

AGGIElife

THE BATTALION



Local independent stations bring spirit of rebellion into the radio broadcast spectrum

BY JASON BENNYHOFF
The Battalion

In this day and age of formulaic popular music, one institution stands as a bastion of musical individualism — the independent radio station. Independent radio station employees say an independent station serves those who are not served by commercial, mainstream media. They say they take no advertising money and accept no limitations on what they play.

Stuart Young, program director at 1600 KANM-AM, said the station plays whatever it wants because it is nonprofit.

"F—k commercial radio," Young said. "You get to see what goes on [in the radio business]. We get calls from record labels every day, and they want us to play their stuff. We get about 100 CDs a week — about half we play and about half we do not, but we do not have to cater to advertisers."

Young said much of the music commercial radio stations play is determined by demographics and potential advertising revenue. Independent radio stations, Young said, get a wider variety of music to

the public. He said one of the best aspects of independent radio is the camaraderie and common love of music held by everyone who works there.

"Nobody gets paid," Young said. "It is just a bunch of people getting together that love music. Everyone has different tastes, but every time you are in there, you are surrounded by people who love music."

Eileen Peters, a four-year volunteer and show host at 89.1 KEOS-FM, said there is more to independent radio than music — there is a duty to serve underrepresented people in the community. Peters said KEOS offers a variety of programming not heard on commercial radio that gives everyone a chance to hear something he or she can enjoy.

"We feature Americana, Texas music, and we even have live music in the studio," Peters said. "We are one of very few stations that has live music."

KEOS is also an educational station. Peters said the station provides diverse types of news programming to give people news they might not hear on commercial stations. This includes minority-concerned news and foreign broadcasting.

"We have a wide variety of programs to serve members of the community who are not being served," Peters said. "We have news and current affairs shows that cater to the gay and lesbian issues. We have lots of world music. For instance, we have

a Jewish-Israeli show. We also carry National Public Radio (NPR) programming, Public Radio International (PRI) programs and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC)."

Despite independent radio stations' insistence on remaining nonprofit, they do improve the profits of others. Many college radio stations reach diverse audiences with money to spend, yet accept none. College stations are at least slightly associated with their universities, but state schools exert no control over content and many do not accept advertising money.

Allan Seale, manager of Disc Go Round, said airplay on independent radio stations can bump up independent bands' record sales.

"We get some stuff off the college radio charts," Seale said. "There are a few bands that would be put in the independent category that are played on college radio. There is also a lot of word-of-mouth involved in their sales. A lot of bands we sell do not get airplay on the bigger radio stations, but are played on college radio."

Young said one of the most important aspects of independent radio is that it provides variety in a world of otherwise bland airwaves.

"It benefits listeners to have varying tastes," Young said. "Here there is none of that cookie-cutter, run-of-the-mill pop."

STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

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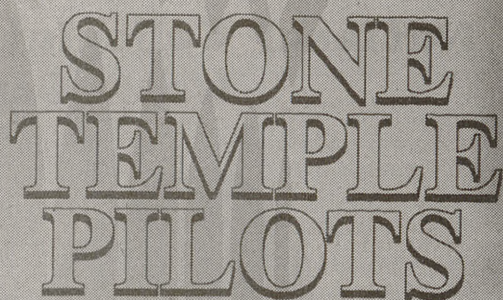
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