; maintaining a space where people can do good things. This includes general office support like phones, office supplies and mail distribution, and general picking up after people, washing their dishes and sorting their recycling out of -the trash. While keeping a space usable for other people has its own satisfaction, I want to spend some time letting others deal with house-keeping, income and expenses, and focus on doing specific work other than organizational maintenance. (I continue with my volunteer task of cleaning the bathroom, though, as I think everyone should take a piece of the basic housekeeping.)

The people who do the day to day maintenance are critical to any organization. At KZYX&Z, they are exceptionally responsible and committed, partly because the context necessitates it, and partly because they are exceptional folks. As I've stated numerous times, each one does their job well, and assumes personal responsibility for the successful operation of the station. This includes working long hours, early mornings, late nights, week-ends, and taking working vacations or returning early from one. This fierce ownership is both a treasure and can be an obstacle to wider participation.

Another factor to my leaving KZYX&Z, and for not applying for the station manager's job, has to do with that level of ownership by some of the people affiliated with the station, and the atmosphere it creates. During my time at the station I became increasingly discouraged about conflict, negativity, divisiveness and backbiting. In my opinion, some members - not all - of both the board and staff participate in this. I'd intended to be specific about who I thought was doing what, but it occurred to me that putting this out to all the staff and board could result in seeing it in print in the AVA, and I do not want to contribute to that publication ;character assassination' material. I sincerely hope this stays within the organization, even without names.

Conflict is inherent within a group of people who come together to do something. It can be part of the creative, dynamic process and

it can tear an organization apart. Most groups operate somewhere within the extremes. A paid working situation often imposes another layer of potential conflict - the power over dynamic, or hierarchy. There is a thin line between being responsible and being authoritarian.

The power to direct work and to hire and fire is an element of hierarchy that fuels resentment, hostility, and covert activity. Whether it is the board of director's power over the station manager, the station manager over the staff, or the program director over the volunteer programmers, the attitude of authority and subservience is destructive and drains from the creative force. In regard to the station manager's position, my vision was to flatten the hierarchical structure into a team/group decision-making process on all matters of importance. I truly believe in the wisdom of group/collective thought, and I feel it is currently disrespected, disregarded, or worse yet, not sought. I believe critique and- discipline, including termination of staff or programmers, should be a peer process I came to believe this organizational restructure would have taken more emotional energy then I was willing to give, at this point in time.

I am concerned about the response to criticism from the community or from within the organization. When it comes from community members, they are put down as crazy or disruptive or whiners. Their opinion is de legitimized When it comes from one of the staff or board, that person is attacked, marginalized, and discredited. Criticism is met with defensiveness and denial of a problem. I witnessed and experienced this. It is important for everyone in the organization to understand that no matter how hard you work, or how much responsibility you take on, the station and programming does not belong to any one person, or exclusive group of people.

Another dynamic which I believe is intrinsic to a traditional work situation (and in terms of hierarchy, KZYX&Z is traditional) is the idea that if someone is being paid, they are fair game for abuse. Pay doesn't equal subjugation Money doesn't buy the right to abuse or otherwise exert power over influence through action, word, of thought/attitude. It is not OK to belittle, scold, or treat another in a demeaning manner because they are receiving pay. I witnessed and experienced this at the station.

The dynamic between the staff and the board is not healthy, and is one of the most serious situations I see at the station. Some of the staff are extremely hostile toward the board as a body and select individuals who sit on it. Their anger, which is strong and persistent, feeds an atmosphere of distrust, secretiveness, and noncooperation. Some of the board members mirror this distrust and secretiveness. Some people on both the board and staff - seem to thrive on the conflict; being angry, assuming the worst intention from others, and feeding on the disagreeable traits in each other. They would rather spend their time and energy fueling the conflict than finding ways of solving it. I believe this adversarial dynamic must be broken, and both the staff and board members must make sincere commitment to dealing with the anger, frustration and concern of their own and others in a constructive setting, with full intention to reach resolution and a harmonious working relationship. Everyone needs to accept that decisions and procedures may not be what they think is ideal, but be willing to let go and work with what the group creates. You are many people, from diverse backgrounds and current niches, - who come together to support a common purpose: public radio, which is a public trust, particularly at this time of assault on free speech in this country.

Staff should be included in all decision-making since they are the ones most often directly impacted. Their expertise gained from the day to day operations and long term experience should be considered a valuable, respected tool. The board should be acknowledged as valuable, respected volunteers who are charged with critical, legally binding responsibility for the station.

