

Friday  
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## Maps help musician find more than roads

By Amy Protas  
THE BATTALION

**K**enneth Tramm did not use a scale of notes when he was learning how to play the guitar. Instead he developed a map of notes. And that is how Tramm, a 1995 A&M graduate with a degree in bioenvironmental science, came up with the name of his band — The Maps, which is performing at Sweet Eugene's tonight.

After drummer Gabriel Cortinas, a senior marketing major, and Herb Mayfield, a senior industrial distribution major, joined the group, The Maps were able to come up with what Tramm calls "jazzy, bluesy, rock stuff." The band's influences include Stevie Ray Vaughn, Pink Floyd, and the Rolling Stones.

Mayfield said it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what type of music they play.

"When people find out I'm in a band, they always ask what kind of music we play," Mayfield said. "It's hard to explain what it is. We write our own music. Not very many local bands do."



Kenneth Tramm

Tramm said he is happy Cortinas and Mayfield joined the band.

"Around my junior year, I started the band with some friends," Tramm said. "I had concentrated on school, then I wanted to play. It was more of people just doing it for fun. Eventually, they wanted to concentrate more on school. Because of that, I was able to find the right people."

The old band was called Kenneth Tramm and The Maps. Tramm said the new members are good musicians in their own right, so he dropped his name.

The current Maps line-up has been around since the end of the summer. But

Tramm has been working on writing the band's songs since high school.

Cortinas is also a member of the band Lewis. He said playing in two bands can be pressing at times.

"Some weekends, it's kind of hectic," Cortinas said.

"A couple of weekends ago, Lewis and The Maps played for a Habitat for Humanity benefit. We had also played for the Miracle Network that day. Luckily, both bands are understanding and let me go both ways."

Bryan-College Station may not be the music mecca Austin is, but Cortinas said audiences here are starting to mature.

"Right now, audiences are developing much more," Cortinas said. "As for alternative music, audiences are getting larger. They're growing. We don't really target a specific audience, just hope anyone who likes music will come out."

Mayfield said the band is at an advantage here because Austin is dense with bands.

"In Austin, bands are a dime a dozen," Mayfield said. "It's good if you can get known here and branch out."

Mayfield said audiences here do not have a great interest in the music.

"They aren't there for the music," Mayfield said. "They are there to drink beer. People will pay a lot for beer but won't pay cover. It's hard to get people who aren't into music to get away from [dance places]."

Tramm said The Maps have played at such venues as Stafford Opera House, Sweet Eugene's and Kaye's Cabaret.

"We get a lot of people at Sweet Eugene's," Tramm said. "It's not exactly coffee music, but it works. People play Jenga while listening to the Maps."

Kenneth Tramm and The Maps, the former band, opened for Chris Duarte when he played at Stafford Opera House, now called the Dixie Theatre. Tramm said he hopes to open for him again with the current band.

As for the future, Austin is appealing to Tramm with its vast number of venues.

"I hope to move to Austin because that's where it's at," Tramm said. "I hooked up with the booking agency, Popular Talent. I'm really glad that happened."

Mayfield said despite graduating next year, he hopes the band will stay together.

"I'm going to graduate next semester," Mayfield said. "Ken is married, and Gabe has a year left. We have offers to play in Houston and Austin. And I wouldn't mind giving a music career a try. I don't think my parents would like to hear that."

## Big sister's wedding puts relationship in perspective

**W**hen I was in kindergarten, I could do 1,000-piece puzzles.

In first grade, I wrote a book about Mr. Petty, the janitor at our school. I even illustrated it.

I was no genius, I just had a big sister.

Michelle made me sit in "class" with her stuffed animals and dolls before I ever went to school.

I did pretty well in the class (my brother always skipped), but I never made the best grade in the class. My sister gave that honor to the gorilla, always saying that it would keep me humble.

But I never became humble until the rest of the kids caught up to me in school — I guess I evolved quickly into the slacker that I am today.

