

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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## Listening to the beat of a different station

Students take a break from mainstream music by tuning into campus radio station KANM

By Lauren Romero  
THE BATTALION

When Paige Jobe gets tired of mainstream radio, she simply tunes in to KANM, Texas A&M's student radio station.

"KANM provides a fresh perspective to music," said Jobe, a senior education major. "I like it because you hear a lot of bands that you can't hear anywhere else."

Scott Towle, KANM's public relations director and a graduate student in Mays Business School, describes KANM as the "college station of College Station" and the "alternative to alternative." Towle said often students are disappointed by the conventional choices found on the radio.

"Students get a chance to be exposed to music (on KANM) they won't hear anywhere else," he said.

KANM is a recognized student organization that plays unsigned bands. Many artists, such as Jimmy Eat World, Weezer, Dashboard Confessional and Bowling for Soup were played on KANM before hitting more prominent radio stations.

Matthew Crawford, the KANM station manager and a senior computer engineering major, said KANM is very different from other stations in the area.

"We aren't focused on ratings or cash flow," he said. "We are focused solely on providing unique and interesting content to A&M and the Bryan-College Station community."

Crawford said having a student radio station is important to the A&M community, because it is a resource for unique music. It also provides an opportunity for people interested in becoming disc jockeys to get experience without the pressure of commercial interests, he said.

Contrary to other radio stations around College Station, the DJs at KANM are not professionals in the field; they are learning the trade and are not paid.

While A&M supports KANM, it is not enough to pay the DJs. For this reason, funding for the station is one of its main problems, he said.

"We've tried many different things to get funding, from visiting A&M clubs to writing letters to former students," he said. "We use a trial-and-error process, but so far have not succeeded. A lot of it is just finding the proper channels. "KANM has approximately 75 DJs each semester."

Crawford said DJs are selected based upon a combination of the proposed music selections, availability and experience. Although there are 81 time slots available each semester, he said it's rare that the late night and early morning slots get filled.

Because the DJs aren't being paid and still must find time to study, they often choose time slots that will work around their school schedule, Crawford said.

"If they have a test or project the next day and must miss their

show, they can contact the Programming Office to be excused and we will arrange for alternate content," he said.

Mustafa Ahmad, a DJ liaison at KANM, said he picked a time slot that worked best for him. For Mustafa Ahmad, a DJ liaison at KANM, said being a DJ is a welcome break from classes.

"I don't see being a DJ as a responsibility or a burden of some sort," he said. "If you're passionate about something — music in this case — then playing the music that you love is never something you dread. Instead, it's a way to relax."

Crawford said most of the time he spends at the station is between classes and after class.

"I've learned how to balance the time I give to the station and the time I spend on my classes," he said. "My grades did suffer a little bit when I first became station manager, but now I know the limits I need to put on my involvement."

Towle also said he's learned to budget his time spent at the station. "I have to hold office hours for four hours a week," he said. "If I don't have any stuff to do for the radio station, I normally do homework."

Because the DJs are still learning, the main qualification for the DJs is that they have a strong music knowledge, Crawford said.

"Our main concern with the DJs is that they have a good understanding of the music they are playing and expose our listeners to new and lesser known artists," he said.

In addition to the DJs, the officers help keep the station running by managing finance, promotion, programming, music, equipment maintenance and other administrative functions.

Towle said the officers all have common goals of increasing awareness at KANM and ensuring that the listeners are getting quality shows. However, this is hard to do without much funding.

Towle said the DJs have to pay dues each semester, which is the main source of funding, and it is used to pay bills and other expenses.

"The lack of funding we receive increases our time and effort put into the station," he said.

"Even though KANM does not yet have a FM license, it broadcasts through FM cable."

The station has recently been making improvements in the studio and making Internet streaming available. Most of KANM's listeners now listen on the Internet, Towle said.

DJs sign on to AOL Instant Messenger and Yahoo Messenger as KANMDJ so students can make instant requests.

The station gets a lot of positive feedback, even from non-Aggies. Once, a listener from New Zealand called to say he really liked the show and listened every week, Towle said.

KANM has also had callers from New Orleans, New York and Illinois.

Crawford said that in the immediate future KANM would like to repair the AM signal and upgrade and replace some equipment.

Currently, KANM is running screensavers in the Open Access



ADAM A. KRAZER • THE BATTALION

Travis Ziebro, left, a senior mechanical engineering major, and Matt Brown, right, a senior anthropology major, host "Dynamic Viscosity," a techno music show that airs Thursdays at midnight on KANM.

Labs on campus and putting up posters and flyers for different DJs' shows. There are also broadcasts outside the MSC, where those involved with the station give away CDs, shirts and stickers.

The biggest strength of the station, Towle said, is KANM's officers.

Crawford said that since he has been the station manager, the officers have done many things to improve the station.

"We have moved from the corner of Koldus to the MSC basement, improved officer communication and moved most of our record keeping and administration online," he said. "Moving our records online has allowed our listeners to see what our DJs are playing in near real time and look through our archives to make instant requests."



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