Specific areas to open up and dispel secrecy include board access to any and all files and records, and staff access to full financial information, including co-workers, wages and other money paid to people on staff or for a special project.. Any project the board takes on should have buy in and participation by staff. Closed door operations are a recipe for non-cooperation, distrust and hostility. I've witnessed intentional acts to hide information, both on the part of staff and board members. I will take this opportunity to give some other opinions and ideas I have about the station operation.

- Fundraising is a critical consideration in selecting a new station manager, as is the strong ability to work effectively with people, both on staff and in the community. The delicate balance between raising funds and restricting big money influence is critical.

- Staff hours should be reduced without a reduction in pay, as a way of giving compensation without budget impact. With careful scheduling, this could be accomplished- It would help to reduce burn out and the negative aspect of "ownership" attitude that comes with too many hours at the station.

- One or two people need to be doing internship with the station engineer immediately. Not only is the current level of responsibility and availability unfair, it leaves the station quite vulnerable.

- A retreat with board, staff, and key volunteers would help with team building and give an opportunity for extended discussion and planning. I recommend a full week-end or a few full day sessions.

- Volunteer programmers should be acknowledged for their part of the operation and given a structure for input. Programmer meetings and agenda should be controlled by the programmers, not the staff. Programmers should take more responsibility for station upkeep - at the very least cleaning up after themselves and returning CDs and records to the shelves - and for fundraising and promoting the station in the community.

- The Community Advisory Committee should be supported and made an important part of decision-making. I submitted a proposal for building this committee which includes specific outreach and structure. Meaningful participation by the community will, I believe, increase listenership and membership, and reduce the, vehement criticism by some of the listeners. There is currently no ongoing, meaningful community input.

Lastly, I want to comment on that sticky wicket, NPR programming, although I know it is stretching the context of this memo. I believe NPR is another element of government propaganda and programming of the people of this country (along with public education and influence on private education). This assault comes through most media sources, and it's quite disturbing to have our station be a part of it to the degree it currently is. I agree with the position that some NPR

is appropriate, and the financial benefit to the station through their grants is worthwhile. I oppose it filling four hours of week-day prime time - three hours in the morning and one during the drive home slot. I believe this scheduling is responsible for the high NPR listenership more than the program itself I agree it is important to give a variety of perspectives and allow listeners to analyze the information and draw their own conclusions. I think this could be better accomplished with offering a true variety of information during those prime time hours.

KZYX&Z is a community treasure, and I want to give my sincere appreciation to all of you on the board and on the staff who give so much tune and energy to keep it going, day to day and long term. I am committed to staying engaged and hopefully being a productive, positive influence.

Thank you for allowing me to give these comments and perspectives. I'm happy to talk with any of you at more length.

In Unity,
Lynda McClure

KZYX

5 Years On The Board

1991-1996

By Jim Tarbell

Jim Tarbell said:

As I read your excerpts (of the Minority Report) it appears that you are mainly talking about changing the board arrangements which is purely a board matter, but no doubt of interest to a wider audience. As you can tell from the attached history, my experience over the years is that station decisions are made within the station culture and are rarely made unilaterally.

The following letter to the editor was published in the *Mendonesian*:

Letter To The Editor from Jim Tarbell
April 14, 1996

Dear Editor,

Having just completed five years as a member of the KZYX Board of Directors, I read the recent *Mendonesian* article on public radio with much interest. Some of the article I agreed with, some I didn't. There were a few factual corrections that should be made, but more than anything I can spread some light on the questions raised in the article.

The primary concerns of the article are who runs the station and whether a conservative agenda is being pushed. My experience is that many people have many agendas for KZYX and that it's always important to be vigilant of what agenda someone is promoting.

This has been such a pervasive issue at KZYX that it has dominated much of the decision making and ongoing workings of the station. The primary intent over the years has been two-fold: 1) to keep the station on the air and 2) to follow the KZYX's mission which states that it "will reflect the rich diversity of the county while promoting a sense of com-

munity . . . The finest in national public radio programs will be made available as well as local programs.”

Nicole Sawaya often spoke of a “culture” forming around the station that kept it on the air, and I think that best describes how the station is run. Those that put the most energy into the station and who are able to socially function within that culture are the people who have the most influence. Although the various staff positions have areas of responsibility and ultimately make the final decisions, no one is making decisions in a vacuum.

The paid staff, active Board members and a broad collection of dedicated volunteers and programmers are at the heart of the station culture, but so are many others who put endless hours into the station to make it the vital community entity it is. The station is set up to be run by the members through the Board of Directors. Initially the by-laws limited programmer representation on the Board, but a by-law change several years ago altered that and now over half of the Board is made up of programmers.

