

KAMU provides entertainment, services for A&M community



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Senior Phil Hollingsworth, an employee at the television station, controls visual aspects of KAMU's live broadcast of The Jackie

Sherrill Show from the KAMU control room. Hollingsworth is a broadcast journalism major from Bryan.

By Kelly S. Brown
Staff Writer

Sesame Street is on every television screen in the building, but there are no children around. An occasional laugh may be heard down the hall, but it's never traced.

In each room the viewer randomly scans the set. He's really not there to watch TV — well, actually, he is — and he's getting paid for it, too.

The building is KAMU-TV, a

Public Broadcasting Station, and half of its employees are A&M students.

Jessica Baggett, a junior journalism major, said working at KAMU as a production assistant has given her invaluable hands-on experience that has allowed her to know her own capabilities.

Before becoming a paid employee, Baggett was one of the many volunteers that KAMU employs.

One thing that bothers her, she said, is that some people look

down on the station, while they don't know what services really are offered on KAMU-TV.

"Because we are a public station, we can't afford many programs that we would like to, but there are still some entertaining and educational programs that are truly good," Baggett said.

Program director Rodger Lewis said many people associate PBS with something boring and painful.

"Years ago, its name was changed in hopes that the association would be made null."

PBS's original name was Educational Broadcast Services, and the word 'education' scared many viewers away.

Kittie Bilke, an elementary education major with a degree in speech, is a production assistant at KAMU-TV. She said people don't realize that although it may be an educational broadcast, it is an enjoyable learning experience.

"I never used to watch PBS," she said. "It was something my parents watched. When I did watch TV, it didn't occur to me to turn on PBS. But since I began working at KAMU in May, I watch it all the time and find it really interesting, especially as a future teacher."

Some of the programs offered are NOVA, National Geographic, Wild America, Smithsonian World and Mark Russell's Comedy Special.

But many of the programs are localized, too.

Among the local shows broadcast are Fifteen Magazine, a weekly show that gives exposure to organizations and community events; Candidate Program, to be aired in November, which will give viewers a chance to get to know the local candidates before the election; and the Sherrill Show, a call-in program which airs Thursday nights.

Lewis said the athletic department is KAMU's biggest client.

Aside from the call-in show, KAMU produces the Jackie Sherrill show on Sunday, the post call-in game show, the football video yearbook and an academic recruiting tape. The football games are replayed on Sunday nights.

The athletic department is not the only group who benefits from KAMU-TV.

In every corner at A&M professors and other faculty utilize much of the tape at KAMU.

"Over half of our time is spent doing things for the University," Lewis said.

"One big misconception people have about KAMU-TV, is that it's just the local PBS outlet. Yes, it is PBS, but it is a whole lot more. Over \$165,000 is spent buying PBS programming, but that number is small compared to the over a million-dollar budget that we have."

KAMU receives its funding from a cooperative venture.

In round numbers, Lewis said, the University, community and federal government each provide one-third of the station's operating budget. The University gives a little more, however, while the community pours slightly less than one-third into the funding.

"We would not be doing well if it were not for the University," Lewis said. They give us a lot, but we give them something equitable in return.

"So much of what we do is related to producing programs for the departments — providing some kind of audio or video equipment. We produce video programs that professors can take to conferences for presentations. In the past we have had classroom instruction on TV."

"I wish we could do more telecourse lessons. Last year we offered a Management 211 class on channel 31, the learning channel program, where students had a chance to watch each lesson four times."

Also on channel 31, the station sends and receives teleconferences.

In October, experts will talk to A&M faculty about teaching methods in a nationwide teleconference.

The most successful conference to date, Lewis said, was the Wiley Lecture Series "Nuclear War: Thinking the Unthinkable," which featured William F. Buckley, Robert McNamara, Sen. John Tower and former British Prime Minister Lord Callaghan.

"We're always looking for subjects of major national interest," he said.



Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

A view through the lens of Todd Wright's video camera on the set of The Jackie Sherrill Show. Wright is a senior broadcast journalism major from Dallas.



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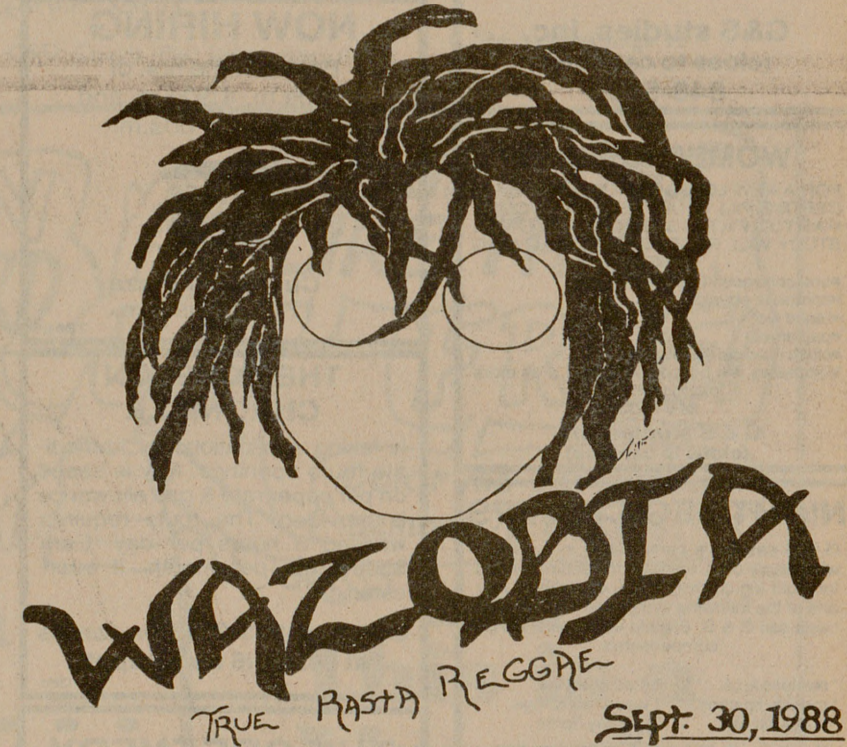
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