



Volume 4, Number 7, July 1, 2016

by Larry A. Quinn



ARMSTRONG EARNS PLAQUE ON THE WGN RADIO WALK OF FAME -

- **Max Armstrong** joined other WGN Legends as a member of the WGN Radio Walk of Fame on May 27. About the honor, Max said, "As I pointed out during the ceremony that was carried live on WGN Radio, this plot of real estate in Chicago is hallowed ground for the two farm broadcasters, **Samuelson** and **Armstrong**." He explained, "Not only are these plaques positioned right next to the iconic and historic Tribune Building, but they are about 100 yards from where **Cyrus McCormick**, inventor of the mechanical reaper, built his first manufacturing plant in Chicago. Also, International Harvester, predecessor of today's

Case IH brand, was headquartered right next door here at 401 N. Michigan Avenue for about 15 years." Max said, "I was full-time with WGN Radio for 32 years before joining Penton Agriculture in 2009, and Orion and I are in the 10th season of producing our television show, *This Week In AgriBusiness*."





WGN Radio News anchor Andrea Darlas, left, and WGN sportscaster Dave Eanet, right, posed with Max Armstrong and his wife, Linda, inside WGN's showcase studio along the "Magnificent Mile."

FLINN NAMED ANCHOR/REPORTER FOR BROWNFIELD OHIO –

Brownfield Ag News announced June 8 that **Andrew Flinn** is joining Brownfield's team as Ohio Anchor/Reporter. "Andrew's years of experience covering news and agriculture for local radio stations in Ohio makes him a great addition to the Brownfield team," said **Cyndi Young-Puyear**, Director of Brownfield & Ag Operations. Flinn came to Brownfield after 15 years reporting news and agriculture in his home state of Ohio. He spent 14 of those years with Brownfield affiliate WKTN (Kenton, OH). Andrew is a graduate of the University of Findlay, where he majored in communication and public relations. Also, he has his associate degree in broadcast production and engineering from Hocking Technical College. Andrew is a former member of the Hardin County 4-H Advisory



Board, Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Committee and the Hardin County Ag Council. Also, he has been involved in the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce and Business Alliance and the Kenton Kiwanis Club. About being offered the Brownfield position, Andrew said, "I'm a bit humbled by it. I've spent my career working in local radio up until this point, so it's a slight learning curve. But, I grew up around agriculture and have been reporting on regional ag news for most of my career, so I'm looking forward to the opportunity to report on the agriculture community in Ohio." He grew up around farms, visiting neighbor farms all the time with his dad.

Also, he followed his dad's footsteps when he became President of his Kenton High School FFA Chapter. **Joe Cornely**, past NAFB President and Vice President of Communications for Ohio Farm Bureau, reports that Andrew is the fourth "alumni" to go into Ohio Ag broadcasting that began at their hometown station, WKTN (Kenton, OH). **Ron Powers, Gary Jackson, Joe** and Andrew all began their broadcasting careers at WKTN. Brownfield Ag News creates and delivers original content across multiple media platforms. Brownfield includes the largest and one of the oldest agricultural news radio networks in the country. More than 400 affiliate radio stations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin carry agricultural programming created by Brownfield's award-winning team of a dozen full-time farm broadcasters. Ohio Brownfield has 41 affiliated radio station partners. More information is available at www.brownfieldagnews.com.

70-YEAR NAFB MEMBER – Don Lerch, Lifetime Broadcast Council-Emeritus member, who resides in Juno Beach, FL, tops NAFB's list of longtime members at 70 years. At 97 years young, he recalled his early farm broadcasting years in a phone call on June 1. He began his farm broadcasting career on June 9, 1941, at KDKA (Pittsburgh, PA), a Westinghouse-owned station and part of NBC's Red Network. He had just graduated from Penn State University with a degree in agronomy. Recommended by County Extension Agent **Henry Eby**, Don got the job with a starting salary of \$1,800 for a six-day week. During the early years, the Federal Communications Commission required major stations to broadcast information for farmers. Don interviewed county agents and farmers, but remote broadcasts were difficult because of equipment limitations then. During the war years, food supply was a key topic. He remembers that his broadcasts on December 8, 1941, for farmers had a heavy emphasis on producing more food both for domestic and overseas use. On July 13, 1943, Don joined the War Food Administration in Washington, DC. Food rationing was in place so many of the stories he wrote or broadcast were designed to keep citizens informed and encourage their compliance. Also, farm broadcasters did their part in promoting Victory Gardens by Americans to help grow their own food. He was hired by WNBC in New York City on October 25, 1946. He later worked for **Edward R. Murrow**, who was CBS Director of News. Don produced a half-hour weekly program, *Columbia's Country Journal*, which aired on Saturdays. Besides agriculture, he carried stories about country life and accepted inserts to his program from farm broadcasters. In 1953, the advent of television caused the show's budget to be cut and the program was shortened to 15 minutes. In 1959, he started his own



