

Medium Rare: KZSC & City on a Hill

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For a small school with no journalism department, UCSC puts out an amazing number of quality publications, as well as producing its own radio station and cable TV station. As there is no formal journalism department, the students who produce these various media have an amazing amount of freedom to exercise their own ideas without interference from professors who know the "right way" to do it. As anyone who has read *City on a Hill* or listened to KZSC radio knows, the end result of all this collective student creativity is a regular cornucopia of good stuff to read and listen to.

City on a Hill, the student newspaper (at 20 years, the oldest tabloid in Santa Cruz), has embarrassed other universities with full-fledged journalism departments several times. The well-written and professionally packaged publication has taken home several state and national awards of excellence. Doug Reed, this year's editor-in-chief, says his paper has a simple formula for success.

"We set high standards for ourselves," said Reed. "We know what's good, and we develop an eye for it. We take a lot of pride in what we do. And we enjoy it. A good part of our success comes from being a collective. That's the greatest strength of *City on a Hill*: all our copy decisions and editorials are made by as many members of the staff [about 40 people] as possible."

The newspaper, which ranges from 28-44 pages each week, is a whole lot more than a rundown of campus news, as so many college newspapers are. Although it certainly covers campus issues, *City on a Hill* also covers the city, arts, the international scene and women's studies. Editor Reed defends his paper's policy of branching out into all these non-campus areas by saying that a university education extends far beyond the walls of the classroom.

"Part of the function of a university education is to acquaint yourself with the world," said Reed. "*City on a Hill* has a duty to do that." Although Reed agrees with critics that his paper can be "a bit strident" in its coverage of some issues, he makes no apologies for his staff's freedom of expression. Nowhere is this freedom of expression more apparent than in the paper's treatment of women's issues.

"*City on a Hill* will continue to bring to light issues that concern women," said Reed. "I think that's a very important part of *City on a Hill*. The feminist community here in town carries a lot of weight in the progressive community as a whole. There's always going to be space for women's issues in *City on a Hill* — and I'm glad of that."

You don't have to be a rightwing

fanatic to realize after one reading of *City on a Hill* that the paper is a leftwing publication, to put it mildly. "It's a leftist publication," said Reed. "I think that's a reflection of the political views of the students who come to UCSC. There's definitely a very strong leftist, progressive slant to the students at UCSC."

Reed, who said his publication is "at opposite ends of the pole" from the *Sentinel*, feels that our town needs some publications that balance out our daily's view of the news. "We try to provide news that you won't find in mainstream news. Even though our circulation is rather small (10,500), we provide a counterweight to what the *Sentinel* is putting out. Any paper that goes to print — any good paper — is going to have a point of view. That's as true for the *Sentinel* as it is for *City on a Hill*."

Like City on a Hill, KZSC is most definitely an alternative medium, presenting a somewhat one-sided view of the world

That left-leaning point of view has doubtlessly cost *City on a Hill* some ad revenue over the years (70 percent of the paper's revenues come from ad sales, the other 30 percent from student registration fees), but that doesn't worry Reed too much because the paper is not a business venture, as some other leftist publications in town are. With that freedom from the chains of the almighty dollar, Reed has no plans to soften the leftist punch of the paper or to dilute it with ad-generating fluff. Once again, the confident young editor makes no apologies for that — even though it may tread on the toes of that mythical god, Objectivitus.

"We generally reject the notion of being objective," said Reed, probably one of the nation's few college paper editors who could make such a statement so brazenly. "When you go to write a story, you pick out something you think is most important. When you ask a question of a political candidate, you're prioritizing news events. That throws the whole notion of 'objectivity' out of the window. What you can do — what you must do — is strive for fairness and accuracy. As long as you do that,

you're a good newspaper."

Turning from the pages of *City on a Hill* and tuning into the left end of your FM radio dial, you will find the other shining star of the UCSC media galaxy, KZSCFM. To call KZSC a "student" radio station would almost be a misnomer. Although the university's student registration fees keep the station on the air, more and more of the station's funding must come from the community as a whole.

