



(Photo by Joanne Mercer)

Eric May, disc jockey with WIXQ, communicates over the air to Millersville with the use of the station's expanded, more sophisticated equipment.

The history of WIXQ

BY ROB McKENZIE

Educational Director WIXQ

WIXQ, Millersville's radio station, has expanded in every aspect of U.S. production since its start in the 60's.

The radio station began as a small club founded by William Wright, professor of Speech/Drama, George Frances, former professor of Industrial Arts, and Dr. Ralph Anttonen, faculty advisor to WIXQ.

In the beginning, the station's call letters were WMSR AM (Millersville State Radio), according to Gary W. Reighard, Vice President for Student Affairs. Federal Communication Commission (F.C.C.) classified the station then as a carrier current operator, chartered on the AM frequency band of the radio. The faculties then consisted of a few turntables, records, and a transmitter, all tucked away in a room in the basement of the infirmary, said Anttonen.

"The station personnel were basically a group of students with a desire to play varieties of music," said Kevin Ross, former station manager.

The station has grown considerably since its start as a basement carrier current operator.

The WIXQ F.C.C. files, which are logs and statistics of station information, indicate that it was Reighard who decided to put the station in the hands of the students. According to Anttonen, the fact that WIXQ became student-run has allowed WIXQ to expand to what it is today — an absolutely student-run organization with guidance from Anttonen (otherwise known as "Doc Roc").

Anttonen is the man who works with WIXQ day in and day out. Anttonen said he was in charge of supervising the change from AM carrier current WMSR to 150 watt 91.7 in 1977.

He explained, "Connie Sierzeza, program director of that time (1977) was the main thrust behind the change. Together we did extensive research and paper work in coordination with the F.C.C."

According to Anttonen, the station change was "a blessing in disguise," because two years later the F.C.C. began a movement to disband most ten watt college radio stations. The F.C.C. did offer an alternative to disbandment, however, which is the "blessing" Anttonen referred to. "WIXQ was basically told that unless it boosted its power, it would lose its place on the airwaves," said Anttonen.

According to WIXQ F.C.C. files, WIXQ filed with the F.C.C. for a second time, this to boost power to 150 watts, giving it a listener radius of approximately 25 miles.

Besides the paperwork that Anttonen and Sierzeza were involved in, extensive equipment purchases were also necessary, Anttonen said. Turntables, records, cartridge machines, microphones, and other various radio supplies became necessary in order to change from 10 to 150 watts. With advice from Nelson Kepperling, WIXQ engineer, Anttonen began station equipment expansion, according to WIXQ files.

Anttonen said his role at WIXQ is "to encourage us to expand the program to new and different areas and to prevent us from getting in trouble."

According to Reighard, he is the man who must answer to the community in the event that WIXQ programs something that clashes with community interest. He said that college radio has historically been a more liberal form of media than others, and WIXQ managers and directors have been able to tame most disc-jockeys radio behavior to make it acceptable to listeners.

The change to a 150-watt FM station has earned WIXQ recognition in the Lancaster area as an F.C.C. chartered, educational, noncommercial radio station.

According to Anttonen, diversified programming was initially aired on the station by Ross, and it has continued diversification providing a large variety of programs to listeners. Programming ranges from talk shows to Trivia for Food, Rasta Music to Christian Contemporary Rock, and Golden Oldies to Mind Music.

WIXQ continues to expand, in both equipment and personnel and the station now has come a long way since its start as WMSR AM.