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by Larry A. Quinn



A GRAIN BIN AS A WEEKEND HOME—Bob Quinn (WHO, Des Moines, IA) covers farming for a living, but now he’s taken living in agriculture to a new level. Bob has built a home in the spirit of Iowa agriculture out of a grain bin. He got the idea after Sukup Manufacturing built small grain bins to be taken to Haiti to use for housing after the devastating earthquakes hit that country. “We wanted to have a house here on the farm that was characteristic of a farm.” He considered a cabin, but after covering the Sukup grain bin story, Bob got the idea to try a grain bin as a house. So, a huge 20,000-bushel grain bin was assembled on Bob’s acreage west of St. Charles, IA. The structure is built like a Thermos bottle, he said. A second steel roof is built under the top roof, and two feet of insulation was put in. Another interior wall was put inside the outer wall and filled with insulation. The grain bin home has a loft, which covers half the structure’s inside. Overall, it has a very high ceiling over the living room. Grain bin steps used to get to the outside of a grain bin, are installed as a way to get to the loft. The round structure also offers interesting living dynamics. Bob said the light bounces around from an exterior yard light, through



the window and off the walls, illuminating the inside at night. "If you're having a conversation on one side close to the wall, the person on the opposite side can hear just like he's standing next to you," he said. Bob credits his wife, **Ann**, for going along with the idea. "She's been a pretty good sport about it. Everything we've done here is kind of an experiment." Bob and Ann spend weekends in the bin house, but hope to be living there after retirement.



IN HIS OWN WORDS—“Now I know what a kernel of corn feels like. It's funny, a square guy living in a round house. My wife would say that it's a little difficult trying to set furniture because there are no room dividers. It is more of a weekend, or family cabin escape than a full-time home. So, in that respect it works great. It's wide open. Everybody can be together around the bar or table. The bedroom is a little different. It's the entire loft, which holds four double beds in a dorm-type arrangement. So there is no privacy, but at our age that is not a HUGE concern. Ha! Ha! The double wall construction makes it 'snug.' The double roof keeps the heat in and cool in as well. It was—and still is a learning experience—so I have a pretty good 'what to do and what not to do' manual on grain bin houses. It's 1,500 square feet with the option of adding another 300 by adding more loft. We love it. It looks way-cool, and fits in with our personality—and the surroundings!”



STEVE BRIDGE RECEIVES \$1,000 NAFB FOUNDATION CONTINUING EDUCATION GRANT—



Steve Bridge (WFMB-AM/FM, Springfield, IL) was awarded an NAFB Foundation grant to participate in the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program (IALP). He says participating in this program has been a very good decision. “The seminars are great, but the personal connection you make with the 29 people in the class is the best part. Our class began last November. Over

the past year, we have had seminars at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, a week in Washington, DC, and a memorable trip to Gettysburg, PA.” In February and March, the group will travel for two weeks to Japan and Panama. “It’s the opportunity of a lifetime. I’m honored to have been selected for the class and to join the small list of other farm broadcasters and journalists that are part of the IALP.” Individual members of the NAFB Broadcast Council are eligible to apply for a maximum of \$1,000 that may be used for a variety of educational opportunities (like this leadership program). Steve is completing his second year of a two-year program. Applications are available through the NAFB Foundation.

