



Montevideo Senior High School freshmen Jacob Niemand (left) and Josiah Christoffer started their own radio station in Christoffer's barn in the summer of

1997. They eventually hope to operate a student-run radio station from the high school. (Staff photos by Natalie Briones)

KRAM - 98.3 FM

Kool Radio And Music

Students breaking ground on amateur, non-commercial radio station

By Natalie Briones
Guest Writer

Bored with the usual tunes and talk on your radio dial? You might consider a future stop at 98.3 FM, better known as KRAM - Kool Radio and Music-to a pair of teenagers from the Montevideo area. Two Montevideo Senior High School students — Jacob Niemand and Josiah Christoffer — are breaking ground on an amateur, non-commercial radio station.

Josiah is the son of Kerry and Lyn Christoffer; Jake is the son of Carl and Pat Niemand.

What began in mid-1997 as a CB radio trial on a lazy summer afternoon in Christoffer's barn, has progressed to a fairly sophisticated studio in the basement of Niemand's home.

"We were sitting in Joe's barn with nothing to do and we started talking about how cool it would be to be radio disc jockeys," says Jake. "So we found a CB radio and that was our first piece of equipment."

Later that fall they found that the barn was lacking in utilities so they quit for about two months. Early in 1998 they started out again in Niemand's basement. While this is an adequate facility for the time being, in the future they would like to operate out of the high school as a "student-run" station.

Jake and Joe, both ninth-graders, get together for a few hours each week polishing what they hope will be the up-and-coming station for young and old audiences. With the donation of equipment from the Granite Falls station KKRC, and ancillary support from Butch Halterman, Jim Gilley and Tim Miller, the dream of two young men may soon become a reality.

The help from these three men has

changed us from a CB radio to a fully equipped studio," says Josiah.

"The two are really ingenious and self-motivated men, who want to learn more about electronics and apply it to society," says an enthusiastic Butch Halterman. "They really know a lot about electronics because they have done such excellent and thorough research. Not only are they able to run it but build it, network it, and arrange it to form a functioning studio."

They have also had some "big-name" support. Jake visited the WCCO studio at the state fair and received some welcome advice from Don Wik and Roger Strom. He also collected autographs from the two men, which hang on the walls of their studio.

While neither Jake nor Josiah have made a commitment to a career in broadcasting, they have not ruled it out either.

Says Niemand, "Right now it's just a hobby, and we like the independence that gives us. Nobody, besides the FCC, can come in and tell us that we can't do this or that. If we go into broadcasting, this is exactly what we would want to do."

The Christoffers are supportive of a possible future in broadcasting. "I think it would be great," says Lyn Christoffer. "We'd like to see Josiah get into Christian broadcasting, if possible."

The would-be station is primarily kid-oriented, using a wide variety of music, peppered with humorous audio clips from popular movies and light-hearted chat. Christoffer and Niemand envision a "sing-along" station including everything from country to rock, jazz to oldies, with more than 1,600 tunes in their library.

The pair have also provided play-by-play of all home volleyball games and

home basketball games to date.

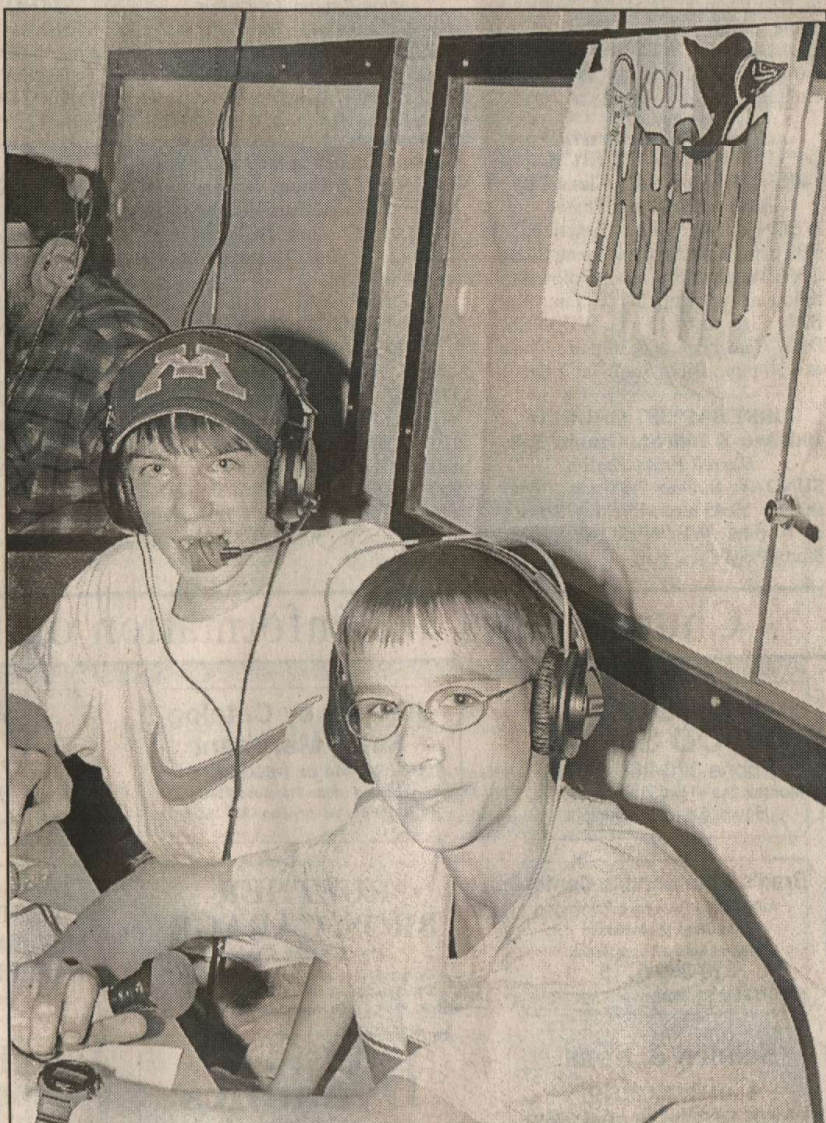
They have covered dances in the past, and hope to do so in the future. They are also interested in doing public service announcements. Listeners are encouraged to call in, and many do, to request songs, to win prizes, and to just chat.

The pair say they have learned a great deal in the process.

"While I used to have to call someone to help me hook up equipment, I can now do it on my own," says Niemand.

The development of the station has not been without difficulty, however. Finances are an ongoing problem, and the two face the real need for a Windows-compatible computer. Additionally, they are in need of a license and FCC-approved equipment. They both encourage everyone to pursue their dreams.

If you are interested in participating in this project, contact Jacob Niemand at 269-7182, or reach them at their web page, www.KRAMradio.home.ml.org.



Niemand and Christoffer have been polishing their broadcasting skills by doing live play-by-play coverage of Montevideo home volleyball and basketball games this year and they have also covered school dances.

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— Jacob Niemand