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by Larry A. Quinn



TRUITT CELEBRATES 31 YEARS COVERING INDIANA STATE FAIR...Gary Truitt

(Hoosier Ag Today Network, Zionsville, IN) spent much of August at the Indiana State Fair, but this is not unusual, he has been doing it for the past 31 years. Founder of the statewide radio network Hoosier Ag Today, Gary attended his first State Fair in 1985. "I was in a trailer parked just outside the swine barn doing my broadcasting over a telephone line," he remembers. "This was before satellites and the Internet so there was literally a copper wire that ran to almost every radio station in the state that carried my live reports." Today, Gary and his team of HAT reporters use wireless technology to produce and distribute digital

audio reports to their network. He's been an eyewitness to the transformation of the fair over the past three decades. "You used to come home covered in dust because most of the roads on the fairgrounds were not paved. Most of the buildings have also undergone significant renovation. The cattle barn used to be a pretty dark and dismal place." The structure and operation of the fair has also changed over the years, he added. "Things used to be rather casually run; today it is much more professional and businesslike." He emphasized, "One thing that has not changed is that Indiana agriculture is the centerpiece of the fair. It has always been billed as the showcase for agriculture, and that aspect has become even more intentional in recent years." He observed that development of the north side of the Indiana State Fairgrounds has been focused on providing a venue to showcase 4-H, agriculture, youth, and ag heritage. "With so many state fairs moving away from their agricultural heritage, it is nice to see the Indiana State Fair stick to its roots," Gary said. One of his more memorable moments was the time he broadcast from the Swine Barn. "Somebody had the bright idea of having me set up my broadcast location in the Swine Barn. It turned out to be one of the hottest summers in Indiana history, so the Swine Barn was not a nice place to be. Neither the hogs nor I wanted to be there." He continued, "One of my guests was then-Senator Evan Bayh." He recalls that the Senator was just as "unhappy as the hogs and I were about being in the barn with triple digit temperatures." Gary has evolved several traditions over the years including starting each day

with a cold glass of chocolate milk from the Dairy Bar. He compiled a list of the best long-time vendors at the fair. "The strawberry shortcake in the Ag Hort building is not to be missed, and the best sweet corn comes from the stand on the west end of the Harvest Pavilion," he said. For protein, he alternates between the Hoosier ribeye and the pork tent each day. Again this year, Gary led an experienced team of reporters, all veterans of the State Fair, including **Kathleen Stubbe Truitt, Andy Eubank, Cayla McLeland, and Jon Truitt.**



Gary interviews **Cindy Hoyer**, Director of the Indiana State Fair, left, and **Sue Ellspermann**, Indiana Lieutenant Governor, right.

Hoosier Ag Today was founded in 2006 for the specific purpose of serving the informational needs of the Hoosier agricultural community and currently has 65 radio stations broadcasting its programs. Also, HAT operates a multimedia website, smartphone app, and publishes a daily e-mail newsletter.



JIM DEWEY REPRESENTS BROADCASTERS ON CHINA/VIETNAM TRADE MISSION...

The United Soybean Board (USB) completed its annual summer *See for Yourself* trade mission to China, which for the first time also included Vietnam. Ten soybean growers from around the country were joined by three USB board members and USB staff along with two ag media representatives, a print journalist and STARadio Farm Director **Jim Dewey** (WTAD, Quincy, IL). The trip began with a visit to a DuPont facility in St. Louis, MO, on July 30. The group departed the next morning on an early flight to Chicago followed by a 14-hour non-stop trip to Shanghai, China. The Shanghai visit included a trip to a fish farm and a visit from the Deputy Director of the U. S. Consulate Agriculture Trade Office in Shanghai, **Zach Henderson**. "We also visited a typical Shanghai grocery store on our way to the airport. It was interesting to see

the wide variety of oils used by Chinese cooks and a great number of recognizable American made products," Jim said. "Our flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, was uneventful, but it brought us to a vibrant, active, modern city of 10 to 11 million people and 6 or 7 million



