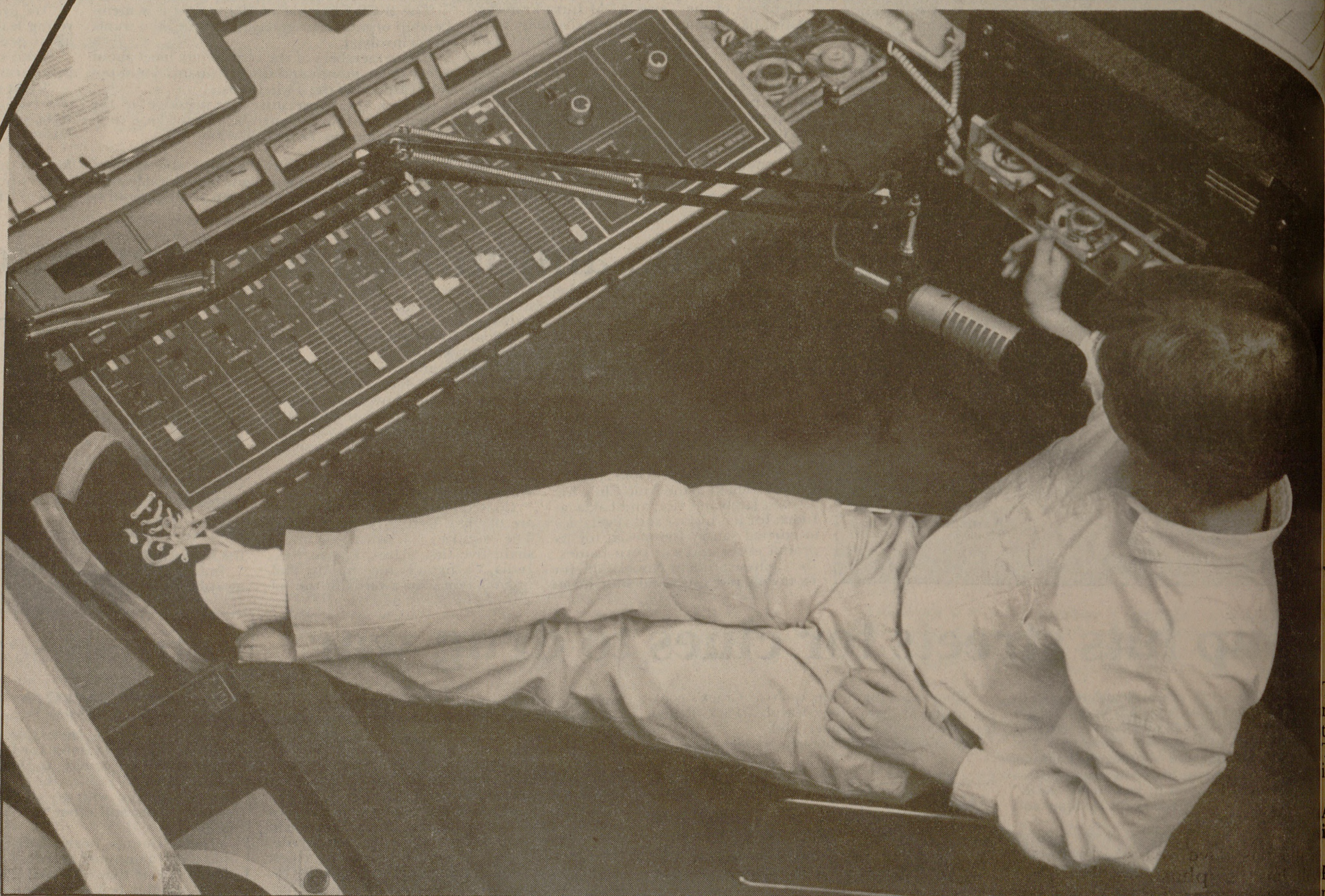


on the air



Brett Summers kicks back while doing a station break and prepares the next cartridge to be played. Summers plays instrumental "avant weird" music on the "Escape from Noise" show Mondays at midnight.

KANM (99.9 FM Cable) gives Aggies an alternative music choice. But few students know about their own Aggie radio station.

Alex Luke, FM adviser and former station manager and music director, said KANM's local obscurity is ironic because the station is well-known among regional and national radio circles.

"People are more aware of us on a national level than you would think," Luke said. "When we go to a state or national convention, people know about KANM."

"KANM probably has a better reputation than any other cable radio station in the state," he said, "but no one around here seems to know about it."

Luke believes that the low awareness of cable radio has kept KANM from becoming a locally prominent radio station. Further, cable companies fail to promote cable radio, he said.