He grew up in a university town as the son of an engineering professor and a working mom. “I either wanted to be an umpire or sports broadcaster. So for the first six years after college I was a sports anchor and sports director on TV stations in Rockford and Springfield, IL.” Growing up in Macomb, IL, his desire was to be in broadcasting, but he wanted to be a play-by-play announcer for a baseball team or a weeknight sports anchor on a local TV station. “I accomplished that, but the broadcasting business can be fickle. I left TV, or TV left me, and I started working for a non-profit association in Springfield, IL. I handled their communications, but I missed the buzz, motion and connectivity of being a reporter and broadcaster.” He was working part-time for WFMB-AM as a sports talk show host in late 2008, when the station had an opening for a farm director. “I thought about it, but I didn’t know a thing about farming or agriculture, besides being able to tell the difference between a corn and soybean field. I figured I’d give it a shot because I knew I loved broadcasting and journalism.” In January 2009, he started at WFMB AM/FM as their agribusiness director. “I’ve really enjoyed most every minute of the job. I didn’t have a clue what I was doing when I started. I enjoy the wide variety of people you meet and interview. My colleagues, especially those in Illinois, are the best people I’ve ever worked with. I count many of them as my best friends.” Recently, Steve started working with **Orion Samuelson** and **Max Armstrong** on their television program, *This Week In Agribusiness*. His time covering sports gave him an advantage on the job. Many farmers and others in agriculture love sports. “Those same folks were used to seeing me on the sidelines of their high school games. That connection still exists and I get as many questions about sports as I do farming.” He adds, “Reporting on sports and farming has its similarities, most stories have outcomes, final scores or yields, and the really good stories are always about people.” He still announces about a dozen high school football games a year on their AM station. Also, he is WFMB’s afternoon news reporter and directs a statewide news service used by *RFD Illinois*. He covers the state capitol and other important news for their network. Steve co-hosts a weekly sports talk show at the station. Married for 11 years, his wife, **Dina**, works in radio, too. She’s been a morning show co-host for 15 years. They met while working in Rockford, IL.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE

AWARD—Farmer and farm radio host **Dave Williams**, left, receives the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award from Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) President **Rick Ebert** during the PFB 65th Annual Meeting in Hershey, PA. The award is presented to an individual whose dedicated work and service has significantly contributed to the advancement of Pennsylvania agriculture. Besides being the host and owner of the Pennsylvania Farm Country Radio Network, Dave is a vegetable, hay and straw farmer from Honesdale, PA,

who served for eight years (2004-2012) on PFB’s State Board of Directors. “It is a great honor to receive the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award,” Dave said. Earlier, he was the 2005 recipient of the PFB Distinguished Local Affairs Leader Award. Dave’s radio show is broadcast six days a week on 24 radio stations in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, and he is the Northeast reporter for Rural TV, which is affiliated with RFD-TV. PFB President Rick Ebert said, “Dave has been a great ambassador for farm families across the state. His radio show is entertaining and informative and keeps listeners up to date on what is happening on the farm and in the industry.” Ebert added, “We appreciate and recognize the vast contributions Dave has made on behalf of farmers and the agricultural community.” Williams led efforts by the Wayne/Pike County Farm Bureau to sponsor and organize public meetings on the Clean and Green program and also served as chairman of a multi-county cooperative group designed to boost opportunities for agriculture businesses and to heighten the awareness of farming’s significant contributions to the economy of Northeast Pennsylvania. Dave responded, “I enjoy being involved with people who all have the common goal of promoting agriculture and ensuring that there is a future for the next generation on the farm.”

WEEKEND RADIO PROGRAM LAUNCHED—Ty

Higgins with the Ohio Ag Net has launched a weekend program that connects farmers to consumers with country music. *Farm & Country Radio* is currently airing on country stations from Tennessee to Iowa. Ty’s uncle, **Scott**, the CEO of The American Dairy Association Mideast, opened the door for him to start his radio journey right out of high school, by introducing him to farm broadcaster and former NAFB President **Joe Cornely**. “My career began in farm broadcasting, shifted to country radio for 15