The driving force behind the culture is to keep the station on the air and the mission statement fulfilled. Any person or agenda that threatens that basic premise ends up as *persona non grata* by the sustaining culture.

Since this is an institution with over a hundred people flowing through and around it on a regular basis, creating a list of all the major players over the last five years is impossible. Certainly the paid staff that has been around for years — Jack Tyselling, Ron O’Brien, Mary Aigner, and Shiela Leighton — make key decisions in their area of work. Jill Hannum, the acting station manager, who stated at the February Board meeting that it was her decision to hire Teresa Simon as the new Program Director, has also played a critical role at various times of the station’s existence. Teresa Simon and Steve Rubin have both put in voluminous hours at a variety of tasks over the years to keep the station functioning. Other people who have had major influences within the culture include past, twice-Board President and super-volunteer Carroll Pratt, past board member, programmer, and pledge drive coordinator Diane Hering, her father Bruce Hering who is past President and the longest serving member of the present Board and all of the Board members including present Board President Ann Rodgers. From this core the

culture spreads out to the programmers, the volunteers, the members, the underwriters, the listeners, the guests and everyone who has had anything to do with the station.

That said, let me move on to the specific issues raised in the article:

Is the programming becoming more heavily weighted toward national programming? This ratio has varied over the years. Right now 27.7% of the hours that KZYX is on the air is national and 72.3% is local. In the Fall of 1993 this ratio was exactly the same and in the spring of 1992 25.5% of the programming was national and 74.5% was local. These are amazingly similar statistics which indicates to me that the Program Directors are keeping a pretty close eye on this figure.

Is strip programming taking over KZYX. Strip programming (homogeneity within the schedule) has been a reality at KZYX since Sean Donovan set up the first schedule six and a half years ago. The degree of strip programming existent in the schedule has varied over the years but Nicole Sawaya definitely moved it in the direction of more strip programming in her last year at the station. Sighting national surveys that indicated that the prime radio listening hours were between early morning and late afternoon with the heaviest listenership between 6 AM and 9 AM, she moved the morning news to those hours and interspersed local news within it. Also in an attempt to broaden the listener base, she put all the news at the same hours, all the talk shows at the same hours, and all the music within the same hours, particularly during the heavy listening times during the weekdays. This approach favors the listener who only wants to listen to particular programming, under the logic that the station is therefore reaching the broadest and most diverse audience in Mendocino County and beyond.

Is Federal funding threatened? Federal funding is definitely threatened. It was only through a massive concerted effort last year that current federal funding was saved. The current Speaker of the House is hostile toward the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Public Radio and listener-sponsored radio stations. The solution is either to change the majority in the House of Representatives or keep lobbying like crazy. Present Congressional plans predict a steady decrease in funding over the next five years

KZYX's spends about \$220,000 a year. It has been receiving between \$60,000 and \$70,000 a year from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for the past several years which makes up about a third of the station's annual budget. About half of the budget (\$110,000) comes from local memberships and pledge drives and the rest comes from underwriting and fund-raisers.

Are NPR and Pacifica News too heavily influenced by their corporate contributors? News programming has long been a subject of debate around the station. In an environment as diverse as Mendocino County it is impossible to keep everyone happy about what and how the news is presented. Several options have been used over the years including BBC and Monitor Radio, but NPR and Pacifica seem to be the most popular. There have been rumblings in recent years of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters putting together their own news service and Joseph Leon once had a dream of networking all of the listener-sponsored radio stations in Northern California into a local news system. These plans all take time and money, though, neither of which have been dedicated in sufficient amounts to make them a reality.

What is the future of the programming at KZYX? Programming decisions are made by the Program Director based on the station mission, listener response, program availability and the overall needs of the community that are not otherwise being fulfilled by commercial radio. There have been instances in the past when the station manager has overruled the Program Director, but there has been a concerted effort on the part of the Board to establish an arrangement where the Program Director has control of the schedule. This doesn't mean that the Program Director is making decisions on his or her own. Nothing is more disastrous within the station culture than a renegade decision-maker. The station manager will usually have input into any major scheduling change as will other trusted people within the station culture. And, of course, after the change is made the entire station culture passes judgment on the wisdom of the changes. The Board never formally discusses or approves programming changes and Board members are rarely asked to give input into programming decisions. Programming decisions are presented to the Board as *fait accompli*.

Change is bound to happen to the KZYX schedule. Teresa Simon, the present Program Director has been involved with the station since its inception and can probably be counted on to remain dedicated to the two main themes of the station culture — maintaining the station mission and keeping the station on the air.