Music director Tim Davis said, "I don't feel like it's the cable company's responsibility to promote us. I don't think it would hurt them (to promote cable radio). It would be an extra perk to buy a cable package."

"When I first heard about KANM my freshman year, I was freaking out, because music I had been listening to for a couple years was on the radio. I didn't have a TV, but I bought cable so I could have it (KANM)."

Music Format:

Broadcasting 24 hours a day, KANM schedules 56 three-hour blocks each week. A DJ is assigned to a show, and he or she selects a specific music format. The DJs play whatever music they want within the chosen format.

Program director Doug Vaught said, "We don't want to limit the (DJs) to what we want. By letting the DJ decide what to play, we're getting more variety and perspective of what is out there."

"The DJs can develop their own style. A lot of people tune in for a particular style."

Formats range from classical, Christian rock and jazz to heavy metal, progressive and alternative rock.

"We are a college alternative station," Davis said. "Our primary goal is to serve portions of the market that aren't currently receiving service from commercial radio. We want to make sure people are getting what nobody else is providing."

KANM's programming policy excludes music that receives regional commercial airplay. Davis explained that the station has loosened this policy because of the crossover to commercial airplay by bands traditionally found on college radio.

"I don't feel like we have to abandon bands like R.E.M., U2, Depeche Mode, The Cure, based on the fact they are becoming more widely accepted," Davis said. "We've loved them forever, it's just taken people time to learn to love them also."

With all the genres of music featured, Vaught said it is difficult to maintain continuity in KANM's programming. Still, the block format helps the DJs be consistent with their music selections.

"It keeps DJs from wandering out of one genre," Vaught said. "It's also good for the listener to know that if they turn on a type of show, they'll get that specific type of music."

Because KANM is non-commercial, more airtime is available for music, Luke said.

"KANM is a more music-oriented station than probably any other station in town," Luke said. "Our main selling point is that we're alternative. We provide anything that can't be heard already."

For information about when a particular genre of music is played, call the station or pick up the station's magazine, "Alternative," which will be distributed on campus at the end of the month.

KANM not KAMU:

The most common misconception is that KANM is KAMU (90.9 FM radio).

Getting the two stations mixed up is easy, considering the similar call letters and the frequencies. However, KANM is a cable radio station only, while KAMU is transmitted on FM airwaves.

Further, KANM is older than KAMU (which was founded in 1977), and is only associated

with the University. KAMU was established as the University radio station.

"KAMU receives money from the government through the University because it's a University station," station manager Beth Weissinger said. "We (KANM) are as close as we can possibly come to being independent."

KAMU's music format centers on classical and jazz. The station also features national news and ethnic programs. KANM is a strictly college radio station, featuring a wider range of alternative music. Despite the differences, confusion is common.

"People have a terrible time distinguishing between the two stations, Weissinger said, who also works at KAMU. "People will call KAMU asking for an underground band."

Organization and Structure:

KANM is managed and operated by Texas A&M student volunteers. Ten are in management positions, 73 are DJs and about 50 are alternate DJs. "I feel KANM is an expression of some special people on campus," Vaught said. "KANM is not a bunch of weirdos playing music. It's a liking."

Weissinger said, "We are probably the most diverse organization on campus because we comprise people from the Corps to fraternities."

"I can't think of a group that isn't represented or hasn't been represented at KANM."

The station is a student organization and is independent from Texas A&M, except for a

faculty adviser from the Department of Student Activities.

"This organization is run for and by students," Luke said. "It always been that way since we went on the air."

KANM is financially self-sufficient. Although the station receives no advertising revenue, it is financed by fund raising activities such as concerts and t-shirt sales, and semester dues paid by the entire KANM staff. Management and DJs pay \$15 per person and alternate DJs pay \$5 each.

Each semester, KANM organizes a "big event" to raise money for the station. Last month, a two-day benefit at Club Fahrenheit raised both money and student interest. Six Texas bands played in support of KANM.

Financial director Janina Hurtado said it was the most financially successful KANM benefit, raising more than \$500 for the station.

History:

KANM first began broadcasting in October 1973. The station is one of the oldest cable radio stations in the state.

At first, the station was a subsidiary of Student Government. During the mid-1970s, the station broke away from Student Government and has been run independently by students ever since.

The station has broadcast from some unusual locations. KANM has aired from a music director's apartment and from a dormitory lounge. It also used to broadcast from a barber shop off campus.

But KANM's nomadic history stalled, and the station has been based at the Pavilion since March 1982.

•See KANM/Page 5