

Hard times make KPIG pull the plug

By Walt Wiley
McCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE

FREEDOM, Santa Cruz County — "Pig Radio," a novel form of broadcasting that has evolved here on the Central California Coast over the past couple of decades, has suffered another fatal setback.

KPIG, the 3,000-watt FM station in this rural community near Watsonville, was the latest incarnation of "high-cholesterol" programming that began in 1975 with an irreverent radio station known as KFAT.

But its owners have pulled the plug on pork and did what beleaguered station owners are doing nationwide these days. They put a satellite dish on the roof and began broadcasting canned "hot adult

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3-10-91

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contemporary" music.

In the process, they have done away with the irreverent disc jockeys and the programming that included everything from bogus commercials to bawdy jokes to a range of music that included just about everything not usually played on "normal" commercial radio stations.

KPIG owner Laura Hopper said the new sound will be a far cry from the programming the station was founded upon. "We hated to do it, but we had to. We were dying. Just didn't have the advertising support," she said as the station was in the throes of turning the pig into bacon bits.

"This was founded on the idea that radio should be fun, and we had fun here for three years with this station, but we've got to make a living too. If it was going to work anywhere, it would have worked here. We had the listeners. We just didn't have the advertisers."

As she spoke, disc jockey Randy Rueter was busy playing out the last hours of pig radio, spinning "It Ain't Over 'Til the Fat Lady Sings" by Foster and Lloyd and taking

calls from distraught listeners, inviting requests on the station's call-in line.

"Call us on the swine line, while there's time," he urged.

He noted during a pause in his nonstop manipulation of turntables, compact disc players, taped commercials, live commercials and the telephone that he had received more than 100 calls the first hour he was on the air after a newspaper in Monterey printed a story that the switch from pure pork to canned product was imminent.

"The cat got out of the bag, of course, when the guys came to work and saw the satellite dish on the roof," he recalled. "Then, one of the DJs who was let go stood up on stage at a Santa Cruz concert and really laid out a nasty version of the story."

For his part, Rueter said, he had been a part-time DJ all along and will continue doing part-time announcer work while operating his own computer consulting business in Watsonville.

Reality line blurs

After fielding another telephone call from a listener who wanted to know what could be done to preserve the irreverent format, he played a bogus commercial for a horror movie in which the monsters are women suffering from premenstrual syndrome.

That was followed by a real commercial for a Santa Cruz health food store, followed in turn by another real commercial for a series of concerts that

Black interspersed w
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and Austrian blues a
Theessink.

"Other stations, they lists," said Rueter. "Bu just play what we like listeners listen to us. Sor up with a request, they which track on which the song they want to h

Among recent hits o tion have been "Quiche a Barbecue Town" and "ican Air Force."

It all stems from the l dition that wowed loya throughout the Santa C terey-Salinas area as wel bit of the Bay Area. A tr high in the mountains t rate the two regions pla such as the talking-bl "Moose Turd Pie."

That station died ei ago when its owners sold new owners changed the and the format. Then, later, some old KFATers station called KHIP in but it, too, was a financ case and had to abando mat.

KPIG was planned to the loyal listeners who free-wheeling KFAT styl in a way that would avo falls that brought on the the earlier stations.

"We'd planned to do very businesslike manne did OK for the first y Hopper of the