What is the management history at KZYX? KZYX was put on the air largely due to the tireless efforts of Sean Donovan and a group of volunteers in the late 1980's. Donovan managed to get the original Board to agree to compensate him for all the hours he put into setting up the station with a note that was to be paid out over a number of years and was finally paid off last year. With Donovan's departure in the latter part of 1990, the Program Director, Johnny Bazzano, took over as interim station manager until Susan Newstead was hired as the new Station Manager in the Spring of 1991.

During her tenure Susan put the station on a track of receiving more federal funding and extending the signal to cover more of Mendocino County. After two years, however, the Board did not renew Newstead's contract and Johnny Bazzano once again served as an interim-Station Manager until the Board hired Phil Tymon in mid-1993.

Tymon had a rocky tenure that included his decision not to renew Beth Bosk's contract for her weekly talk show. He had already announced his retirement to the Board by the time he showed up at the station, in the middle of the night, in the middle of the Fall 1993 pledge drive and mockingly announced that he was "taking over."

During his tenure Tymon hired Nicole Sawaya to fill the Program Director's slot which had been vacated when Brian Wood resigned at the end of Susan Newstead's term. With Tymon now gone, Jill Hannum was hired as an interim station manager and, along with Nicole Sawaya and Operations director Jack Tyselling, presented the Board with a "flat top" management proposal, which created a management team made up of the Business Manager, the Programmer Director and the Operations Director. In the spring of 1994 Claudia Vierra was hired to fill the Business Manager slot that Jill Hanum had been filling temporarily.

The Board now had oversight function over three management positions, a task which it never carried out very well. The Board had a hard enough time evaluating one Director and never formally evaluated

the job performances of the three “flat top” managers. With the lack of evaluations, the staff essentially stepped in and did their own *defacto* evaluation, and the management team began to over rule her on key decisions that were proprietary to the Business Manager. She resigned in early 1995 and essentially Nicole ran the station, giving it a long needed tenure of stability and energy that was crucial to its survival.

As a result of the fallout from the chaos around the handling of Beth Bosk’s termination and Phil Tymon’s resignation a group of Ukiah programmers, ex-KZYX Board members and other interested parties formed a non-profit corporation known as Northern California Public Broadcasting with the intent of forming a competing public radio station in Ukiah where the KZYX signal never had been clearly and consistently received. This group was led by long-time KZYX programmer Barry Vogel, included Phil Tymon and hired Sean Donovan to put their proposal together. Ill will quickly developed between the station culture and the Ukiah group as the station viewed NCPB as a definite threat to KZYX’s survival.

How to approach this threat became an issue of long debate. Despite a general feeling of animosity, distrust and loathing amongst most of the station culture toward NCPB, KZYX Board President Carrol Pratt undertook an approach that Nicole Sawaya termed “the high road,” working not to alienate the Ukiah group and keep them convinced that Mendocino County Public Broadcasting (MCPB, KZYX’s parent corporation) was interested in all input from throughout the county and that we were concerned about their needs and wishes. The Ukiah group was never very responsive until they did not receive a federal grant to build their station. Meanwhile MCPB finally received federal funding that Susan Newsted had originally applied for two years earlier to build a transmitter on Laughlin Peak above Willits. With the awarding of that grant KZYX moved ahead with fund-raising efforts to put that transmitter on the air.

As a part of Carrol Pratt’s “high road” approach, the station had received a “Healthy Station Grant” from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, which involved the participation of their consultant David LePage in a long term analysis of the functioning of KZYX. He held public and private meetings with a broad variety of people at the sta-

tion, helped define goals, helped “flat top” iron out their differences and met with the Ukiah group.

Out of all this came a design for a unique county-wide, listener-sponsored radio network, all under the auspices of MCPB, it’s Board of Directors and staff. The idea is to have studios throughout the county that can 1) control the main KZYX transmitter on Cold Springs Mountain and 2) broadcast programming of interest to the particular area in which the studio is located through its own transmitter. The initial phase is to establish studios on the Coast and in the Inland area that will work with the studio in Philo. Each studio will eventually have its own call letters and transmitter and be able to control the transmitters for the entire system so that county-wide programming can originate from either the Coast, Philo or the Inland area.

This system is now in the process of being put together. The MCPB transmitter on Laughlin Peak which has the call letters KZYZ will act as the inland link to the system. The search is on for a studio site in the Inland area.

