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by Larry A. Quinn



AGRICULTURE FLOAT IN 2018 ROSE BOWL PARADE – *Ag Phd*, a regular feature carried on *RFD-TV*, has officially announced the company's first-ever float in the 2018 Tournament of Roses® Parade. Their float, *Salute to Farmers*, brings a whole new meaning to *Making a Difference*. "RFD-TV is proud to support the *Ag Phd* float in the Rose Parade in every way possible," said **Patrick Gottsch**, Founder & President of RFD-TV. "If there is one thing that unites all rural America and agriculture, it's that we have to do a better job of communicating and connecting with urban folks. The *Ag Phd* float will be a great step forward in that effort, and we congratulate the Hefty family for this terrific initiative. What a great way to kick off the new year." Patrick continued, "RFD-TV will feature the *Ag Phd* float and its riders heavily in our pre-show broadcast prior to the Rose Parade at 9:30 a.m. ET, 8:30 a.m. CT. In addition, we will have a 'live' camera on the float as it goes down the parade route. The Rose Parade will be 'live' and in HD on *RFD-TV* with limited commercial interruptions, showing all the great floats, bands, and equestrian groups." As explained on *Ag Phd* website, "Who makes more of a difference than farmers? Without farmers and the food supply farmers produce, none of us would be

here. Farmers work tirelessly to feed our growing world, and they do a fantastic job. In the United States, for example, we have the healthiest, most abundant, safest, and cheapest food supply in the world! And that's all thanks to farmers!" The website feature adds, "When you ask a non-farmer what they think about agriculture, you might hear words like GMOs, BioTech, food safety, water quality, genetics, big equipment, GPS, traits, and soil. While all those things play a role in modern farming, the strength of agriculture has always been, and I expect it will always be, the people." In further description of the float, the website notes, "From everything we've been told, there has never been a Rose Parade float with more riders than what the *Ag PhD Salute to Farmers* float will have, 100. Yes, 100 riders on a float is a lot, but that's the whole point. What a better way to show that modern agriculture is still about great people than to have 100 amazing farmers from across the country? The farmers on the float have worked with us at *Ag PhD* over the years to help us conduct research on a large scale so we can continue to do our job better." The website explains, "At *Ag PhD*, our goal is always to give great agronomy advice to farmers around the world so farmers can improve yields profitably, while at the same time improving the land and the environment. The *Ag PhD Salute to Farmers* float will be one of just 18 commercial floats in the parade, so it was an honor for this float and the theme to be chosen. As always, the Rose Parade will be an incredible spectacle of bands, equestrian entries, commercial and non-commercial floats, along with millions of live plants and flowers." The *Ag PhD* float will be approximately 110 feet long and 18 feet wide, towering over 30 feet high at its peak. For more information, go to: <http://www.agphd.com/rose-parade-2018/>.



JIM DEWEY PLAYS KRIS KRINGLE – Farm Director **Jim Dewey** (WTAD, Quincy, IL) will be playing the role of **Kris Kringle**, aka **Santa Claus**, in the Studio 57 production of *Miracle on 34th Street*.

The production will be done in a radio broadcast-style based on a script that was used on radio in the 1940s. The script for this production was adapted by **Clark A. Cruikshank** who is also voicing several roles. The production is being directed by **Frank Elmore** who also is reading a couple of voices. Cruikshank and Elmore are producing *Miracle on 34th Street* as part of a planned series of radio-style plays at Greater Days restaurant on Main Street in Hannibal, MO. **Jim Dewey** has been a broadcaster for nearly 34 years — the last 31 in the Hannibal, MO/Quincy, IL market. He has a BS in theatre arts from Truman State University and an MA in dramatic arts from Emporia State University. Jim has been a member of Hannibal Community Theatre and has performed with Quincy Community Theatre and Hannibal LaGrange University Theatre Department. Other voices in the production include **Kristie** and **Maddie Bradshaw** as Doris and Susan Walker and **Patrick Hedges** as Fred Gailey, along with supporting players **Kirsten Hildahl-Dewey**, **Emily Lennox**, **Bob Yapp**, and **Pat Yapp**. There will be a total of four performances, two on each of two consecutive Sundays, December 10 and 17. Dinner will be served at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., and the show starts at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Prices: \$25 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. To reserve tickets, call Greater Days restaurant (573) 221-6900.



