

# AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

Page 3 • Friday, September 19, 2003

## Opening the Floodgate

A&M professors make music, balance responsibilities together in local band

By Tori Foster  
THE BATTALION

As students head to Northgate or other favorite hangouts on Friday night, many are looking to dance, meet with friends or listen to music. But one of the last things a student would expect to see is one of his professors jamming in a Northgate band.

Jim Cottrill, a political science professor, who also attends graduate school at A&M pursuing a Ph.D in psychology and plays in local band Floodgate.

"When I was an undergrad, if I had a professor playing in a band I would have been curious to just go see them," Cottrill said. "Even if they weren't any good it would be fun to go laugh at them."

Along with Cottrill, the lineup of the band includes Adam Ferguson, who also teaches at A&M and is pursuing a Ph.D in psychology; Mike Bender, who works at A&M as a computer specialist; Toby Kyte, also seeking a Ph.D in psychology; Jeff Quinn, who just left the band but is featured on the current CD; and Craig Hanna, also a member of the band Throwaway People is replacing Quinn.

The band's music is a mixture of rock and funk, with a little bit of blues and country all mixed together.

"We don't sound like anyone else in town so we have something different," Cottrill said.

"For many people who like rock music there are not too many bands in this town for them to go see. I think we are definitely an option that people are really starting to like, and people appreciate having an alternative."

Floodgate will release its newest CD, "Anytown," tonight at Fitzwill's. The CD features 18 original tracks and 79 minutes of music.

"We decided to name the CD 'Anytown' because people anywhere can listen to the songs and imagine that there is a place somewhere that these things are happening to someone," Cottrill said. "There are songs about things from relationships, people's problems, and even timely things like reality shows. We really hope listeners will be able to relate to the lyrics."

Floodgate's performances are different at each time because the members tend to make it up as they go to some extent.

"I think we have spontaneity and we like to jam a little bit," Cottrill said. "We've also got solos that are improvised so you never know what you are exactly going to hear. Depending on if it is big enough where we play, people will even get into the music and start dancing."

In the middle of production of the new CD, Quinn told band-

*"Usually, students come and I think they are kind of surprised because they don't expect us to be very good and then we are. The students keep coming back and bringing their friends, so it is encouraging."*

— Jim Cottrill  
political science professor  
and Floodgate keyboardist



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANEAN MAMIN

Floodgate performs live at many local venues, like this performance at Texadelphia on Northgate.

mates he was quitting the act.

His adviser decided to move to Duke University and he enjoyed working with her so much that he decided to follow her there. The band managed to wrap up recording and production so that it could close the chapter cleanly and on a good note, Cottrill said.

The band will introduce its newest addition, Craig Hanna, at the CD release party.

Hanna is also a member of the night's opening band, Throwaway People, and will be pulling a double-duty performance Friday.

"Being an outsider to the CD, I can tell you that there is something on it for everyone," Hanna said. "No one is going to be disappointed, yet there is still continuity through out the whole thing."

Frank Martinez, a psychology graduate student, has been listening to Floodgate develop for the past three years.

Martinez likens Floodgate to a Texas electric blues band weaned on a healthy dose of Jane's Addiction, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Smashing Pumpkins, who rebelled and graduated to the kaleidoscopic force that is Floodgate.

"A Floodgate show is always full of energy but at the same time it allows you to sit back and enjoy the night of melodies with an occasional cover song that comes out of left field," Martinez said.

With a mix of different instruments, Floodgate invents a different form of music that is hard to find in College Station, Martinez said.

"Mandolin, keyboards and a bass playing slide guitar style gives Floodgate their unique flavor," Martinez said. "Floodgate brings

to this city something that you won't have to drive 100 miles to either Austin or Houston to experience."

As the band members finish graduate school, they are happy to be playing in College Station which fits their music style and they have a strong fan base, Ferguson said.

"I've played in the Austin music scene also and it is saturated," Ferguson said. "In Austin there are a lot of really good bands and people don't really care. The club owners have that opinion too. Here, the club owners value your contribution and it seems like the students are more likely to give you a chance."

Cottrill has invited his students to come see Floodgate's performances and said he is happy to find them returning for more.

"Usually, students come and I think they are kind of surprised because the don't expect us to be very good and then we are," Cottrill said. "The students keep coming back and bringing their friends, so it is encouraging."

Even though playing in a band takes up a lot of the band member's time, they agree it has payoffs. They manage to balance their classes, teaching and the band by making band practice a fixture in their week.

"We say we are going to practice once a week and then you carry it out. You just have to work hard on the days before and after," Cottrill said.

They payoff for their sacrificed time is what drives Floodgate to keep going.

"It's obvious that we wouldn't be doing this if we didn't think we had a good product," Cottrill said. "The best part is when you hear someone that you don't know say 'wow' and other nice things. That is what makes it all worthwhile."

**SCOTT KAY**  
PLATINUM

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Always exceed her greatest expectations."*  
*Scott Kay*

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**Time:** 09:00 am  
**Pre-Register** in room 224 of the Pavilion / V.A. Office  
**Price:** Pre-Register - \$15.00 / \$20.00 Day of Race  
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