Michelle did her best to give me a head start, and I'll always appreciate how much she taught me.

Yesterday, I got an invitation to her wedding, which, among other things, means I'll have to invite her to mine.

But the whole wedding-planning process has me feeling as though I live with Steve Martin in *Father of the Bride*. I've seen my parents become more and more insane.

Just last week, dad suggested that we have the reception at the Steak Pit and got arrested for removing the superfluous buns from a hot dog bun package.

Mom and Michelle are battling over every detail, which wasn't a surprise for my family. After all, things need to be planned perfectly for my only sister's wedding. Will the napkins be rolled up or folded? This is something they need to spend two hours on the phone arguing about.

But one part of *Father of the Bride* was never played up — the little brother.

He was much too young to realize anything except that big sis' was leaving home. In many ways, I am happy that my sister waited until she was 25 to get married because I can relate to her marriage on a different level.

When we grew up together, she was too old for me to relate to. She tried to take care of my brother and I when we were young. When I was six, she used to open her "restaurant" every Saturday morning and serve my brother and I breakfast as we watched *The Smurfs*.

Years later, when she was starting high school, Michelle talked Mom out of serving us breakfast. She said women should not wait on men and insisted that we were old enough to take care of ourselves. She was

**MICHAEL LANDAUER**  
AGGIELIFE EDITOR



right, and Mom had more free time to go back to work.

My sister went off to A&M and became a liberal. Then she moved up to Chicago and became a communist — or something.

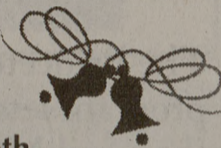
We've had many close moments, but with all of our differences, I started to wonder if our closest moment came and went with me finishing as salutatorian in her preschool class.

She'll be home for Christmas — and that wedding thing — but odds are good that she won't make me breakfast.

But that doesn't bug me because odds are also good that I'll never have a bigger supporter — someone who really believes in me. Someone who has encouraged me to do for myself.

I guess big sisters work in mysterious ways with their little brothers. They are subtle with advice, and they are the testing grounds for our parents.

**Yesterday, I got an invitation to her wedding, which, among other things, means I'll have to invite her to mine.**



When we were kids, I always told Michelle that Mom and Dad loved me best. As the communist child who moved to another state, Michelle was making it easier for me to make ground on my assertion.

But I never saw my parents stop loving her, and the more I saw my sister grow into an independent, intelligent, successful woman, I couldn't help but realize that I love her, too. Not as a big sister who tries to take care of her little brother, but as someone who taught her little brother to take care of himself.

The kid in *Father of the Bride* was sad when he realized his sister was moving away from him and making a family of her own. I guess I'm lucky enough to see Michelle's wedding in a different way.

When she walks down the aisle, she won't be leaving my family. She'll be moving into another aspect of life that I don't know about yet. Kinda like how she knew about school before I did.

And all I will be able to think about is how much she has taught me — and how much I still have to learn from her.

A big sister's work is never done.

Michael Landauer is a junior journalism major

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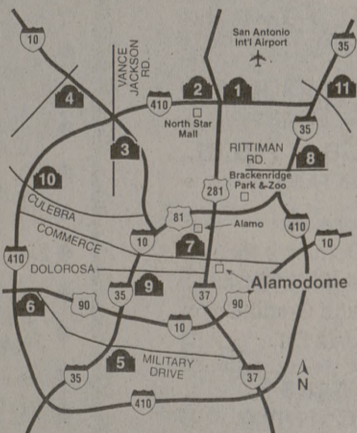
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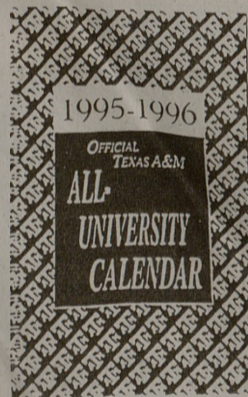
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