

# A major longhair cultural event:

## New FM rock station in Carmel

BY GARY FRANTZ

One of the major longhair cultural events on the Monterey Bay in recent years will come to life in Carmel next week when KLRB, the country's newest radio station and the bay's first "progressive rock" FM station, begins broadcasting over frequency 101.7.

KLRB, with studio in Carmel on Dolores above the Pine Cone and transmitter off the Monterey-Salinas highway, will broadcast as far north as Santa Cruz, as far east as Salinas and south to Big Sur. With the exception of a daytime AM station, KRML, also broadcasting from Carmel, KLRB's program is the only one in the area devoted primarily to album rock and roll music, as opposed to the 45-rpm, "Top 40" hits played incessantly by the typical white youth-oriented AM station, known in the trade as "bubblegum" stations for their slavish to the listening tastes of 13-year-old girls.

Ed Johnson, a 24-year-old native of Salinas who is the man chiefly responsible for bringing KLRB to life - his crew calls him "The Magician" for achieving the feat - stresses the variety of music the station will play. "We don't intend to wake people up in the morning with Led Zeppelin," he says. Instead, early morning programming - the station comes on the air at 7 a.m. - will feature "folk-rock, easy listening type music" of the kind Judy Collins sings or the soft rock of groups like Beautiful Day.

"This type of music won't even offend mama and papa," says Ed. "It might even get them interested in contemporary music styles."

The flavor of the music will thicken as the day progresses, promises Ed, with plenty of hard-driving, electric rock being played before the station goes off the air for the day at 2 a.m.

Ed was fresh out of school and selling insurance with his father in Salinas, without much enthusiasm, when the idea for the station occurred. He was sitting around the house one evening with his friend, Mark Bragg, who had some experience in broadcasting, when the question came up, why are there no FM "progressive rock" stations in the area?

Like many people who grew up listening to rock and roll on AM stations and who eventually became sated with their hyperactive, juvenile format, Ed was impressed with the aesthetic gains of the more mature FM stations in recent years.

Mark explained the Federal Communication Commission's all-wave allotment system, and added he believed an FM slot was open in Carmel. Apparently, no one had yet considered it

profitable to apply for the license and to build a station. Ed decided to look into the matter more deeply.

"The idea still sounded good the next morning," he explains.

The first task was to study the market and to collect technical data with which to prepare a brief for the FCC. The presentation eventually filled a folder the thickness of a telephone book.

Then followed an incredibly lengthy two years of financial scraping, technical complications and revised estimates. The original estimate of \$50,000 that would be required to get the station on the air ballooned to nearly twice that amount.

An early 1969 opening date was revised a half-dozen times to the present, still provisional one of April 28.

"Sometimes I'd get so discouraged I just wanted to chuck the whole thing," says Ed. "I'd sit there at a county supervisors' meeting, watching some small craft aviation group blast away at our tower plans - after they'd been approved by the FAA - and think, Well, what do I do now, go to law school?"

A firm belief in the validity of FM rock sustained the project, however. The history of the relationship of

rock and roll and radio helps explain why.

The advent of rock and roll in the 'fifties was a tremendous event in the lives of many post-war youth. Junior high school girls came to class with wings fluttering in their eyes the night after watching Elvis Presley shake it on Ed Sullivan's stage. Quiet suburban youth erupted like grass fire as Bill Haley and his Comets opened "Blackboard Jungle" with "Rock Around the Clock". Latent generation antagonisms accelerated to war in households divided over the merits of Little Richard and Buddy Holly.

Disenfranchised youth had discovered a music and with it the glimmer of a culture. AM radio quickly became a major cultural medium by grabbing on to the music. Staggering from the impact of television, many stations saved themselves simply by playing stacks of "Hit 40" discs and interspersing them with hard-sell commercials. Their high-pitched, frantic presentation was balm to youth - barricaded in bedrooms and cruising the drive-ins.

Chuck Berry describes the rapture of shaking some feeling back in the body after spending a numbing eight

hours cooped up in high school classrooms. The problem with the "Hit 40" stations, they backed up every "Sweet Little Sixteen" with two or three novelty tunes involving anthropomorphic automobiles and Martian guitar players.

As listeners aged, the childishness tended to grate more and more so that by the time they were 17 or 18, except in the cases of arrested development, the kids weren't listening to AM radio with any regularity. Kids, began scraping together sound systems of their own and began to beg borrow or steal records according to personal preference.

A lot of these records were albums. This development pointed up another failing of the "Hit 40" stations. Their rapid-fire mix of 45s and commercials didn't accommodate the 10-minute ballads and protests of a serious artist like Bob Dylan.