KZSC's status as a community station is reflected in ways other than financial. Two members of the station's five-member board of directors and two members of the station's five-member program board are not students at all. The balance of the 100 or so volunteers are a mixture of students and community members. While this may lead to some "under-reportage" of campus events (compared to many student stations, at least), it also relieves some of the transient nature of other student stations.

If any one word could describe the unique 1250-watt station, that word would be "eclectic." A few of the selections from the musical menu include reggae, Brazilian, calypso, salsa, jazz, country, blues, classical, and women's music. Just as important to the station as music is a wide variety of public affairs programming, including programs on gay issues, Central America, information, global affairs and children's storytelling.

Guida Leicester, KZSC's development director, told the *Express* that the program board is looking for two ingredients in people who would like to start a show on KZSC: dedication and imagination. "We don't like to see people just come in here, do their show and leave," said Leicester. "We like to see some dedication to the station." All volunteers must complete a concentrated 20-week training session — and they must often accept less-than-prime time slots — but it all pays off in the end. "It's free rein for us," said Leicester, referring to the fact that the university has little, if any, say-so over programming decisions.

Like its newsprint-covered cousin across campus, KZSC is most definitely an alternative medium. And also like *City on a Hill*, the radio station presents a somewhat one-sided view of the world.

"We are an alternative community radio station," explained Leicester. "What you get from mainstream radio, TV and newspapers is certainly not the leftwing perspective. We do represent the leftwing point of view. What we hope to do at KZSC is present sides that are not very closely looked at elsewhere. We want people to look at more closely and question not only the leftwing media, but the mainstream media, as well."

One of KZSC's strong points

ONE SITS, THE OTHERS DON'T. Campus DJ's (left to right) Bill Blassey, Don Colburn, Kellie Stoddart, Guida Leicester, Kaweah Leneshewsky and Lisa Castor collectively cue a record at KZSC.



(depending upon one's point of view) is the station's attention to women's and minority issues, both in its musical menu and its public affairs programming. Leicester says this is in keeping with its alternative image.

"I don't feel we give women's issues too much coverage at all, especially considering that these do not get much coverage in the mainstream media," said Leicester. "Maybe we're making up for the lack of it in mainstream media. That's something we're proud of here: it gives women and minorities the chance to come in here and have the opportunity to put on programming that isn't given a chance elsewhere. We're presenting an opportunity for people who may not be between the ages of 25 and 35, White and upper middle-class. We're looking to welcome in all people."

Surprisingly, Leicester (who is in charge of fundraising for the station) said she has encountered little resistance to the station's politics as she's sought funding for the station. She says the fact that KZSC is a training ground for people — especially for women and minorities — makes the station attractive to sources of funding.

A more common problem in the search for money comes from the competition with a plethora of other alternative community radio stations in the area. Although these other stations have made her job a little harder at times, Leicester is

proud to live in a community where public radio has a chance. "Santa Cruz is a very fortunate community to be so rich in alternative media," said Leicester. "We [radio stations] are different from each other. When it comes to money, it can be tense, but we complement each other."

Anyone wishing to find out more about KZSC is welcome to attend an open house at the station on Monday, September 30.

KZSC and *City on a Hill* are the two "media giants" at UCSC, but they are not the only examples of student-run media at the university. At least four other examples of media call UCSC home. They include:

- **KZUT**, the campus cable television station that provides the campus with quality videotape programs, including tapes of on-campus concerts and lectures, as well as educational tapes by UCSC students as part of their coursework.

- **Chinquapin**, the campus literary journal published in the spring, features fiction, poetry, artwork and photography by UCSC students.

- **Leviathan**, the Jewish student newspaper, is published quarterly, and includes articles and fiction about contemporary Jewish concerns.

- **Twanas**, the quarterly newspaper is published by the Third World and Native American students, which is a collection of writing, poetry and photographs pertaining to the issues of the Third World and Native Americans.