

# KFMU

## Music From The Wind

by Phil Roehrs



### THREE WIRE WINTER

When Elliott Bayly first started on the radio station, nearly four years ago, it was like a hobby. It didn't take him very long to realize that a radio station needed more time and attention than just a hobby.

The idea of the radio station was really just a brainstorm. Elliott told us just how it all started. "Well, I was driving back to Chicago once, after I'd been out here for a couple months, and it just occurred to me at that point that there were no radio stations at all out here. So we originally tried to put a radio station in Steamboat Springs, but there were already three applicants."

Elliott finally decided to put the radio station in Oak Creek. He found an antenna location and applied to the Federal Communications Commission for a license to broadcast, but in the time it took the FCC to process the application, the fellow that gave Elliott permission to use the antenna site changed his mind. The antenna

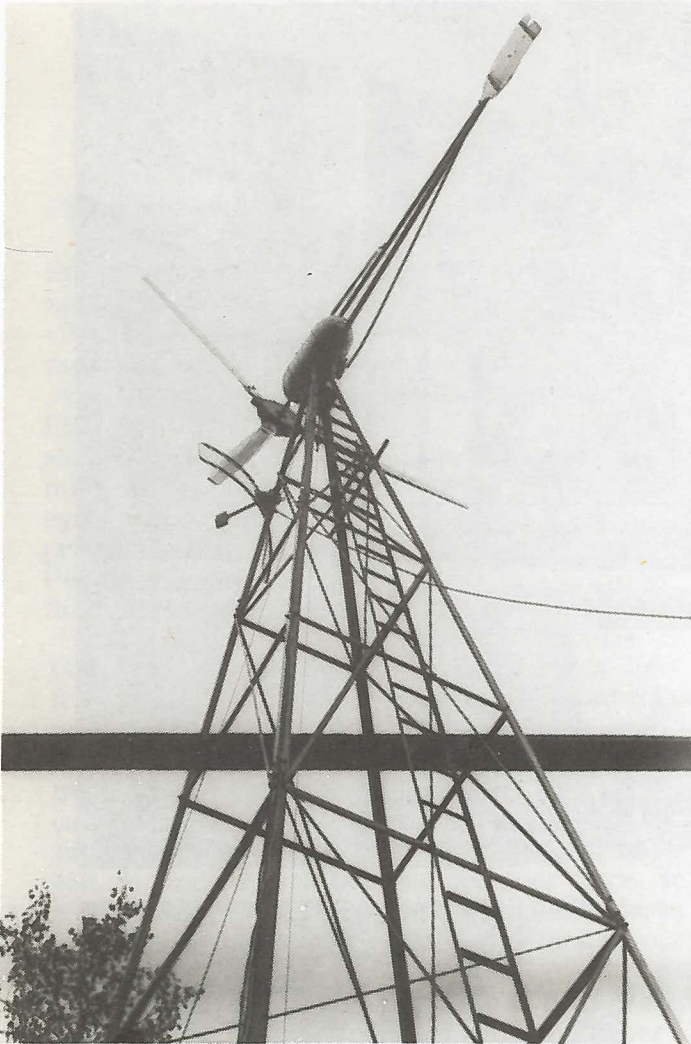




location that was next found had no power to it. If power lines were run to the transmitter site, it would, in 1974, have cost in excess of \$15,000.

At this point Elliott decided to harness the wind for power. He went on to explain his interest in wind power. "I've always been interested in wind generators. As a kid I saw them around Duluth, Minnesota. A wind generator is not a technical marvel. They're really quite simple."

For a back-up system, Elliott has added a 1911 Delco gas generator to the transmitter site. This type of generator was used by farmers as a back up for their wind generators over fifty years ago.



Your author, and the back-up generator used in those windless spells.

KFMU is powered by a 1930's Jacobs wind generator. It sets atop Oilwell Hill, two miles away from Oak Creek as the crow flies. When the wind is blowing 25 mph, the generator will put out 2,700 watts. This amount of electricity can fully charge the storage batteries in about a day. When the batteries are fully charged, they store enough electricity to operate two microwave receivers, stereo, generator, transmitter and remote control equipment, plus other telemetry equipment, for five consecutive windless days.

Elliott uses a big antenna and a smaller transmitter. "You see, we get the same amount of coverage." This set-up also reduces power consumption.