"It was a big thing if they played the full six minutes of 'Like a Rolling Stone,'" recalls Ed Johnson. "Most of the time they cut it off, right in the middle."

Dylan's lyrics were also too stiff for most radio executives of the day.

Album collecting is a fine but expensive habit. A better

situation, in the minds of many people, were radio stations that played the people's music without the phoniness and hype.

During the late 'sixties some West Coast radio entrepreneurs began to notice the shifting currents and began playing rock album music over FM stations. FM was the vehicle for several reasons. Most important, franchises were open. There were too few FM receiver-sets in circulation to support many stations. It was a similar situation to the early days of color television when too few color sets made color commercials uneconomical.

FM also represents cheaper operating costs and a better sound fidelity. The signal is not disrupted even during a thunderstorm.

The new FM stations, most commonly labelled "progressive rock" although they were playing everything from Ravi Shankar to Holstian classical music with an interplanetary flavor, were immediately recognized by large segments of the listening public as aesthetically superior to the bubblegum stations. For one thing, the FMs didn't try to cram so much commercial space into an hour. Their typical schedule featured three album cuts combined in a 15-minute set followed by a commercial clump. The AMs were still madly following their formula of three minutes of music followed by a minute or two of commercials.

The FMs also slowed the tempo of their presentation, notwithstanding the frantic aspect of some of their music. The jocks began sounding more relaxed and natural, the way a friend might sound, presenting a new purchase at home. After all, the burden of the message put down by many rock musicians, whose opinions mean more to a

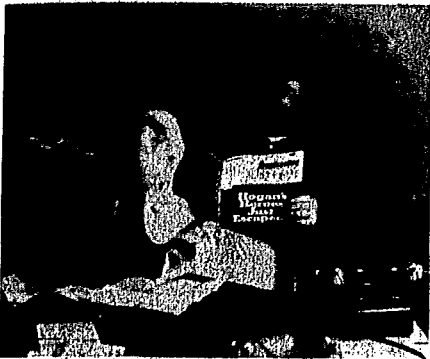
youth than anything dreamed up by religious and political leaders, was directly anti-pathetic to the American Hardsell as personified in the insane hyperactivity of Ricky Ticky Jones broadcasting over K-Zilch 1160 on your dial 10:42 on this bright and sunny morning playing the No. 1 song on the K-Zilch chart, "Playing Post Office" by the Jackson 5.

The new FM rock stations proved not only commercially successful - their number approaches a dozen in California - they also relate more meaningfully to the lives of their listeners than do most media. Marshal McLuhan, the media analyst, explains the tribal drum system radio represents, at its extreme the perfect tool for mobilizing the energies of the nation state, at a more grass-roots level, a device for the dissemination of sub-culture information. Youth today learns about the death of Jimi Hendrix or the invasion of Laos over the radio, they find where to go for help with dope or VD through station switchboards, they arrange for rides to Arizona courtesy of the local DJ. Furthermore, as Charles Reich points out, rock and roll music as an art form is almost infinitely accommodative to the expressive needs of that clarion of popular consciousness change, the rock musician.

If all this sounds pretentious and idiosyncratic, simply talk to some kid who has grown up with the Beatles, try to get him to talk - he does all the time with friends - about the development of his psyche in relation to the changes expressed by the Beatles in their successive albums. It wasn't that the Beatles were so far ahead. Simply their suggestive imagery gave coinage for conceptual ex-



PHOTOS BY STEVE PARK THE KLRB staff includes (left to right), Bob and Gloria Barron, programs, traffic and announcing; Corky Walsh, Walt Tschumperlin and Donna Frantz, disc jockeys; Phil Cogan, news; Ed Johnson, all around man.



ED JOHNSON is president of the station and the man who carried out most of the intensive groundwork required to get the station on the air.

change to people filled with unformed yearnings and perceptions.

The value of the music the FM stations were playing was matched by the realization that the men who ran them were perhaps a little more sympathetic to the culture than was common in media men. Newscasts and public announcements took some notice of the surrealistic quality of contemporary public events as they are filtered through the media. The DJs seemed to recognize that oftentimes news reports compiled by men of the highest professionalism and integrity are so obliquely angled to reality that they must be treated as entertainment rather than fact.

Thus James Lull of the progressive FM, KOJO, in San Jose, will come on the air and in sort of gleeful disgust dispose of a Pentagon statement designed to raise public support for another \$30 billion piece of useless hardware. The listener knows that Lull knows that I.F. Stone in his latest newsletter shows that the new weapons gap is merely a budgetary maneuver if not an outright lie.