ART SECHREST IS PRESENTED TWO NAFB PRESIDENT'S AWARDS – NAFB Emeritus Member and 1984 NAFB President, **Art Sechrest** (Bloomington, IL), center, is presented his award by 2017 President **Max Armstrong**, left, and 1999 NAFB President **Mike Adams**. Mike presented the 1999 award earlier when Mike was President. Both Max and Mike had close professional relationships with Art. Max said, “Art was working for WJBC (Bloomington, IL) when he suffered a stroke more than 20 years ago. Before WJBC, he was Radio-TV Director for the Illinois Farm Bureau. That’s

where he was when he hired me out of Purdue University in 1975. I worked with Art 2 ½ years before going to WGN Radio-TV in Chicago.” Max reminded, “Art brought me to my first NAFB meeting 42 years ago. I asked long-time friend **Mike Perrine** and past president **Mike Adams** to join me in presenting the President’s Award to Art. They both have also known him for many years.” They traveled to Normal, IL, to the home that Art shares with his daughter, **Shawn**, for the presentation. Max announced Art’s award earlier as he presided over the President’s Banquet on the final night of the NAFB Convention.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER BEGAN BROADCASTING CAREER IN WISCONSIN – Bobbi Jo Bergum, a junior at Purdue University and 2017 recipient of an NAFB scholarship, began her farm broadcasting journey in Wisconsin when she was a freshman in college, working for the *Wisconsin Farm Report* under Farm Director **Pam Jahnke**. Pam was a familiar voice in her home, being the farm broadcaster her former dairy farming parents still listened to regularly. Even though the southern Wisconsin farm was sold when she was nine years old, Bobbi Jo continued



to be involved in 4-H and FFA with her equine projects and was encouraged by her farming community to consider a career that combined her interests in agriculture and communication. After being broken in by covering the Wisconsin State FFA Convention, Bobbi Jo knew she had found her passion and career path. During her six-month employment, she interviewed the Governor of Wisconsin and Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack**, among many farmers, agriculturalists, dignitaries, and researchers. She also learned how to do market and news reports during the morning, midday, and close, often starting her day at 2:00 a.m. and taking her “afternoon nap” before the sun rose. Upon completion, Bobbi Jo continued to pursue her BS in agricultural communications at Purdue University, where she joined the



Purdue Equestrian Team and Sigma Alpha. She began a video series, *The Rural Report*, in her spare time that discusses agricultural topics on campus. This was her baptism into television. The summer following her sophomore year, she interned with the field reporting team at C-SPAN in Washington, DC, aiding the crew in equipment set-up, operation and take down. There she met senators, cabinet members, and news personalities. She discovered a love for television and the buzz of the Hill, but whenever she got a chance, she left the city for a weekend on her friend's dairy farm in Maryland. Before returning to school, Bobbi Jo enlisted in the Indiana National Guard and will be shipping out to Basic Training soon. In

the meantime, she is taking radio, television and writing courses for her degree, caring for her two horses near campus, involved in extracurriculars, and attending military drill weekends. Her hope is to one day join the ranks of the farm broadcasters she has come to know and admire.

HOOSIER AG TODAY AWARDS 4-H SCHOLARSHIP

– For the 12th consecutive year, *Hoosier Ag Today* (Zionsville, IN) has awarded a scholarship to a high achieving Indiana 4-H member for her/his communication skills, reports HAT President **Gary Truitt**. Presented at the Scholarship Recognition Luncheon at the 2017 Indiana 4-H Congress, the award was made to **Crystal Xue** of Hamilton County. She is a senior at Carmel High School who plans a career in public service. Crystal was the 2016 Public



Speaking Achievement Award winner in Hamilton County and was the Professional Persuasive Presentation Sweepstakes winner at the 2016 Indiana State Fair. She said, “Good communication skills, both oral and written, are vital in both one’s personal and professional lives.” She said her 4-H experience has given her the chance to develop communication skills and the self-confidence to use them. “She is a very impressive young woman who has the talent and drive to do great things,” Gary said. Forty-two 4-Hers received scholarships during the program, held October 14 at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

