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by Larry A. Quinn

**AG MEDIA DEGREE LED TO NAFB PRESIDENT'S CAREER -- Lorrie Boyer**

(KSIR, Fort Morgan, Colorado) started her career in ag media right out of college in 1996 with a degree in technical journalism, specializing in agriculture. She started as a writer for the *Ag Journal* in La Junta, Colorado. In the meantime, her mom had told her several times that she needed to be in radio. One day, as Lorrie was listening to a local radio station in Lamar, Colorado, she heard an ad saying they were looking for an on-air assistant. After seven months of commuting from McClave to La Junta, and after working very late



into the night, she decided to apply. As it turns out, they also were looking for an agriculture news reporter, although not aggressively pursuing anyone. Lorrie was hired as the ag reporter and on-air assistant, performing both duties successfully. Lorrie's career path has led to opportunities with different types of projects on and off the air, developing and honing her skill sets in radio broadcasting. During her time at KLMR, she did ag reporting in addition to a mid-day show and, later, a mid-morning show. She also hosted *Swap Shop* along with doing live remotes and other various programming tasks. After four years at KLMR, she accepted an offer at KWAY, where she spent the next five years building their ag news department from scratch. During this time, a couple from Dallas, Texas, became the owners of KWAY and brought big, fresh ideas with them. "It was **Bob Delancey** who really taught me how to produce high-production commercials, how to be an on-air personality, and how to use the personality to really connect with listeners." She continued to do the ag and market reporting but also learned the art of entertaining listeners while running the mid-morning show there. Among her career goals was to start an ag news

network, but she did not have a timeline for when that would happen. After the birth of her second son, the time came. She returned to KWAY on a part-time basis and started the *Colorado Ag News Network*. Her desire to work and be home with the baby turned into creating a website with one hand while feeding him with the other. During this time, the previous owners of KWAY did consulting work with the owner of KSIR Radio in Fort Morgan, Colorado; through this connection, Lorrie started working on a part-time basis for KSIR. She helped run a morning show using tie-line technology and sent recorded ag news reports electronically while still living in Lamar. As staff changed at KSIR, she was offered an opportunity to move to northeast Colorado to take over the ag news department and to be the program director. Lorrie spent the next five years in these positions. After a short break from radio to work on her master's degree in business, she merged the *Colorado Ag News Network* into *BARN Media* and then returned to KSIR as the farm news director and KSIR morning show host, where she remains today. Lorrie runs the KSIR Morning Show weekdays and also is the farm news director, where she produces daily ag newscasts and market reports. She also conducts long-form and short-form interviews with national, state, and local ag organizations and representatives for the morning and noon shows on KSIR. Lorrie conducts live "on-farm" remotes throughout northeast Colorado, writes a blog, and is responsible for the ag social media posts. As a longtime broadcaster and member of NAFB, she decided six years ago to get involved in leadership as a way to learn more about the association, grow as a person and broadcaster, and give back to the organization. She served as South Region Vice President for three years. She then was elected National Vice President, served as President-Elect, and assumed the position of National NAFB President as of January 1, 2019. "The things I have enjoyed most during my time on the board are being a part of new programs, such as the Mentor Program, now the Member Network, and learning to have effective and meaningful conversations that include a multitude of opinions and perspectives. It has been fun to learn about agriculture in other parts of the U.S. while traveling for meetings representing NAFB."



### **CLEVAN HAD NO PLANS FOR RADIO CAREER**

– “To be honest, my plan in life after high school was never to be in radio; I hated talking in front of people, but here we are,” said new NAFB member **Travis Cleven** (WTAQ/DEZ, Green Bay, Wisconsin). Travis grew up in Morrison, Wisconsin, where there are 200 people. “In our town we have a church, an herb shop, a funeral home, a bar, a gas station, and an RV salesman. All of the essentials,” he said. “I was born and raised on my parents’ custom calf raising business, **Quiet Crest Farm** (pictured). The farm was started in 1995, a year after I was born. We grew from nothing to now raising more than 4,100 calves for dairy