The kids have responded like filings to a magnet. Kids at Carmel High School will listen all day to KRLB, the Carmel AM station which plays a progressive rock schedule during the daytime, and switch the radio off at nightfall rather than listen to the Carpenters and Jackson 5 over KDON, a typical bubblegum station in Salinas. KSJO within a year has considerably rearranged the San Jose market and commands a very strong following. San Francisco and Los Angeles each support three progressive rock stations.

KLRB enters a comparatively virgin market. Santa Cruz and Carmel are blocked by mountains from KSJO, the closest progressive FM station. Pacific Grove receives a decent signal intermittently. KRLB, which has won many converts since it went progressive two months ago, is licensed to play only during daylight hours.

Bob Barron, KLRB's program director, estimates the station will quickly attain an hourly listening audience of 25,000 to 30,000 people out of a total area population of 300,000. More are expected as FM radio sets become more preferred. The federal government recently ruled that all new automobiles equipped with radio must offer an AM-FM package starting with the 1971 models.

Bob, who has been in the

broadcasting business long enough to watch the growth and degeneration of AM rock, is convinced that FM is the wave of the future. He points out that out of the top 100 singles last year, only four or five sold more than a million copies. At least 40 albums sold a million in a comparable length of time. "Record companies can't ever give away singles anymore," he says. "Anyone over 13 years old buys albums. Even if you leave aesthetics out of it, it doesn't make sense from a commercial standpoint."

While KLRB is geared to the basic music formula pioneered by the San Francisco progressive stations, they hope to make their name in community involvement programs -- "What goes on amidst the music," says Bob.

Newscasts will be "in depth instead of five-minute, rip-off-the-wire" presentations, says Ed.

"We hope at least half our news will relate directly to this area," he adds. "It's going to be presented in an entertaining yet truthful manner. Sarcasm? If the events of the day call for it, we'll use it. We'll be amusing when we can."

Phil Cogan, the station's full-time news director, will be aided in news gathering by stringers on all the college campuses in the area.

Bob describes the station's community service function as that of a "funnel" for information pertinent to listeners. The Sunday religious broadcasts, which the FCC encourages, like many of its policies, by its power of license renewal, will include popular music that is relative to the subject such as "George Harrison's 'My Sweet Lord'." At noon each day, "What's the Buzz?" is scheduled to bring together community events such as concerts and astrological readings with the citizens who might be interested in the news.

Man on the street interviews will also be stressed. "Feedback," Bob calls it. Early this week he and Phil went down to Devendorf Park to talk with the kids with the idea of playing back bits of their rap throughout the day.

"We found out some very interesting things," says Bob. "Did you know that the kids - the roadies and kids who live back in the hills down by Big Sur - have a great respect for the Carmel police? One kid from Los Angeles told us, 'In L.A. a cop's a pig, OK, but up here they treat you like a human being. If you start to do something wrong they'll tell you like a human being.'"

# Bialek unseated from Carmel school board; Snorf, Smith elected, Wilsdon re-elected

Charles R. Snorf, Pamela D. Smith and incumbent, Richard A. Wilsdon, were elected Tuesday to the Carmel Unified School District board of trustees. They were elected to the five-member board over five other entries, Hilton M. Bialek, an incumbent; Adele

McFann, Robert A. Cross, Glen A. Myers and Eleanor Horne.

A total of 3,458 voters cast ballots to choose three members to four-year terms on the five-member board. The terms of the other two members, James Miller and James Brock, run for

another two years.

The vote represented a 36.3 percent turnout of the 9,510 voters registered in the school district. This was 13 percent higher than the last election, according to Walter Hinton, district business manager.

Generally, no more than three or four candidates run at once.

The voting breaks down as follows: Snorf 2,062, Smith, 1,623, Wilsdon 1,585, Bialek 1,253, McFann 1,201, Cross 697, Myers 652 and Horne 642.

Carmel's vote in the Monterey Peninsula College board election matched the district-wide vote in preference as incumbents Russell Hansen, Lilyan Eldred and Lewis Fenton

retained their seats.

The college board also seats five for four-year terms.

Carmel school district voters, representing about a third of the votes cast, contributed 2,148 votes to Hansen's total of 6,462, 2,001 to Eldred's 5,503 and 2,359 to Fenton's 6,742.

Other college board results (Carmel vote followed by total vote): Godeon Bloyer 583, 2,430; Ann Nixon 1,143, 4,137; Phillip Oberg 516, 1666; Raymond Shonholtz 479, 1660.

Carmel school district voters added 2,143 votes to the total of 6,972 garnered by Arthur Ingham, an incumbent running unopposed for the Monterey County Board of Education.