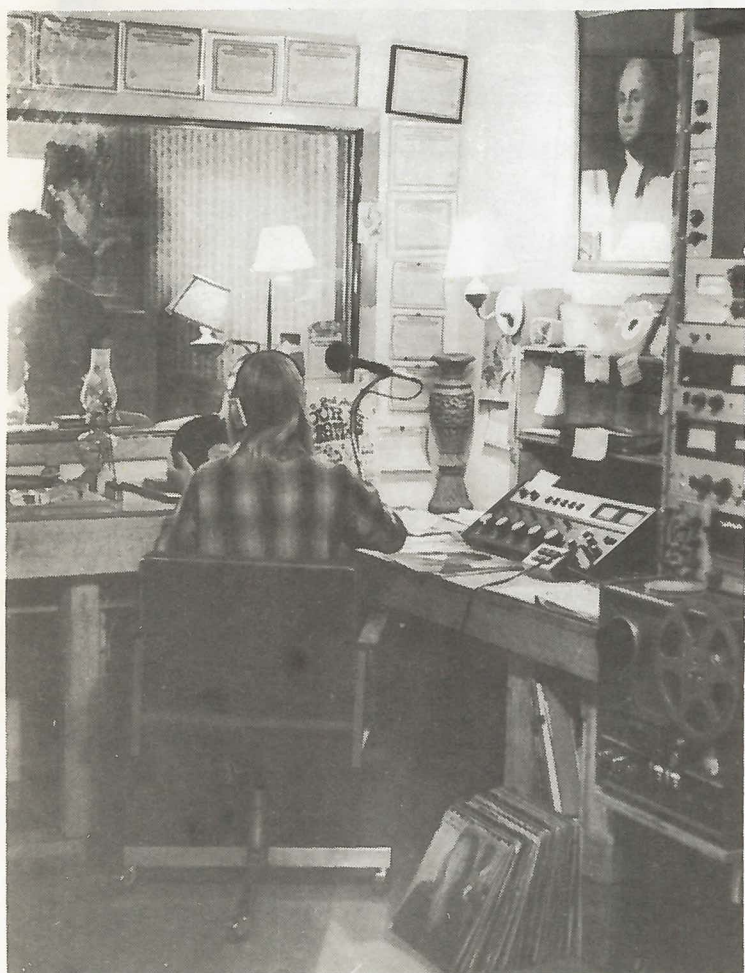




KFMU can be picked up on mountain tops as far away as 55 miles. The average coverage is about 25 miles. "It really depends on the terrain, also on the quality of the receiver."

The KFMU studio and office seemed very busy. Friendly locals stopped by to chat, or leave a message, or just to look around. "We have a lot of competition, let's face it. Steamboat has their own AM and FM." Elliott went on to explain, "Many radio stations play first a song for one audience, then a song for another audience, then a song for another audience. That's the kind of thing we try not to do. We try to avoid picking music at random."

Elliott employs seventeen young men and women at KFMU. He informed us of the fact that nobody at KFMU has had any prior experience.



"The only experience that's required is a knowledge of music. The job is mostly how well you put music together, like establishing a theme for a half an hour."

The station's programming format consists of five different musical categories:

The country show 7am—12 noon

Easy Listening show 12 noon — 4 pm

Jazz show 4 pm — 6 pm

Classical show 6 pm — 8 pm

Rock and Roll show 8 pm — 1 am



The D.J.'s change with the type of music that is played; Each D. J. is assigned a certain show and he or she assumes total responsibility for that show.

Elliott pays his employees a dollar an hour. "I pay them as an expression of thanks; also to kind of control them. I pay them so little because we don't make money." It costs about \$1500 a month to keep KFMU going. The sole source of income is advertising. Advertising only provides around \$500 a month.

At the bottom of the hour ads are interspersed. At the top of the hour there is a "no-ad policy." Mary Jayne's Kitchen, which is located right next door, usually sponsors the ad-free break and that means more music for the listener and publicity for the sponsor of the break.



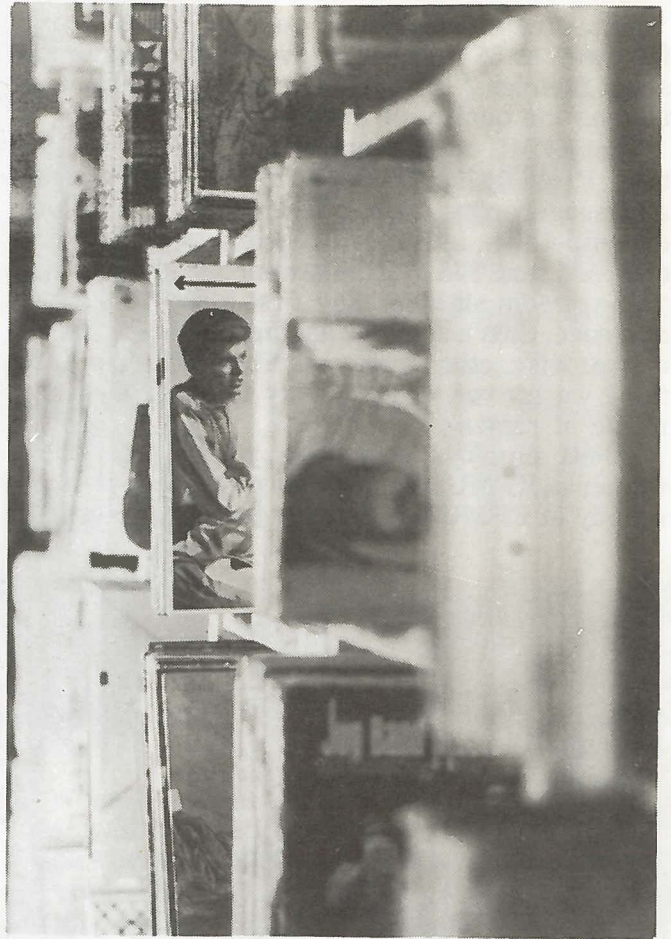


The news is very different from other radio stations. They take their news from a teletype. "We subscribe to a number of periodicals: The Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News, Wall Street Journal, Rolling Stone Magazine, Science Weekly, Wind Power Digest, and a few others, and pick out interesting or important articles." The news is shared equally between three people.

Elliott informed us of some of the problems of running the station. "Our electrical equipment runs eighteen hours a day, and on weekends it runs all day." The wind generator doesn't seem to create any mechanical problems. "Most of our problems are with the electrical equipment."

We inquired about a possible liability problem in running the station, such as the unintentional degrading of an organization or business. "Well, I'm sure there is. Since it's my radio station, it would really come down on my shoulders, but it's not something I worry about."

"We are primarily a music station. We would like to establish a reputation on the music we play." With everyone at the station trying to perform at their finest for the listening audience, KFMU stands out as the station for prime musical entertainment.



Mr. Elliott Bayly, the man who makes it all work.



*Photographs by Tony Borland  
and  
Phil Roehrs*