

Alternative to KUGR proposed

By Linda Chalich
Contributing Reporter

An alternative to what some WSU students call the radio station monopoly on campus is being formulated by a small group of communications students and will be presented to the ASWSU Assembly tonight.

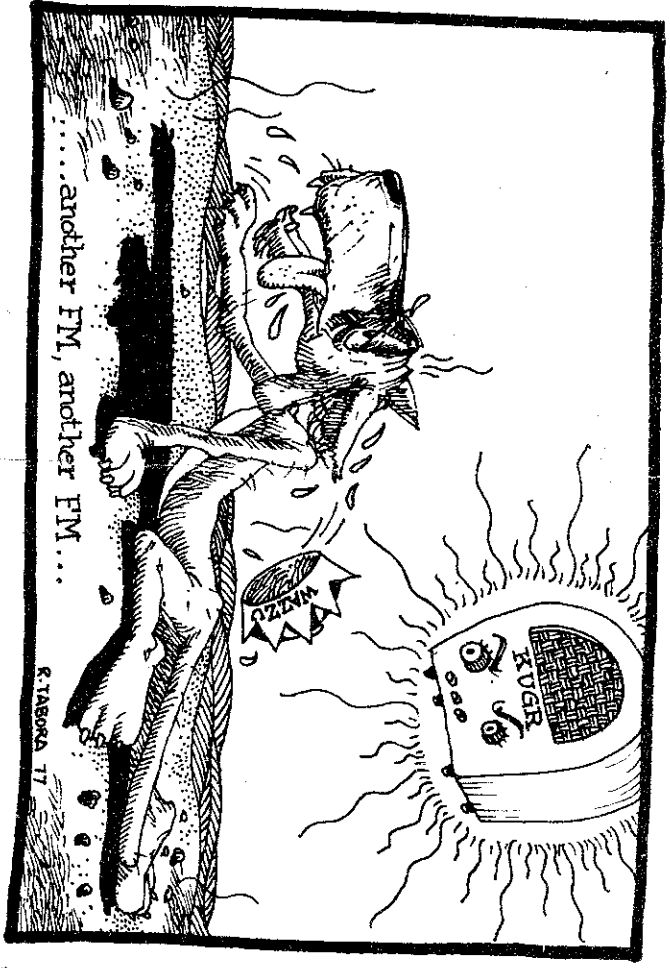
The group will be asking for recognition as an ASWSU committee and in the process will be seeking the assembly's approval of the investigation of possible construction of a 10-watt FM station.

Bill Stewart, a junior majoring in broadcasting, is the group's chairman. He explained how the students got together.

"Bob Seartross from the Agriculture Extension Information Service here on campus came to speak in one of my broadcasting classes about his work and mentioned that he had helped start an FM station at Walla Walla Community College," Stewart said. "Bob said that the demand for a similar station was definitely present at WSU and he asked those students interested in the project to stay after class."

Stewart said that about 10 students met after class and expressed enough interest to Seartross that another meeting was held the next week and the group has been meeting regularly ever since.

"There are about 10-15 students who come to every meeting and are sincere in their efforts to help get this station established on campus," said Stewart. "Most of these people have their third-class broadcasting licenses and two have their first-



.....another FM, another FM...

'phones' (highest level of license for commercial broadcasting)," he added.

John Meglen, another communications major and a member of the committee, said that the biggest reason for the committee's efforts is student dissatisfaction with the programming format at KUGR, the AM and FM station on campus, operated by WSU students.

"KUGR is currently playing the 'Top 40' hits, or at least that is the popular opinion among the WSU students that the committee has talked to," said Meglen. "Our group took a survey on campus asking what the students wanted to listen to in the way of music, and the over-all results showed that jazz and progressive rock were the most requested, followed by rock n' roll."

The results of the survey also showed that the students wanted their campus station to focus more on national, international as well as local news and university activities, reported Meglen.

But Frank Shiers, student general manager at KUGR, said he has survey results that differ from those of the committee.

"Last year a survey of the WSU student community showed that 35 per cent listened to KQQQ while 19 per cent listened to KUGR," said Shiers. "This year a survey showed that KUGR is tied with KQQQ for the number of listeners on

of the equipment and materials necessary to get an FM station started.

But this is not the only cost that will be encountered by the committee and the ASWSU if it takes on the station ownership. The yearly operation and maintenance costs will also be a factor in the assembly's decision.

Money will be the biggest factor that the committee will face as a deterrent to its cause, said Meglen, adding that the F.C.C. requires stable financial backing for any station as one of the specifications for receiving a license.

"We had planned on leasing our equipment but were told it would be more expensive in the long run," said Meglen.

The Assembly will have to take into account the monetary problems as well as the problems of competing campus radio stations. Stewart maintains that the new station's format will differ quite a bit from the present KUGR format and sees the two stations benefiting each other.

"No one should feel threatened by our committee's actions," said Stewart.

Shiers does not see the new station as a threat but he cannot justify the committee's reasons for spending a great amount of student funding to begin a service he feels is already available at WSU.

"My only question is why create another station at WSU when KUGR does or can do all of the programming that the students feel they want to receive from a campus station," said Shiers. "No one has come (from the committee) to talk to me yet and I find it ironic that the two people on campus that have the best contact with students, Val Limburg, KUGR's faculty advisor, and I, have not been contacted yet," Shiers said.

"KUGR is now in the process of expanding news, sports and public affairs coverage," commented Shiers. "We train students from the campus at large to operate a radio station—experience that they can take with them when they graduate.

"I would like to see the ASWSU allocate money to bring the cable system to the fraternities, sororities and dorms that do not have this service now," Shiers said. "This would be less expensive than building another complete station and would

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"Last year a survey of the WSU student community showed that 35 per cent lis- tened to KQQQ while 19 per cent listened to KUGR," said Shiers. "This year a survey showed that KUGR is tied with KQQQ for the number of listeners on campus and this shows that we (KUGR) are in touch with the students, while being 'in touch' with the students may be an issue, it is not the main item of concern the committee will present to the assembly Wednesday."

The main theme of our constitution is to provide the ASWSU with an education- al voice to the campus and the communi- ty that supports the university," said Meglen. "We will propose that the com- mittee be the executive board of the station but will also emphasize that ASW- SU will be the owner."

If the committee does receive ASWSU committee standing recognition, its next step will be to submit a budget to the ASWSU budget hearings in April. Stewart said the group has formulated a rough estimate of their initial costs to be about \$7,000. This would include building a tower on top of the Physical Science Building and buying an antenna as well as the rest

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