**only in Carmel...**

TWO THIRTYISH men, strolling downtown Carmel with their wives, lagged far behind the ladies as they manipulated the little pairs of spheres-on-a-string-clatters—that children click together so adroitly.

One of the men got his set in balance and stopped dead in his tracks as he cracked the strung balls together first above and then below the string-controlling fingers. His buddy stopped with his to admire his perfected technique.

"Henry?" "Jack?" The Call of the Wives, half a block away, threw the performer off and string and

**FIRSTNAME PARTY HERE**

An informal first-name party drawing together many of the stalwarts of the local social scene floated through a mellow evening Saturday at the Junipero home of Janine and Rohanna.

Representing the Carmel artistic community were the radiant couples Richard and Diana, he of camera fame, and Chuck and Lois, lately of the East Coast where Chuck devotes the working portion of his year to portrait commissions.

Inspired dancing to the strains of the Youngbloods musical group was exhibited by, the noted engraver, Peter, and Brenda Dee, a budding poetess.

Not to be outshone by his artistic counterparts, business executive Bob, held forth on the state of contemporary puppetry, a field in which he is a part-time scholar.

Representing the media was KLRB disc jockey Donna, whose tales of show business notables were matched in intrigue by the bewitching palm reading demonstration of Elaine, a Pacific Grove guest.

Other out-of-town guests were Frank and Jim who drove down from Oregon for the weekend to be on hand.

The mellow atmosphere of the party was heightened by the sensitive guitar artistry of Kathy, who played a medley of contemporary popular favorites.

Arriving early and staying late, lured as they were by a delectable spread of hors d'oeuvres and wide sampling of choice vintages, the guests, by unanimous consensus, all agreed they had a "very fine time".

balls limply tangled.

"We'll catch up with you, dear," assured Henry—or maybe it was Jack—"if little kids can do this, we've got to be able to lick it!"

He stood his ground and got the little globes clacking back in their orbits again, inspiring his buddy to do the same.

Harriet and Geraldine—or whatever their names were—smiled warmly at their Little Boys, then at each other, and slipped into something cool—the nearest dress shop.

MRS. JACK CALL tells with pride that her family has had the same Carmel Post Office box number since 1917!

A VILLAGE RESIDENT in his 70's was listening to a young friend explain his plans for a new venture.

"It seems like a good idea," opined the friend, "but I'm not sure I can carry it out perfectly."

"When you get to be my age," philosophized the elderly gentleman, "you accept the fact that nothing ever turns out quite right."

SIGN ON A truck-about-town: "Stamp out Reality."

## Y registration deadline Fr.

Pre-registration for YWCA spring classes is requested by tomorrow.

Two of 13 classes scheduled are being offered in Carmel: beginning bridge at the YWCA office, Carmel Convalescent Hospital Annex, Valley Way and Highway 1, and slimnastics at the Parish Hall, All Saints Episcopal Church, Lincoln and Ninth.

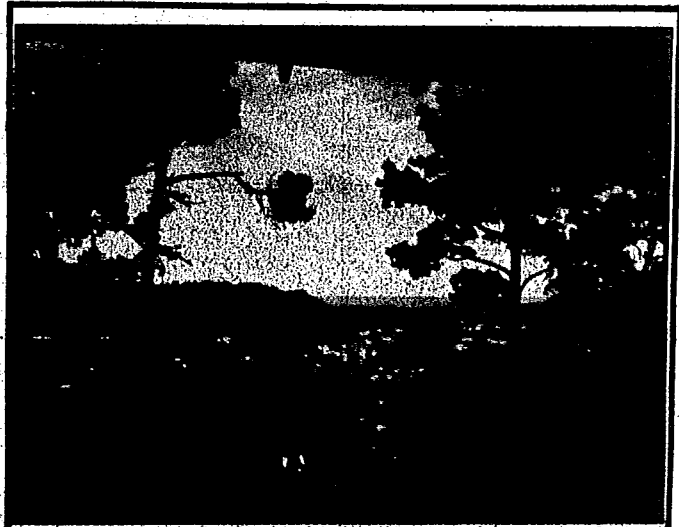
The bridge class is taught by Mrs. Harold Langham and will meet alternate Wednesdays, 9:30-10:30

a.m., for six sessions, May 5-July 14. There is a \$2 fee plus \$5 for new YWCA members.

Mrs. Diane Chatwin and Mrs. Ken White teach slimnastics Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Classes are now in session and may be joined at any time. The last class is June 9. There is a \$4 fee plus \$5 for new YWCA members.

Checks for application fees and membership, if applicable, may be sent to Box 2492, Carmel. Further information is obtainable at 624-3506.

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