firm, *Lerch and Company, Inc.*, where he continued to work with farm broadcasters feeding them broadcasts for their programs. He continued to specialize in agriculture, but diversified after the war into conveying information about oil production and remembers taking farm broadcasters out to an ocean oil platform. He met **Layne R. Beaty**, when Layne was farm director at WBAP in Fort Worth, TX. Layne was the third President of NAFB in 1947. Later, Layne became Chief of Radio and Television for USDA. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Layne was my boss when I moved to DC in 1974 to head USDA's Television Service.*) Don and Layne were among the early-year members of NAFB. Don recalls attending NAFB meetings in Columbus, OH, and at the Stevens Hotel (now Conrad Hilton Hotel) in Chicago. He also worked with **Roy Battles**, NAFB President in 1950, when Roy was spokesman for the National Grange. Don said, "I believe farm broadcasting is one of the best professions in the world. As a farm broadcaster, I learned that I needed to not only talk **to** farmers, but also to talk **for** farmers." (Sounds like today's concept of "airing on the side of agriculture.") Don's advice to farm broadcasters today is to work closely with food companies in helping consumers to understand where their bacon and eggs come from. Those who know Don remember that he had a passion for golf, but he gave up the sport when he was 95. He admits to still having a putter and practices hitting the golf ball into a cup. Don is one of NAFB's legends who contributed much to farm broadcasting as a network broadcaster, and his golden voice still remains after decades of telling the story of agriculture to listeners nationwide. He enjoys reading about farm broadcasting colleagues, old and new, through this newsletter.

SIXTH GENERATION RANCHER AND FARM BROADCASTER – Lane Nordlund is the Associate Ag Director at the Northern Ag Network based in Billings, MT. The network provides 22 different daily radio shows on 60 radio stations and two HD TV programs on 12 TV stations. Lane is the sixth generation of his family to raise cattle on their ranch on the Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation as well as off the reservation near Dodson, MT. Lane went to school two hours south of the ranch in Lewistown, MT. He was very active in sports, rodeo and student leadership organizations. Above all, agricultural education, FFA, and his family positively influenced him to take the path he is on today. Growing up, it was easy for Lane to get into the habits of any rancher: rising early, doing chores, listening to the morning ag report in the feed truck, and racing home to watch more ag news on TV. The voices of farm broadcasters like **Russell Nemetz**, **Taylor Brown**, **Rick Haines**, and **Evan Slack** were an essential part of his family's livelihood. These ag reports fueled his love for the industry. Because of his passion and love for agriculture, Lane



was elected as the Montana FFA State President in the spring of his senior year of high school. As he entered his freshman year that fall at Montana State University (MSU)-Bozeman, Lane's knowledge and passion for agriculture really began to grow. He majored in Agricultural Education-Relations.



Lane Nordland interviews John Grade with the Montana Stockgrowers Association. Cameraman is Lane's colleague, Russell Nemetz. When asked why he became a farm broadcaster Lane says, "It's because my family is too broke for me to come home and ranch!" He explains, "Like many involved in agriculture, young people have to find their own way and have a separate career before jumping head first into farming or ranching." Lane adds, "My passion is ag; I want to ranch and I want to educate and inform others about it. Right now, farm broadcasting is a perfect fit." Referring to his time in college, Lane said joining the Alpha Gamma Rho (AGR) Fraternity at MSU was a hard decision for him to make, but also he says, it has been one of the best decisions he has ever made. Not just because he surrounded himself with fellow young ag leaders, but it helped get him to where he is today. Lane explains, "Taylor Brown owns Northern Ag Network. He and I both have a very similar background." Further elaborating, Lane says, "Taylor and I both graduated from the same high school, we were FFA state officers, and