motorcycles. Nearly everyone in HCMC travels on either a motor scooter or small motorbike. The streets are crowded with them,” he added. People hauled goods on their motorcycles. “We even saw one man with an apartment-sized refrigerator strapped to his scooter.” The group’s trip to Vietnam included stops at a Bunge crushing facility, a container port, and a port that can handle large Panamax ships filled with soymeal and other soy products. He continued, “We also visited a catfish processing facility, which employs some 2,000 workers processing thousands of fish every day. That afternoon included a trip to a catfish farm where we witnessed a feeding frenzy as the fish dined on food that included soymeal as a primary

ingredient.” Jim described the trip’s benefits saying, “The 10 farmers on the tour had a good opportunity to learn about both China and Vietnam and why both markets are growing and what buyers in those markets are looking for in soy products.” He noted, “One big difference in the two countries is that China is a more mature market, and the Chinese people are earning more money, which allows them to be more concerned about the type of foods they eat as they add more protein to their diets (mostly animal protein in the form of pork, chicken and fish). The average Vietnamese resident is between the ages of 15 and 40 and earns about \$2,500 a year, but that income is also rising, which means Vietnamese appetites will soon be looking for more animal protein.”



One item of concern was that U.S. soybean meal had a lot of limestone in it. Shown, left to right, are U.S. farmers **Jennifer Campbell** (Franklin, IN), **Cap Phillips** (Walnut Ridge, AR), and **Caleb Frye** (Morganza, LA) looking at a sample during a visit to a mill in Vietnam. All were *See for Yourself* tour members. Visits to both countries were planned by the local offices of the United States Soybean Export Council. “Meals were primarily local cuisine, which meant a lot of fish and tofu. The group

also enjoyed local beverages including Tsing Tao beer in Shanghai and 333 beer in Vietnam,” Jim said. Their return trip took 5 and a half hours from Saigon to Tokyo and another 11 and a half hours to Chicago, where they gained back the day they lost on the way over. Jim concludes, “USB put out an invitation to farm broadcasters in March asking if any would be interested in joining the tour. I am very grateful to have been given the chance and will be sharing more

stories from the trip in the next few weeks as I have a chance to digest them.” He emphasized, “I would recommend to my NAFB colleagues, that if you get a chance to go on the *See for Yourself* tour, take it.”

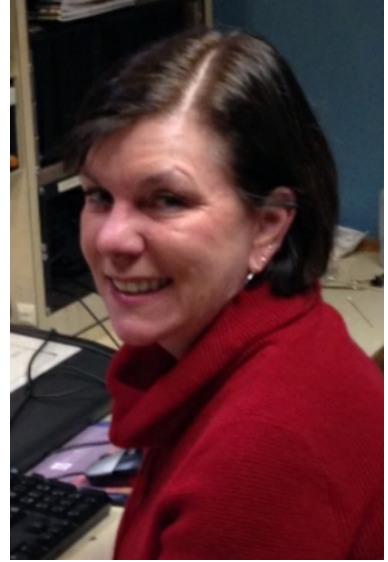
STARADIO INTERN...Tom Donley is a product of Adams County, IL, where he graduated from Unity High School in Mendon. He is studying journalism at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Tom worked with **Jim Dewey** (WTAD, Quincy, IL) for a couple of weeks during the winter semester break and returned as an intern this summer. “All summer long I have been prepping Tom to cover for me while I traveled to Asia with the United Soybean Board *See for Yourself* tour. “As I write this, I am in Shanghai, China, and Tom is actually acting as the Farm Director while I am gone and is doing quite well at it. Tom is a very good writer and has been a very willing student when learning how to voice his stories for radio. He has also learned well how to edit copy for the listener rather than for the reader as he has primarily studied print journalism throughout his college career. Tom has a great sense of humor which helps when working in radio. He also has quickly developed a sense of what news stories are more topical and appropriate to our audience.”



