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Quinn

by Larry A.

FINALIST FOR NAB MARCONI RADIO AWARD...Susan Littlefield (KZEN, Columbus, NE) was a finalist for the Marconi Award for Small Market Personality of the Year. The NAB Marconi Radio Awards were established in 1989 and named after inventor, and Nobel Prize winner, Guglielmo Marconi. These prestigious awards recognize stations and individuals for their excellence and performance in 21 different categories. The awards ceremony was held in Orlando, FL, September 19. **Tom Brand** (NAFB Executive Director) said, "While Susan wasn't the overall winner, we were thrilled to see her make the finalist list." Tom added, "Another one of our NAFB member stations, WKDZ (Cadiz, KY) was named Small Market Station of the Year." **Allan Watts** is the farm broadcaster for WKDZ. Susan reports that KICD (Spencer, IA) was also a finalist in the Small Market Station competition. **Dan Skelton** and **Troy Leininger** are farm broadcasters at KICD. Susan is proud to represent farm broadcasting. She was the only farm show host in the finals. All the rest were morning show hosts.

COLORADO FLOODING FOLLOWS DEVASTATING DROUGHT...Evan Slack (Evan Slack Network, Denver, CO) said that the hardest hit areas by flooding were the Jamestown and Lyons communities north of Boulder (Boulder and Larimer Counties) with some flooding in the Greeley area. Evan said heavy rain made cattle feedlots around there "soupy," but he has not heard of any livestock losses. Hay crops on the ground were lost and some irrigation systems were damaged by flooding. He notes that Colorado has had several devastating floods through the years. In contrast, this year's drought meant that 700,000 acres of Colorado wheat land had no crop. Overall, wheat yields for the state were down 69 percent from last year. Usually, he gets a good view of agriculture from his plane that he pilots covering agriculture in the West, but it has been in the shop for service. Starting in broadcasting in his home state of Missouri in 1952 at KGBX (Springfield, MO), his voice has been heard on about 250 radio stations in his career. Evan said that the three Denver stations of KHOW, KLZ and KOA employed him for 22 ½ of those years. Presently, his network is carried by 45 stations in nine states. He shares a 57-year NAFB membership record with **Orion Samuelson** (WGN, Chicago, IL) and **Roddy Peebles** (Dallas, TX).

"WORKING AS A FARM BROADCASTER...is without a doubt, the most rewarding work I have ever done in communications," said Agribusiness Director **James Hunt** (KGNC-AM, Amarillo, TX). He grew up in Central Texas in a rural area north of Austin before moving to Amarillo, and he has more than 30 years of experience in communications (mostly radio), but he's also worked as a weekly newspaper editor, press secretary for a Texas state senator, press secretary for a U.S. Representative and as communications director for a livestock trade association. James had been out of radio for nine years when he was offered the farm broadcaster position at KGNC-AM two and a half years ago. "I doubt I would have returned to radio for any other position." James had spent most of his career in news but felt he had moved on from broadcasting. "Getting an

opportunity to be a farm broadcaster was a total bolt out of the blue," he said. "I don't have an extensive ag background, but I have been around farmers and ranchers enough to know that they are the best people in the world." KGNC-AM is a 10,000-watt station that uses a news and talk format. James hosts an Agribusiness hour on weekday mornings at 5:00 a.m. He also gives other ag reports during the morning news block, plus news block. Additionally, the station provides market updates throughout the day. The station's audience includes listeners in the entire Texas Panhandle and significant portions of western Oklahoma and eastern New Mexico. "The integrity of our producers is greater than any other demographic group I can think of," James said. "It is an honor to produce broadcasts for them. I hope to continue working in ag journalism for the remainder of my life."

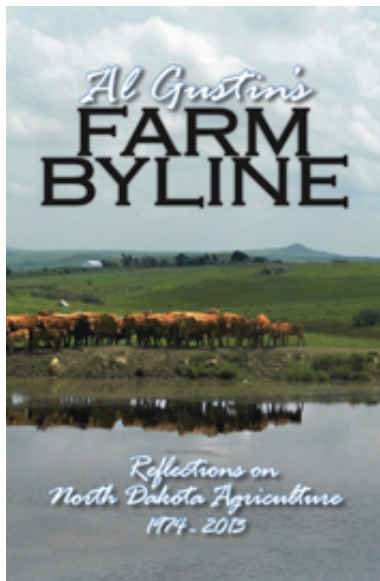


OKLAHOMA BROADCASTERS AT WORK...USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs **Edward Avalos** is interviewed in Stillwater, OK, by **Mike Dain** (First Oklahoma Ag, Oklahoma City, OK), right, and **Sam Knipp** (Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Oklahoma City, OK), center.



SOUTH KOREAN JOURNALISTS VISIT OKLAHOMA LIVESTOCK FACILITIES...During a five-day tour, **Sam Knipp** (Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Oklahoma City, OK) interviews **Min Park** (Senior Manager, Public Relations, Meat Export Federation, Seoul, South Korea) while the group was visiting the Willard Sparks Research Barns at Oklahoma State University at Stillwater. Sam reports, "South Koreans love U.S. beef, but they are concerned about proper treatment and care of our animals. The tour was arranged by the Oklahoma Beef Council and Meat Export Federation to set the record straight."

