

Happy Birthday Channel 15!



Texas A&M University has renamed one of its streets to "Sesame Street," to commemorate the 10th birthday of PBS station KAMU Channel 15, which was celebrated on Feb. 15. The name Sesame Street was chosen to honor the children's show, which is also celebrating its 10th birthday this year.

Photo by Janet Golub



One of the celebration's young participants enjoys a chocolate chip cookie while looking at his Sesame Street cartoon book.

Photo by Becky Matthews



A huge paper cake helped honor KAMU on its birthday.

Photo by Becky Matthews



The Hearne High School Eagle Band were part of a parade, one of the scheduled events of the celebration.

Photo by Janet Golub

by Becky Matthews

Battalion Reporter

If someone walks up to you on campus tomorrow and musically asks, "Can you tell me how to get, how to get to Sesame Street," don't punch him or walk off muttering about (big) bird brains. As of Feb. 15, there really is a Sesame Street at Texas A&M University.

The street, which leads to the parking lot next to the Joe Hiram Moore Communications Center, was officially marked with a special Sesame Street sign from the Children's Television Workshop at the Friday celebration of Channel 15's 10th birthday.

Rod Zent, The KAMU station manager, explained on the hour-long live broadcast of the celebration that Sesame Street was chosen to be the theme because Sesame Street is also celebrating its 10th birthday this year.

About 12:30 p.m., a crowd began gathering at the University Center. Members of the Hearne High School band as well as approximately 300 pre-school and elementary school kids gathered in preparation for a parade down on Houston Street. The kids brought homemade Sesame Street nametags, banners and posters and they were given helium-filled balloons to carry in the parade.

The children from one school turned themselves into miniature TV sets by wearing brown grocery sacks with little screens cut out of the front.

At 1 p.m., the station began to broadcast coverage of the ceremony on the front porch of the communications center as the parade started down at the other end of the street. The band led off the parade and the little kids scampered behind it like the kids who followed the Pied Piper.

The mayors of both Bryan and College Station as well as representatives of both the A&M Consolidated School District and the Bryan Independent School District officially declared Feb. 15, 1980, to be KAMU Public Television Day.

Dr. Jarvis Miller, president of

Texas A&M, congratulated the station for its 10 years of public service and said that he was very proud of the community's support of KAMU in the past two years.

After the parade, the children were brought into the studio of the station where they were interviewed about Sesame Street and the characters in Sesame Street.

The Cookie Monster was very popular, but Big Bird barely edged out ahead to be the most popular Sesame Street character. After the interviews, the children were taken outside the station where they were given Sesame Street magazines and punch and cookies.

According to Rodger Lewis, the program director of the station, the most important aspect of the birthday celebration is that KAMU began broadcasting on weekday mornings beginning on that day.

Before Feb. 15, the station began its broadcast day at 2:30 p.m. Now it begins broadcasting at 7:45 a.m.

The station is currently planning to broadcast material carried directly off the Public Broadcasting System network without any locally produced programs. It hopes to expand to local programs, education programs and classic movies if the support and demand for the programs justifies it.

The change to a full day of broadcasting will help people in the Bryan-College Station community understand when KAMU is broadcasting.

Previously, when KAMU was not on the air the cable companies would insert programming from another station. This caused people to be confused as to when KAMU was broadcasting and when broadcasts came from another station.

When KAMU first began broadcasting, it had 76 transmitter failures in the first 13 weeks. They were working in a building which had been condemned after World War I and using equipment which was over 22-years-old.

In 1970, it became a PBS station and in 1972 it moved from the old building to the Joe Hiram Moore Communications Center where they had all new equipment.