JOINING THE RED RIVER FARM NETWORK TEAM...is Carah Hart. She began her duties August 31. “Carah will be a huge asset to the Red River Farm Network (RRFN). She is an excellent farm broadcaster and will be a wonderful addition to our organization,” said **Mike Hergert**, RRFN President, who served as NAFB President in 2001. Carah joins Mike, **Don Wick** and **Randy Koenen**. Based in Grand Forks, ND, RRFN serves agriculture in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota through a network of 19 radio stations. Carah grew up on a diversified crop and beef farm near Carrollton, MO. Her farm broadcasting career began while in high school,

when she reported daily market reports and farm news at her hometown radio station, KMZU. She is a University of Missouri graduate where she earned a B.S. degree in agricultural journalism with an emphasis in broadcasting. While attending Mizzou, she interned with Brownfield Ag News, the Missouri Soybean Association and the National FFA Newsroom. After graduating, Hart worked in public relations and account service at Osborn and Barr in St. Louis, MO, and Cultivate Agency in Justin, TX. She is actively involved in NAFB, serving on the NAFB Foundation Auction Committee. Also, Carah is a past recipient of the NAFB Glen Kummerow scholarship.

THROWING CLAY ON A POTTER'S WHEEL...is a favorite hobby for North Carolina farm broadcaster **Rhonda Garrison** (Southern Farm Network, Raleigh, NC). "For as long as I can remember I'd wanted to learn to make pottery, but had little opportunity or time while living in the Texas Panhandle," Rhonda said. In the summer of 2007 she moved to North Carolina with three dogs, and only one family member east of the Mississippi so, she said, "I finally had lots of time, and little did I know that I'd moved to the epicenter of handmade pottery on the East Coast!" She explains how she got started. "In the fall of 2008 I took my first class that involved throwing clay on a potter's wheel at a city-



owned art studio, and about the best I could do was throw

a fit. I was very disappointed." But, Rhonda kept seeing pieces that were shapes and textures that were a better fit with what she wanted to do. "I asked how those were done, and a term I'd never heard before was introduced to me – hand building. The difference is that the clay is rolled into a slab, much like one would roll out a pie crust, patterns are cut, much like dress making, texture applied with whatever you can find and like, and the piece is 'built' or assembled much like a construction project." She added, "All of a sudden,

I was in love with clay and what I could do with it! I loved finding things in nature that I could use for texture, or carving my own. My agricultural and horticultural background is evident in my work!"

"For the first couple of years, I spent every possible moment at the studio or in classes learning everything I could about hand building pottery, making new friends and just generally having a ton of fun. My dogs were getting older, and while I enjoyed the social aspect of working in a studio, I felt like I was needlessly missing out on the time my beloved dogs and I had left together. So in 2010, I began moving my work to a home studio in my garage." There came a



time when Rhonda “had worn out my welcome with friends and family with pottery pieces (think good zucchini year).” She donated her work to charitable organizations, including the NAFB Foundation Auction, and decided to start selling her pottery at craft shows and fairs in central North Carolina. In the spring of 2013, Rhonda was accepted into her first juried show in Cary, NC. This year she has applied (or will apply) to 10 juried shows hoping to get into six. Some are big events, some are not, but each one is special in its own way. Selling at craft shows meant Rhonda needed a name for her little business. In keeping with her work environment and her home life, she named her pottery business *Dog House Pottery - Raleigh*. She concludes, “Funds from these shows go to support my ‘pottery habit’, and pay my veterinarian bills! Look for some of my pieces at this year’s NAFB Foundation silent auction once again!”



RFD RADIO NETWORK INTERN...Kelsey Litchfield from Rio, IL, joined the RFD Radio Network team in Bloomington, IL, this summer, reports **Rita Frazer**. A junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Kelsey is studying agricultural communications with a concentration in broadcast journalism. She is a member of 4-H House Cooperative Sorority, Collegiate Farm Bureau, Explore ACES steering committee, and Illini Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow. Recently, she was elected to serve as Member Relations Coordinator on the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow officer team. Also, Kelsey is the 2015 Jim Evans Scholarship recipient sponsored by the AAEP Professional Improvement Foundation. After graduating from the University of Illinois, she plans to become a farm broadcaster. “I want to help tell the story of agriculture to

consumers and be a credible source that farmers can get information from,” she said. “**Rita, DeLoss (Jahnke)**, and the whole RFD team have given me so much guidance and support to help me be a well-rounded farm broadcaster, and I can’t thank them enough for this experience.” Rita said, “Kelsey has been not only a tremendous help to the RFDRN this summer, she has been a blessing to me. She has come in every day with a smile and a positive attitude and always welcomes new opportunities. I realize interns are supposed to learn from their experiences, but I can honestly say that I have learned a great deal from Kelsey this summer. I’m confident that she will make a wonderful NAFB Farm Broadcaster after her graduation in 2017 from the University of Illinois. The RFDRN has been lucky enough to have received the NAFB Intern Scholarship Grant again this year, and we are so grateful that the grant helps us to secure such top notch students from around the state.”