COOPER ATTENDS EUROPEAN LIVESTOCK SUMMIT – Gary Cooper (AgNet Media, Ocala, FL) attended the 26th Annual “Sommet de l’Elevage” in Clermont-Ferrand, France, an event that has become one of the largest livestock shows in the world. Translated from French, it’s the Livestock Summit, and it’s held there at its permanent facility early each October. This year’s three-day Sommet involved more than 93,000 visitors from 32 countries, nearly 1,500 vendor exhibits, and more than 2,000 live animals on display. There were three days of off-location tours to choose from involving farms, ranches, research facilities, dairies and a lot more. Gary said, “The show brings together a global mix of livestock interests to help introduce new products and ideas and to foster trade among both developed and underdeveloped countries.” He continued, “I first attended the event last year at the invitation of an international colleague and friend from the local area, a well-known French farm journalist, **Dominique Diogon**, who focuses on the agriculture news beat for regional newspaper *La Montagne* based in the Sommet’s host city.” Gary emphasized, “Sommet officials confirmed last year that I was the first ever U.S. farm journalist they knew to attend the event, and I was amazed this event does not even appear to be on the radar of the U.S. livestock industry.” Gary added, “In this area of France, they are very fond of Americans and are not shy to share it. My presence there received a good deal of attention, from producers, exhibitors, show organizers and even top-level agriculture officials in France. Sommet officials for the first time formally invested in efforts to invite more involvement from North America targeting U.S. and Canadian interests to attend and participate.” This year, a top French government ag official invited Gary to bring U.S. producer leaders with him next year. She offered to help set up meetings with their French counterparts. After two years attending the event, Gary finds it to be both newsworthy and groundbreaking for farm broadcasting.

Gary Cooper meets with French Ministry of Agriculture, Agrifood and Forestry official **Catherine Geslain-Laneelle**, who is General Director for Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises.



Gary hopes this article and other communication this year will help get the word out so a modest group of farm media can join him and top level U.S. cattle leaders, too, at the next summit. “I think it would be a grand statement here at home for farm broadcasters to help open doors for producer-to-producer talks that could lead to more business relationships between our countries. I hope to take them up on their offer at the 2018 event.” On the media side, more than 200 press people attended this year, 40 of them from 22 other countries outside of France. “Europeans, producers and the public alike, adore, appreciate and respect their farm journalists a great deal more it seems.” Gary continues, “The Sommet de l’Elevage is hard to compare to any other show of its kind, anywhere that I know of. This year, the U.S. Livestock Export Association, represented by immediate past president **Renee Toussant-Strickland** from Florida, became the first-ever exhibitor from the U.S. to participate. She shared in my astonishment at the potential the event offers to make so many global trade contacts in one place at one time. Sommet officials seem more than sincere in their hopes that more of our producers will make the trip next year. Strickland is on the program to speak at the upcoming Cattlemen’s College during the NCBA Annual Convention coming up in Phoenix in late January.” Key facts Gary summarized, “French cattle producers share many of the same family farming concerns as do their counterparts in the U.S. Most of them want to stay on the land and pass it down to their heirs to stay in farm production, but they, too, are challenged to do so and continue the family farm profitably. The Sommet involves so much more than can be shared here, including three days of multiple farm and ranch tours to choose from, and a livestock competition featuring a different breed each year. This year, the Limousin was the competition breed, and it was a packed house of thousands in the special arena when the finals of that competition were announced.”



Gary concluded, “If you’re interested in learning more and hearing audio from the Sommet’s International Director, **Benoit Delaloy**, simply type the word “Sommet” into the search line at www.SoutheastAgNet.com, and listen in to the post I did with him last year, and other news items and interviews in the archives. He talks about the agricultural history of the region, the event, the history and appreciation the French people have for Americans in that region, and a lot more. It’s worth a listen I promise. Anyone with questions can call me directly at 352-895-0414.”

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*.