UB Radio Station's Work Outstanding

By JACK ALLEN

WHEN THE DARK storms of dissent rage on the University of Buffalo campus, it is heartening to witness the performance of the university's radio station, WBFO-FM. The campus outlet, a beacon of light and reason amid the passionate and tempersome voices which scream from all sides of the political spectrum.

This is due in no small measure to the broadcast philosophy of quiet, soft-spoken Bill Siemering, who puts into practice theories of public radio and its role as a vital service to both the campus and the community at large.

TRADITIONALLY, in times of political upheaval, extremists of the right or left seize the facilities of print and broadcast media to force their tenets to the attention of all those who will read or listen.

Fortunately, at UB, the voices of reason, of compromise, of fairness prevail in the campus radio station. The theories of Siemering, placed in action by program director Henry Tenenbaum and news director Mike Waters, have been sorely put to the test in recent weeks. They have gradually been able to pour together and give an accurate accounting of events. Sometimes the confrontations took place directly below the WBFO studios and they were reported as if they happened. Generally, we tried to give a little time distance to give a broader perspective.

Frequently a crowd could be heard shouting in the background of panel discussions. With broadcast less reporters (two received in juries), the shouting and tension, some listeners said, was the closest they had come to the World's broadcast.

Many recorded eyewitness reports on the scene were emotional to air directly, but the information was plain. The words were given and aired in a more calm delivery.

BESIDES THE on-the-scene live and lively reports, there were discussions of causes of the unrest, the strike demands and other issues of university reform.

There was full discussion of the Themenia Project (Dept. of Defense research), the controversy of colleges, ROTC, open mission, police-community relations, university governance of media and city-university relations.

Position papers were read as discussed as soon as they became available. The position statements on the UB Council, The Greener Report, were read several times in their entirety and faculty members and students were contacted for reactions.

THE STATION, which broadcasts at 88.7, on a limited power FM band that still can be heard quite a distance from the campus, signed on four hours earlier than usual to provide informational service and full and complete coverage.

WBFO signs on at 6 a.m. Saturdays and stays on until midnight. Weekdays it is on from 2 p.m. Programming also originates from WBFO's satellite studio at 1200 Jefferson Ave. under the direction of Dr. Blakely.

Many positive aspects have been made on WBFO as a result. Siemering said:

"We tried initially to wait until we knew sufficient facts to report accurately about demonstrations, and then only broadcast eyewitness accounts.

"If, as happens in such complex, fluid situations, there were occasional conflicting reports, we called this to the attention of the listeners. It is nearly impossible to present a single view which can adequately reflect the total situation.

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folk and blues) are generally short. This format is still in an evolutionary stage.

THIS EXCITING and relevant format allows for such diverse things as symphony concerts, a forum on minority hiring in construction unions, and federal hearings on obscenity from City Hall.

It is vibrant and vital radio, but not all stormy. For instance, try WSFO for comprehensive coverage of Earth Day next Wednesday, when ecology experts across the country will deal with the question of whether Earth can survive if man maintains his current course of pollution and population growth.