were AGRs at MSU." He adds, "People also think we look alike!" However, it was Lane's leadership in ag and involvement in AGR that caught Taylor Brown's eye. During Lane's last semester at MSU, he interned with Northern Ag Network under the guidance of his now co-worker and friend, Russell Nemetz. "Russell has not only helped teach and guide me in my early career," Lane says, "he is a true friend that cares as much for me as he does for the industry he represents." Lane's start with Northern Ag was a jump off the deep end of the pool that is farm broadcasting. "It was trial by fire, but, in the end, I have learned and continued to learn about an industry I was lucky enough to find a career in." Lane concludes, "I could not be successful in this position on TV and radio if it were not for all the farm broadcasters and industry leaders that have taken me under their wings from across the nation. This is such a fantastic career and I learn something new each day. It is now my goal to ranch and broadcast for the rest of my life and to do my part in being a voice and leader for agriculture."



FOUNDING FATHERS – The founding fathers of the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network include **Curt Lancaster**, seated, and left to right standing, **Gene Hall**, **Vernie Glasson**, Texas Farm Bureau Chief Operating Officer, and **Tom Nicolette**. Gene said, "Vernie's support was critical when Curt and I launched this thing in 2001, and Tom joined soon after. We are tickled at what it's become. Vernie and Curt will be retiring this year. Tom and I will try to keep it going."



LEADERSHIP NAFB 2016 – “I’m one of the lucky few selected to attend *Leadership NAFB 2016* prior to the NAFB Washington Watch event in April,” reports **Carah Hart** (Red River Farm Network, Grand Forks, ND). In two days, a group of seven broadcasters shared an open dialogue about what it’s like to be a leader in the workplace, focusing on the power of vulnerability, articulating a vision and good communication. “I walked away from the weekend with a deeper appreciation of the others in our group and the resources available to all members,” Carah said. “It’s been more than two months since the *Leadership NAFB* program wrapped up in Washington DC,” she added. “I think about the power of vulnerability and the role it plays in our workplace almost daily. If you’re looking for a good read, check out *Daring Greatly*. Author of the book, **Brene Brown**, notes that it’s important to let ourselves be seen. When we let ourselves be seen in our workplace, community and agriculture, we allow ourselves and others to experience joy, creativity, belonging and love. If you’re not into books, I encourage you to take 20 minutes of your day to watch or listen to [‘The Power of Vulnerability.’](#)” The end of August will mark her first year with the Red River Farm Network. “It’s been a great year of personal and professional

growth. Surrounded by a team of past NAFB presidents and a warm community, I've been learning more about what it takes to be a good leader and to serve others. I've also been learning lots about agriculture in the upper Northern Plains. Each day at RRFN, the network offers something different. I can spend the morning with a farmer planting sugar beets or soybeans and cover a feedlot tour in the afternoon. The next day, I may be interviewing Senate Ag Committee Ranking Member **Debbie Stabenow** at *Washington Watch* or reporting from the South Dakota FFA Convention. It's hard work, but also lots of fun."



TERRY HENNE CELEBRATES 45 YEARS AT WSGW – More than 100 people attended a noon party on June 21 to honor Terry Henne's tenure at WSGW (Saginaw, MI). His wife and daughter were responsible for planning and executing the party on the deck at Radio Centre with the help of WGSW General Manager **Shannone Dunlap**. The radio family as well as his family brought dishes to pass, grilled burgers, brats, and desserts, plus a huge cake. Clients who advertised with Terry all the way back to 1971 and are still in business today also attended the party. Terry said, "It was a complete surprise to me! This event took over a month to put together. Everyone pulled it off without a hitch. Even Mother Nature cooperated!" Forty-five years ago, he graduated on June 20 from Michigan State University with a B.S. in television and radio communications and started the next morning at WSGW "I'm still there. Guess I couldn't find a job anywhere else," he adds modestly.



Responsible for planning this grand event were, from left to right, Terry's mom, his daughter Stacy, his wife Sharon and his granddaughter Alexis.



WE WANT YOUR NEWS – Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at larryaquinn@outlook.com 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***.