years at WHOK in Columbus, OH, and now I have returned to my roots,” Higgins said. “I thought *Farm & Country* would be a great way to fully utilize my experience with both country music and the country life.” Guests on *Farm & Country*, highlighted as “Featured Farmers”, have included producers from all across the country and some that have made an impact nationally as a voice for the industry. “**Derek Klingenberg** was on the show shortly after he played his trombone for his cows, and I had no idea where that conversation was headed, but it was a good one,” Ty said. “I have also had farm broadcaster **Max Armstrong**, country music group **The Henningsens** and the National Sheriff of the Year, **John Lenhart**, who happens to be a farmer, on the show, too.” Higgins sees *Farm & Country* as another tool to bridge the gap between those who grow the food and those who eat it. “As much as each farm story differs, the one common goal that all of my guests and myself have is to reach out to consumers and share all of the good news American Agriculture has to offer,” Higgins said. Passion is what has fueled Ty’s career, and his in-depth knowledge of agriculture and his familiarity and love of country music – paired with his reverence for the people behind both fields – give *Farm & Country* a foundation to build upon for many years to come. “As we learned in Kansas City last month, there is a need and a want for weekend agricultural programming,” Ty said. “This gives country stations nationwide an opportunity to expand their programming without going too far from their weekend music format.” Learn more about *Farm & Country Radio* at www.FarmAndCountryRadio.com or send a note to Ty if you would like more information at Ty@FarmAndCountryRadio.com.



FIRST JOB IN FARM BROADCASTING—Ben Nuelle (Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network, Des Moines, IA) is an agricultural journalist who works with farm broadcaster **Ken Root**. With this being Ben’s first job as a farm broadcaster he felt “learning from one of the best was important.” He added, “I am thrilled to be working for Ken. He has been a great mentor, and I hope to be just as good as him someday.” Ben’s daily routine consists of filing two stories a day for the network



while also managing the network's website. A graduate of Northwest Missouri State University with a B.S. in Mass Media (with an emphasis in Multimedia Journalism). He is a triplet from Higginsville, MO. His two brothers are **Alex** and **Chad**. Alex farms hay and cattle with his dad, Bob, and Chad is a district sales manager for LG Seeds. "Growing up on the farm we always had someone to play with." Ben was born prematurely along with his brothers. In the very beginning when his mom, **Phyllis**, found out she was having triplets, the doctors said there are three boys, but one was not strong enough, and they didn't know if he would live. (That boy was

Ben.) When the boys were born, they each weighed just over 2 pounds. Ben said his dad could hold him in the palm of his hand he was so small. Ben believes he is alive today because God had a plan for him. He started in radio at KMZU-FM (Carrollton, MO) working as an evening and overnight board announcer on weekends. There he met then Farm Director **Janet Adkison** (Washington Bureau chief with RFD-TV and Past NAFB President) who really got him interested in a farm broadcasting career. From there, Ben went to college and began working for NPR affiliate KXCV/KRNW-FM at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville when he was a sophomore. He worked there 4 years. By his last year at KXCV, he was executive producer for the station's once a month hour-long program, executive engineer for the Bearcat Radio Network, and local host of *Morning Edition*. June through July 2015, he was the Program Advisor for the Institute on Political Journalism with The Fund for American Studies in Washington, DC. His job included creating lecture biographies, weekly schedules for interns and scheduling small group site visits to places such as NBC *Meet the Press*, National Public Radio, and other media outlets in DC. A year earlier, in 2014, he was selected through an application process to attend the Institute on Political Journalism (IPJ). He completed an intense internship working from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. four days a week at Radio America Network, and he took three-hour classes three nights a week at George Mason University. At the end of the summer, he received the IPJ Director's Award out of 56 other students for showing the most dedication and motivation. Through his experience with the IPJ program, he demonstrated his ability to manage time wisely and meet deadlines. His radio stories have been distributed by Harvest Public Media, aired on KCUR-FM (Kansas City, MO), Radio America Network (syndicated in Washington, DC), KMA-FM (Shenandoah, IA), KXCV/KRNW-FM (Maryville, MO), Bearcat Radio Network and now the Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network. "I am excited to enter the world of farm broadcasting and look forward for the journey ahead," Ben said. Besides radio, Ben has played the piano since he was seven years old and currently plays organ and piano for his church whenever needed.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS...We'd like to hear your stories and receive your photos to share your experiences when *Airing on the Side of Agriculture*. Contact me at larryaquinn@outlook.com or call me at **703-819-6532**.

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