On the Coast a studio is available and funding has been received to begin the process of connecting it to the broader network. The Coast studio is located in the old ROP video lab at the Community Center in Mendocino. A \$5000 grant has been received to begin the process of connecting the Coast studio to the rest of the network. The plan is to connect the Coast studio directly to the Philo studio via an ISDN phone line which can carry music quality audio. Although the phone company initially indicated it would do this, it is now balking at providing an ISDN line in Philo. Several options have been developed to get around this problem including connecting directly via ISDN to the future Inland studio. The long-term goal will be to connect directly to the Cold Springs transmitter via a microwave link, but this may cost \$30,000 to construct.

As a formal recognition of this county-wide approach to public broadcasting the Board is in the process of changing it’s by-laws to guarantee broad geographic representation on the Board. There will now be two Board members from the Coast, two from the Inland area, two from Anderson Valley, two at-large and one programmer’s representative. This did not constitute any change in the membership of the KZYX Board of

Directors. Each existing member was simply put into one of the new slots.

Once all of this was designed David Lepage orchestrated a meeting between the Board of Directors of MCPB and the Ukiah group. At this meeting both groups pledged to support this new county-wide design under the auspices of MCPB. NCPB agreed to fold as a non-profit entity and to assist in the funding of the Inland studio.

Through all of this, management of the station had settled on the shoulders of Nicole Sawaya and she had been functioning as the de facto station manager for a year. In recognition of this the Board began moving away from the flat top management and redefining the management structure with a single Station Manager in charge. When Nicole left at the first of this year to take a job with NPR, the discussion over the management makeup came to a head when the Board had to write a job description for prospective station manager candidates. The Board agreed at its February meeting that the new station manager would have authority over the operation of the station but would have to consult with the Board of Directors about the hiring and firing of the paid staff.

The Board is now in the process of searching for a new station manager and at its last meeting agreed to hire a fund-raiser.

Rumors of secret meetings. During the process of “taking the high road” Carroll Pratt and several other board members attended meetings with representatives from Northern California Public Broadcasting. Carroll always informed the rest of the Board when he was going to do this and reported back the results. He never made any promises at these meetings but “kept the lines of communications open.” In hindsight, his strategy worked perfectly. MCPB and the county in general have all gained from the outcome and lost nothing. In the process, though, there was a lot of concern among the station culture about where it was all headed.

Rumors of Board election manipulations. Board elections are audited by the Ukiah accounting firm of Robertson, Campbell. They supervise the sending of the ballots as well as the counting. There is not much room for manipulation in this process.

Termination of Phaedra Savage from Open Lines. Phaedra hosted open lines once every four weeks and her contract was not renewed when the Program Director redesigned the format of Open Lines. This has no

doubt been internally divisive for the station. Phaedra has been a long-time, dedicated programmer, and spent endless hours on pledge drives which has been key to keeping the station afloat. Although she is widely praised for her jazz programming, and still hosts her weekly jazz show, I do not see her as the “number one” public affairs programmer and when the Program Director, no doubt in consultation with other parts of the station culture decided to change the format of Open Lines she lost her spot on that show.

Is public access decreasing? Returning to the comparison between the present schedule and the Fall of 1993 and the Spring of 1992 it again becomes apparent that programming has varied over the years. In the Spring of 1992 there were nine hours a week of public access time on the radio. In the Fall of 1993 this figure was down to five and a half hours and now it is up to eight and a half hours. One of the big debates in radio land is between more music/less talk and more talk/less music — nobody agrees. But it appears that phone access radio is again on the rise. Certainly the daily public access show from 9 to 9:30 offers more access and debate on local issues than has ever been available on KZYX before.

There was a time when the Board had quarterly programs to take people’s questions over the air. This could certainly be reinstated though a lot of people felt that it was not very exciting radio.

Conclusion. The way to influence the decision-making at KZYX is to get involved, from volunteering at the station to running for the Board. Setting up Coastal and Inland studios will do a lot to move the station culture away from being centered in Philo. Probably the most valuable contribution people can make is participating in the establishment of these studios which will guarantee both broader public access to the airwaves and more high-quality local broadcasting.

Jim Tarbell

THE TRANSPARENCY PAPERS

I often wonder	61
Crises of Transparency	62
Open up the board listserv.....	64
Transparency makes good radio, 2010.....	66
The Board is not the CIA, 2011	67
Collins Repents, 2012	69
The Last Thread Of Democracy.....	70

I often wonder at the attitude of those who are resolutely critical of remote political organizations, like the U.S. Congress or the Democratic Party, and yet are uncritical of our local “community” organizations. Any organization which takes the mantle of “community” should be open and aboveboard. This is especially true of membership organizations which are supported by their members. Not just the board of KZYX, but many other organizations that call themselves “community” are hostile to input and scrutiny of their membership.

