

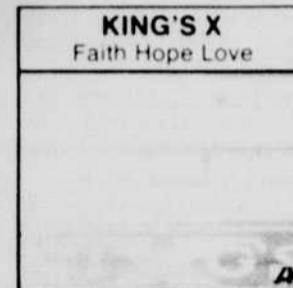
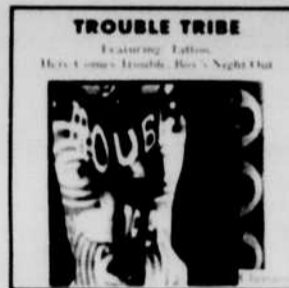
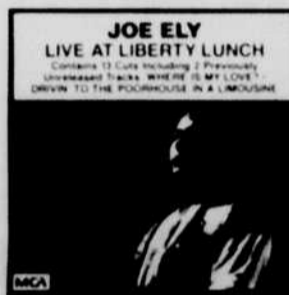
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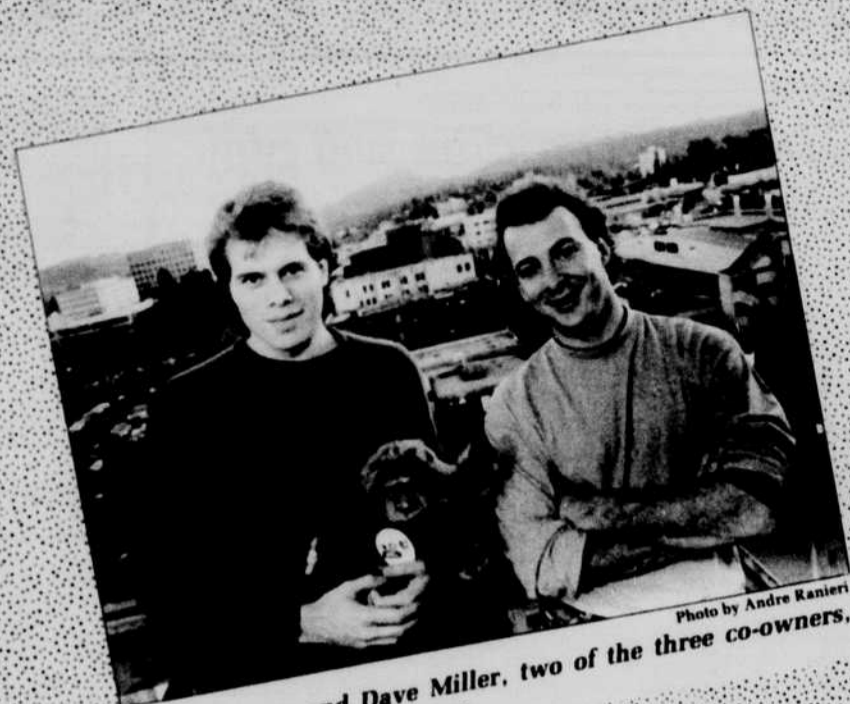


Photo by Andre Kaniari
Eric Alterman and Dave Miller, two of the three co-owners, have a view of their audience.



Photo by Andre Kaniari
Andy Gilbert, University English student and KAVE disc jockey, spins the hits.

KAVE radio wakes people up from boring radio blues

By Layne Lakefish
Emerald Entertainment Editor

In a room nestled on the 11th floor of the Hilton comes a new voice that can be heard 45 miles away.

Adjoining that room lie three others, filled with a number of not-so-long-distance voices, but still as important.

KAVE radio, Eugene's newest station, makes its home here.

On Labor Day, Sept. 3, at 12:03 p.m. KAVE radio, located on the dial at 95.3, hit the airwaves with "Radio, Radio" by Elvis Costello. This debut, however, was different from most radio debuts.

The three men that co-own KAVE were out to change radio. They were tired of finicky radio formats where only certain artists and songs get airtime. "We all had the same vision of making a station whose format was not programmed," said Eric Alterman, one of the co-owners. "We wanted to show that radio could be something good, even if it's not a commercial product."

This idea turned into the beginnings of a plan back in April of 1989. The three men, one in advertising and two in law, joined forces and set out looking for an up-for-sale radio station.

"We knew that this kind of station couldn't be done anywhere," said Jordan Seaman, another co-owner. Now not only did they have to find a license for sale, but they had to find it in a city that was ready to try something new.

"Eugene has a reputation," Seaman said. "We had heard that people here were more likely to go for something like this."

The next year was spent looking and learning. "We went on a full-scale search and education hunt," said Dave Miller, the third co-owner.

Last March the hunt ended. The men bought KZAM's license, a long-time Eugene station that had changed formats three times and then decided to sell.

"We were in California talking to a radio owner in Ft. Bragg and he mentioned that there was something in Eugene," Seaman said. "That same day I flew to Eugene. I didn't even wait to get a special fare."

"We just knew that it was right," Alterman said.

The next six months were spent getting ready and making changes they thought necessary after buying KZAM. Among the major changes was moving the tower to Blanton Heights, giving them "tremendous signals," Alterman said.

Coming up with a name for the new station was another big event. It was Seaman who came up with KAVE.

"I could not believe it when the FCC said that KAVE was not taken," he said. "It was perfect. There's something mysterious about a cave."

After months of planning and preparing, the long process came to a close on Labor Day.

Today KAVE radio operates 24 hours a day with a cast and crew of close to 25. Together they have made KAVE radio what they had originally wanted it to be — a station set apart from the rest.

All three men said that they hate KAVE being classified as a classic rock station. "We don't churn through the top forty of classic rock. We just play good, quality rock and roll," Alterman said.

And just what is "quality" according to these men?

"Quality music is music that is not written based on a formula," Miller said. "It's music that comes from the heart, whether it be the vocals or the music or the guitar that makes it quality."

Using these standards, KAVE is known for taking an album that may have had a huge hit on it and playing the other songs that never got quite as much airtime. "We play songs rarely heard on the radio," Miller said.

"I've had people say that we are the history of rock and roll," Seaman said. "They say we play everything that made history or is making history."

What KAVE is trying to do is fill a niche. "We're trying to do something unique in the market," said Andy Gilbert, University student and KAVE disc jockey. "We're trying to fill that hole with real rock and roll."

As far as on-air talk goes, KAVE deals maturely with the audience. "This is no hype radio," Alterman said. "We're not zany on air, we don't use whacky sound effects and the disc jockeys talk as grown-ups to the audience."

KAVE radio is doing something new. They are taking rock and roll radio seriously and making their own rules. "We break a lot of rules, but we're always rock and roll oriented," Alterman said.

In the song they used when KAVE first hit the airwaves, Elvis Costello sang, "Radio is in the hands of such a lot of fools trying to anesthetize the way that you feel." They picked this song for a reason.

"We're trying to show people that radio can be a fun and exciting thing," Miller said. "Our job is to invite people in and let them decide."

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