STORMY WEATHER HELPS TELL AGRICULTURE STORY...In 1993, when he first started as a farm broadcaster, **Patrick Cavanaugh** (Co-Founder of AgNet West Radio Network, Fresno, CA) was covering a bus tour of city folks from Los Angeles visiting California's San Joaquin Valley to see how farmers were coping with a drought. Patrick said, "Suddenly, dark clouds came in from the west, ironically, and sure enough, a hard rain and hail started pounding the bus and the surrounding fields." The storm only lasted a few minutes, but it had started to wash away the dirt road where the bus was parked, making the city visitors nervous. Farm employees were scrambling to keep excess water from flowing into the fields, and hail was shredding some of the crop plants, causing yield loss. Bewildered at what they were seeing, the city visitors "suddenly grasped the unpredictability of a farmer's job." The unexpected storm helped Patrick build an understanding of the challenges of being a farmer for his listeners. While a farm broadcaster for a news/talk station in Fresno, Patrick received letters from school teachers thanking him for teaching them about what was grown in Fresno County, the #1 agriculture county in the nation (in terms of value). A key contribution that farm broadcasters make when they "air on the side of agriculture" is to bring greater understanding and support for America's farmers and ranchers.



BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR PUBLISHES BOOK...Al Gustin (Mandan, ND) who

Broadcaster of the Year last November, retired that same month after a 45-year broadcasting career. His book, *Al Gustin's Farm Byline: Reflections on North Dakota Agriculture, 1974-2013*, was published in late September and is now available online at www.dakotabooknet.com. Also, it is available from the North Dakota Heritage Center and should be available from major book retailers soon. Not too long after Al started at Meyer Broadcasting Company in the early 1970s, he convinced management that he should be allowed to do a weekly commentary program on the radio. He said, "Being young and rather confident of myself, I felt there were some things I could offer, beyond our regular farm newscasts - some insight into what was happening - my own perspective. Those radio commentaries continued, uninterrupted, for about 40 years." In 1974, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives approached Al and asked him to write a column in their monthly magazine. Thus began "The Farm Byline." His radio commentaries

generally offered background and perspective on something that was in the news that week. Initially, his columns for the "North Dakota REC/RTC Magazine," now "North Dakota Living," were similar. But in recent years, most columns were his reflections on how farming and ranching in his region have changed and how the people have changed. Al's book is a collection of some of those columns, organized loosely into topical chapters. In some cases, they are columns that elicited response from readers. Others were selected because they reflect particularly strong feelings that he had when they were written. Al was born and raised on a diversified Morton County farm in North Dakota, and he has retained a working interest in what has now become Gustin's Diamond-D Gelbvieh Ranch. Beside his radio work, Al's television programming earned him two Oscars in Agriculture from NAFB.

AL GUSTIN'S THOUGHTS ON AIRING ON THE SIDE OF AGRICULTURE..."For any reporter/journalist, the ideal is objectivity and fairness. As an agricultural journalist, I tried to present all sides of issues, especially agriculture's side. In doing that, I interviewed many spokespersons who defended agriculture. Being a broadcast commentator and magazine columnist gave me the opportunity to bring background and perspective, and to say 'This is how I see it.' Not all farm broadcasters feel comfortable doing that, and I respect their position. I feel fortunate, however, in having had the opportunity to speak out and 'air (and write) on the side of agriculture,' and I think my viewers, listeners and readers appreciated my comments."



DON MOLINO COVERS RICE DONATION...National Rice Month was celebrated in September by the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, donating more than 17,000 pounds of rice to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, which services an 11-parish area of Louisiana. **Don Molino** (Louisiana Farm Bureau Agri-News Radio Network, Baton Rouge, LA), right, talks with **Kevin Berkin**, Chairman of the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, about the annual rice donations, which now total several tons of rice to the food bank. Don has been a farm broadcaster in Baton Rouge for 26 years, but he started in radio at age 17 for his hometown radio station, KFTV in Paris, TX. After two years, he moved on to KGVV in Greenville, TX, and in 1967, he joined the staff of WFAA radio in Dallas, TX. Long-time Farm Director **Murray Cox** was still with WFAA then, and Don knew and worked with him. Don tells a story about Murray's popularity with WFAA listeners: When a change in frequency and format made WFAA a "hard rock" music station, Murray's Farm and Ranch Report at 12:30 p.m. daily continued because of its popularity with listeners making it a significant revenue generator for the station.



FARM BROADCASTERS BEAT WEATHERMEN... **Susan Littlefield** (KZEN, Columbus, NE) and **Marlin Bohling** (KRVN/Rural Radio Network, Lexington, NE), shown with the trophies, were winners in the celebrity team antique tractor driving "egg and spoon" contest at the Nebraska State Fair in late August. They out-drove the weathermen team of **Joe Thompson** (KHAS-TV, Hastings, NE), left, and **Kent Boughton** (NTV, Kearney, NE). Susan reports that she and Marlin never lost or broke an egg. (Eggactly!)

FEEDBACK... After seeing our item on the North Dakota farmers' visit to China in our September issue, **Lucia Marshall** (Biosorb, Inc., St. Charles, MO) wanted us to know that the Missouri Department of Agriculture also had a trade mission to China. Lucia said, "We also gave a presentation to the Agricultural College in Urumqi, Xinjiang Autonomous Region, to professors and government leaders. Our presentation was on new agricultural technology that helps reduce the chemical load on the environment."

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU... so we can share your stories of service to listeners. Contact me at larryaquinn@verizon.net or call me at 703-819-6532.

NAFB
P.O. Box 500
Platte City, MO 64079
(816) 431-4032

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