California has something called the Sunshine Laws which require elected representatives to be open—transparent—about their deliberations. The Brown Act, from way back in 1953, requires open meetings and does not allow for ongoing private discussion among representatives between meetings. The Brown Act exempts local nonprofits from these requirements. So, legally, the Centrists are right when they say that the “Brown Act does not apply to KZYX.” But the essence of the sunshine laws is written in our own KZYX mission statement and bylaws.

In the last decade the use of the web has revolutionized board communication. Now, the board can easily continue discussing matters between public meetings and they do. Just as easily they could, with a flip of a switch, open their web communications to interested members. This is one of the ways the board could comply with the intent of the sunshine laws. “Opening the closed board listserv,” is an easy, inexpensive (costless) way to inform the members. The response by board members will reveal a lot about their individual attitude toward transparency and member control.

The following letters and ballot statements appeared between 2009 -2013 and constitute what I call The Transparency Papers. In the board “elections” I received about a third (33%) of the votes on average. This is counted as a terrible defeat by the station managers and the winner-take-all point of view. But to a social scientist, it means that a substantial number of the membership agree with the radical views expressed here.

King Collins , March, 2013

Addendum 2015. In the last two years, 2014 -2015, substantial changes have occurred and a further update is needed. See reports in the Media Forum at www.greenmac.com.

I wrote the following to the Board at the time when many members were concerned about sudden changes in the news department, and lack of response from board and management about what was going on. I got no response from the board.

Crises of Transparency at KZYX

Dear Doug Livingston (President) and other members of the KZYX board,

The current crisis at the station, and especially the layoff of Christina Aanested, is alarming. Not only for the fact but also because of the surprise to all of us.

As a interested member of KZYX, I feel left out, the same way I felt before I came on the board back in 2003. For two years I tried along with a few others to open up communication between the board and the membership, between the board and the programmers, and between the board and the staff. The experience caused me to write a pamphlet “The Secret Life Of KZYX,” the title chosen to point to the lack of transparency at the station. The pamphlet caused a huge uproar and a campaign to get rid of me, which succeeded (see below).

I realized then that the KZYX board was split between two camps: “centrists” and “egalitarians.” There were a lot of issues at the time, including the fact that the station was dominated by an entrenched circle of local valley folks. Most of the staff were from Anderson Valley, the station manager was the sister-in-law of the board president, and the board had fallen into the routine of letting the station manager make all the important decisions.

After I left the board a new manager, Belinda Rawlings, was chosen. I gave a copy of my writing to Belinda, and to my pleasant surprise, she appreciated my critique. Belinda took charge and things seemed to change in a good way . The clique was broken up and no longer exists so far as I can tell and the news programming and many other things improved vastly. I was so satisfied that I stopped worrying about the station

and stopped going to board meetings. It seemed that Belinda had solved the problems.

But I noticed that one important thing did not change: Belinda herself was forthcoming, but there was no effort to keep the membership really informed, and I suppose the board fell back into the old “let the manager do the job” attitude. I had asked and hoped that some mechanisms would be created to insure that concerned members could find out what problems were coming up. Among other things I suggested that the board set up and conduct a regular monthly show, controlled by the board (not management) in which board members would openly discuss the issues before the board. That never happened for sure.

In my opinion, if KZYX is to be a truly community station, the board must be more proactive and transparent about its deliberations. It would benefit us all if you would treat the membership as a source of intelligence and problem solving and not just a target for fund raising.

We need more than a web site where we can submit messages to you, although I appreciate that.

Back in 2005, I wrote:

“In the meantime there’s been an election, in which I ran again for the board, against a nice person by the name of Jane Futcher and I lost. So I’m off the board. That will certainly save me a lot of time and heart-ache. . . . Unfortunately, Zac Zackary also lost which means that there is no one left on the board who can be trusted to report what is actually happening. The veil of “confidentiality” once again settles over the board. Egalitarian sympathizers, Lynda McClure and newly elected Jane Futcher (not to mention Antonio Lamb and Mike Grady) are unlikely to directly challenge the “centrists” and their restrictive notion of what members are allowed to know.”

So Doug and other board members, do you think there is merit to this critique?

Sincerely
King Collins, king@greenmac.com

I received no response from Doug or anyone else. So, I wrote again:*

Open Up The Board Listserv

June 30, 2009 12:31 PM

Dear KZYX board and interested members,

The KZYX board is using the board listserv in a way that is inappropriate to a community member-supported radio station.

Prior to 2005, there was no way for the board to communicate among themselves except at physical meeting. In 2005, we put in a listserv and it was decided, against opposition from myself and others, to limit access to board members and GM only.