MARLIN BOHLING DESCRIBES NEW RFD-TV STUDIOS IN NASHVILLE...“The new RFD-TV studios are a feat of engineering. Designed and constructed by companies from New York, the main television studio room is actually comprised of six different sets located around the periphery



of the main room,” reports **Marlin Bohling**, Markets Editor (RFD-TV and Rural Radio, Nashville, TN). He added, “The five cameras, including an overhead jib camera, are all located in the center of the room and can pivot to cover all of the different sets, which are used for everything from our ag news and market reports to western sports coverage, weather, stand-up teases, and cozy interviews in a living room setting complete with a realistic ‘digital’ fireplace.” He continued, “Hundreds of lighting components are all computer-controlled and instantly reconfigurable. Ten giant LCD monitors arranged on end and combined in two banks of five serve as an amazing backdrop to our news stage and can show any combination of images, graphics, and videos in any size configuration for a dynamic high-action set. New world-class hardware and software systems allow for top tier production capability rivaling other national

networks.” **(Marlin Bohling reports Chicago wheat prices on the studio set.)** Marlin proudly points out, “RFD-TV has been nominated as a finalist for the *CableFax Awards* in the category of *Best Show or Series – News*. We are up against the likes of CNBC, Headline News, Al Jazeera America, and the Oprah Winfrey Network, so we are honored to already be considered in such high caliber company.” **ON MUSIC ROW...**Being located in the former GAC country music channel studios right on legendary Music Row near downtown Nashville is, as Marlin describes it, “a boon to our operation” as it sits squarely in the middle of the world’s country music Mecca. “Renowned entertainers and VIP’s regularly stop in for on-air visits and are a real treat for our viewers and listeners,” he said.



(Marlin Bohling with Abby Powell Turpin, Ag News anchor)

From a personal perspective, Marlin finds it hard to believe that in the span of 13 years he has transitioned from driving a tractor on his small family farm near his hometown of 100 people on the Kansas/Nebraska border to talking daily to an international audience

covering all of North America on TV and satellite radio. "I have the awesome responsibility of keeping our viewers and listeners informed on critical commodity-related information with live real-time quotes and live interviews with numerous market experts from all over the country. It is truly a powerful forum, and I am honored to be a part of such an important media team including fellow NAFB members **Mark Oppold** and **Janet Adkison**." (Mark and Janet served as NAFB Presidents in 2013 and 2014.)

Marlin Bohling is voicing a live *Commodity Wrap* radio program in Rural Radio SiriusXM studio. His radio producer, **Zach Troutman**, left, is operating the control board. Two half-hour *Commodity Wrap* radio shows are on the Rural Radio channel each day at 8:30 a.m. (Eastern Time) and 7:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). Rural Radio SiriusXM just moved its location from channel 80 to channel 147 on August 13.



ROUNDTABLE OF OHIO AG JOURNALISTS...Joe Cornely (Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Columbus, OH) shared this photo from a recent taping of Ohio Farm Bureau's weekly public affairs radio show [Town Hall Ohio](#). Joe put **Dave Russell**, at left, (Brownfield Network, Dublin,



OH) on the other side of the mic when he conducted a roundtable with Ohio agricultural journalists. Along with Dave are **Susan Crowell** (Farm and Dairy newspaper) and **Matt Reese** (Ohio's Country Journal and Ohio Ag Net). Joe is senior director of corporate communications for OFBF, and he served as NAFB President in 1995.

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@verizon.net or call me at 703-819-6532.

Airing on the Side of Agriculture is included in the blog section of NAFB.com. For an archive copy of any past issues, go to Membership and click on "Airing on the Side of Agriculture."