I argued then that excluding members from the listserv discussion was effectively holding an ONGOING CLOSED MEETING which is definitely against long-standing procedures: Closed meetings are only supposed to be held for specific legal matters like personnel actions and real estate negotiations.

If the board would simply open up its deliberations to interested members there would be more intelligent input from the public and less unpleasant surprises, like the recent layoff of Christina.

The typical board member's attitude is that input from members would be at best a nuisance. That is one of the essential characteristics of the "centrist" perspective: Keep the discussion out of reach of the membership.

Opening up the listserv to the members could be done now, easily. All it takes is your decision and a few strokes of the keyboard.

I would appreciate a response (from the board) to this suggestion.

Respectfully submitted,

King Collins

KZYX board members 2003-2005.

The board did not respond. However, the GM did, reinforcing the notion that the board leaves the thinking to the GM. Here's his response:

From John Coate:I know of no board that has no way to converse in any form other than at a formal meeting. If not email then a phone conference. Boards have to be able to converse in some form in a less formal setting.

To which I responded:

Dear John and board,

I think you have hit upon a good idea: Limit closed board discussions to phone conferences (or physical meetings). The handy use of the listserv would than be shared with members. That would be acceptable, I think.

Are you aware that at the state level after the passage of the "sunshine" laws (Brown Act) closed email are not legal for elected government boards? Courts have interpreted the Brown Act to mean that a certain number of board members may not even drive in the same car to meetings.

I have had two years of exclusive email exchanges as a board member, and I am quite certain we would have benefited by sharing our thoughts on the listserv with the membership.

John, you seem to be saying that because transparency is not practiced by other boards, to your knowledge, that that is a reason not to do it. The opposite may be true. Those boards are all, to my knowledge, designed to keep the membership uninformed, and they all suffer from it.

KZYX was an innovation to begin with and one of the main innovations was to create a radio station controlled by the members, or at least a radio station whose deliberations are available to the members. Some of us want to know what is discussed by the board as they discuss it, not months later.

Transparency is the friend of good radio.

King

* * * *

“TRANSPARENCY MAKES GOOD RADIO”

Ballot Statement for KZYX Board

King Collins 2010

I've lived, worked and raised a family in Mendocino County. I love KZYX, listen all the time and served on the board, 2003 – 2005. At the end of my term I wrote “The Secret Life Of KZYX.”

KZYX---the most important media organization in the county---is praiseworthy in many ways: hardworking staff, quality programming, dedicated and imaginative volunteer programmers, all supported by the generosity of our listeners.

Success at raising money---a crucial responsibility of the board---depends, ultimately, on the quality of communication with us, the members: We give more when we know what is going on and our voice is heard.

The board has not kept us informed and has become more secretive. My feeling of urgency about this increased sharply last year when General Manager John Coate announced that a young news reporter had been laid off. Christina Aanested pursued local news with the instincts of an investigative reporter. I thought KZYX was developing a dynamic investigative news team. What a let down when her crisp voice was no longer heard!

Coate said the layoff was a budgetary necessity, but we had no idea that such a move was even being considered.

My purpose in running again for the board:

1) To increase the number of members (subscribers) and income to the station.

2) To encourage the board to be transparent and interactive with us, the subscribers.

3) To open up the closed board on-line discussion group (listserv) so that any KZYX member has the option to “listen in” (receive email copies) of board discussions between meetings. This change is easy and would give ordinary members the option to have “read only” access to the board listserv.

The listserv was started while I was on the board. Some of us argued, unsuccessfully, that it was wrong for the board to hold what amounts to a continuous closed meeting. (Bylaws limit what may be discussed in closed meeting.)

Finding a solution to the board's isolation is more important to me than winning this election.

4) Whether or not I am elected, I will bring forward (with other members) an Act of the Membership (See Bylaws) calling for transparency. If approved, the board is required to act accordingly.

Sincerely,

King Collins, king@greenmac.com

* * * *

The Board Is Not The CIA
Ballot Statement for KZYX Board
King Collins 2011

Last year when I ran for the board I said in big letters “TRANSPARENCY MAKES GOOD RADIO.”

I told about how much I love the KZYX, how it is “the most important media organization in the county” and how I learned so much when I served on the board, and how important it is to raise money and how raising money depends in the long run “on the quality of communication with us, the members” because “we give more when we know what is going on and our voice is heard.”

I daringly proposed that the board “open up it’s closed on-line discussion group,” the listserv that the board uses to talk among themselves between meeting.

At the candidates show, all us board candidates got to talk about why we were running for the board. I found it hard to get a point across in that round-robin format. I tried to stick to the point that the board should INTERACT with the membership and be TRANSPARENT about what’s going on. My opponent, David Hopmann, then the president of the board, didn’t like the idea much and he won. I got about 42% of the vote. That’s quite a bit of interest for an idea that board doesn’t even want to discuss. (Bob Page, a new board member said that he would put these ideas in front of the board but I haven’t heard anything yet.)

I’m not concerned about winning the election. Rather I’m trying to get across to the members and the station, that our community radio station could and should be a model for what we want (and don’t have) in local government. Transparency and interactivity don’t need a particular person: they need some actual mechanisms to guarantee them. I mean, for heavens sake, folks, this is a small radio station, It doesn’t need to be run like a big corporation. The board is not the CIA. We don’t need the secrecy and we don’t need all the rules about what board members can or can’t say and who they should or shouldn’t talk to.

I was out of sorts, last year too, because the station had just dropped an energetic new reporter and it seemed like John Coate, the General Manager, wasn't really trying anymore to develop a "dynamic investigative news team." I don't see much improvement in that.

And another thing, the board and staff don't seem to know the HISTORY of the station. Toward that end I am updating "The Secret Life Of KZYX" (the pamphlet I wrote in 2005) available at www.greenmac.com.

But for all that, I appreciate the work of the board, the GM, the staff and the programmers. Thanks for keeping the station alive.

Sincerely

King Collins, king@greenmac.com

* * * *

Collins Repents

King Collins, ballot statement 2012

Running for the At-large seat.

And so it came to pass that I, King Collins, ate from the forbidden Tree of Transparency and it emboldened me. I loved Transparency and promoted it as a cure for Bureaucracy and related diseases like Arthritis.

But I was Unlearned and Wrong and I was cast from the Mash Garden of KZYYX. And yet I continued to try to convince everyone that “Transparency Makes Good Radio.” (This and other misbegotten documents are unfortunately available at www.greenmac.com.)

Oh how reality has smitten me. Too late, I see how dangerous Transparency can be in the hands of Common people. Look what happened to Mubarak and Quaddafi.

And so I stand before you, a misguided Shadow of a man, to confess my Sins of Anti-authoritarianism. In Shame I must follow the long road to Rehabilitation. I am told that, with sincere and concerted effort, there may come a time when I will no longer Yearn for “Member Control” and “Direct Democracy” and that crazy stuff.

There is so much that Nobody needs to know. Like What the Agenda is, or What happened to the Money those Suckers collected for the Ukiah studio? These things and many others should be kept behind Closed Doors, bounced about on the board listserv perhaps, but Not in Public. No need.

Besides those Questions bring up History. And we don’t need History. Better to operate in a perpetual present.

I know I have been wrong, a miserable ex-believer and User of the T word.

The stubborn few who continue to use the T word in relation to our station are Misguided, possessed of the Devil Weed. Like Heretics of old they should be Burned at the stake. But I exaggerate. A little. They should be shunned. Their names forgotten.

Humbly submitted,
King Collins,
Reformed Moderate Centrist

The Last Thread Of Democracy

King Collins, ballot statement 2013

Running for the At-large seat.

John Coate, the General Manager, asked if I am serious about running for the board because "it will cost the station over \$2000 if you do."

John, you are a fine one to ask if I am serious about the election. You want to pre-select the board and bypass the election entirely. You don't take the elections seriously at all.

So, in my infernal stubbornness, I force an election. Then what? A listless charade, unless somehow someone is able to liven things up.

I'm trying. (See the forbidden files at greenmac.com.)

We can all read the exciting statements about what good people we are and how much we love the station. And then, Wow! We can look forward to the CANDIDATES FORUM, set up by social morons so that nobody, especially the listeners, can tell what is going on.

I know the elections are not democratic because real issues are not discussed, not even brought up. Well-meaning folks will be elected and rubber stamp what needs to be stamped and never ask any interesting questions.

And yet, I must take the election seriously because it is the last thread of democracy, the last glimmer of hope for the impossible dream of our mission statement: MEMBER CONTROL, which by the way supposedly happens through board elections.

Should I be elected, I would consider it part of my job to report back to the members, and to respond to them if they call.

Other than that I make no promises.

Warm regards to all, including the likable John Coate and the hard-working staff of our community radio station.

King Collins

Micro-situationist

The Secret Life Of KZYX, Part 2
Responses to The Secret Life O KZYX, 2006
and
The Transparency Papers, 2009 - 2013

See also the **Media Forum** at
www.greenmac.com