farms in our area. This is what I grew up with, and this was all I really knew. I also worked down the road at Reynders Dairy, LLC, milking cows. You could say agriculture has been in my blood from day one. Along with all the experiences from the farm, I was very involved in the Morrison 4-H Club throughout grade school and high school.” Travis also showed pigs and steers at the Brown County Fair, which was the best part about summer for him. “I miss showing at the fair so much. After graduating high school, I really had no idea what I wanted to do. So, of course, I jumped into the first job that would take me, which was being an electrician. Word to the wise, don't be an electrician if you are afraid of being shocked. That was me.” His foreman asked him one day, "Hey Travis, do you hate this job?" He answered, "Is it that obvious?" He went on to tell Travis to quit because he was young and had a lot of time to figure things out. “He said that I shouldn't be stuck in a job that I wake up every morning hating. So, he set me up with an adviser at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. I talked with the adviser and told them how I loved to edit video, DJ, and things like that. I then decided to go to school for digital media, and two years later I graduated with my associate degree in the field.” During his last semester, Travis needed an internship. “I just emailed a radio station and asked if they did internships; and then I got the internship within a week or so. I was so excited to start working there, even if it was unpaid. My first day, they told me that I was going to be on-air and just to talk loud and not swear. I had no experience on-air, and it was terrible!” Fast-forward and Travis ended up being a full-time morning show co-host for 95.9 KISS FM, WKSZ (a Top 40 Station) for about three years. In that time period, he also did the night show for six months; and after that, he became a co-host/producer for the morning show. After the morning show ran its course, he had to find something else to do and got the opportunity to go back to school online through the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and work at Y100 WNCY (a Country Station) part-time. “This is when I



was led to the agriculture side of radio. I had never been a reporter before, so I was nervous about it. But at the same time, even when doing the morning show, I had to come up with stories and topics to talk about. The opportunity came up to be the agricultural director for Midwest Communications because **Mike Austin** was retiring from radio. I jumped at the opportunity to learn from someone like Mike because he is one of the best in the business, and he knew his stuff! This was perfect for me because it's radio, which I love, and it's also agriculture. Now, I do the ag reports covering six different stations; WTAQ, WNCY, WGEE, WSAU, WHBL, and WDEZ. I can't ask for anything better. I am very lucky and excited to learn more and meet more people in the business."



**VAAGEN STARTS AS COUNTRY DJ** – “I started my radio career in the heart of wheat country, but not in agriculture news,” said **Glenn Vaagen** (Washington Ag Network, Pasco, Washington). “I got my first radio job in at a country station in Colfax, Washington, not too far from both Washington State University and the University of Idaho. At first, I planned to be the next big country DJ; but soon after starting, I was bitten by the news bug. It was in Colfax that I helped launch my first news product: a three-hour morning news program on KMAX-AM. After years on the Palouse, my family and I moved to Spokane, Washington, where I worked as the morning producer for KXLY-AM for a number of years. After that, my family and I relocated to Bend, Oregon, where I helped launch a second news product, KBNW-AM. I



served as the program director in central Oregon for six years, two of which I also served as the news director. I have always been passionate about providing news, information, interviews, soundbites, and more to listeners, primarily on the news talk format.” In 2014, an opportunity presented itself in Pasco, Washington, where Cherry Creek Radio was looking to launch a network focused exclusively on agricultural news. “In December 2014, I became the program director and had the opportunity to launch a third news product. However, agriculture was a completely different animal for me (pardon the pun). My mother’s side of the family raised Hereford cattle in northeast Washington, while my dad’s side operated a lumber mill in my hometown. Despite that background, I was not familiar with the farming lifestyle. Thanks to the great people across Washington and Oregon, I was able to learn enough to launch the *Washington Ag Network* in March 2015. And after that, in October 2015, we launched *Northwest Ag Today*, an hour-long news program focused on agriculture news and issues across the region and across the country. Over the past four years, I’ve had the chance to meet many great people in the ag community, from researchers at Washington State and Oregon State, to commodity leaders, to state and congressional leaders, and even Ag Secretary **Sonny Perdue** when he visited our region during the summer of 2018. The best part of doing ag news is the opportunity to learn exciting new details about the more than 300 commodities grown in the Northwest and to interact with some of the best people around.” Glenn is married with four children. His family lives in the Tri-Cities area of Washington.

## **ROOT CREATES NEW WEEKEND SHOW –**

**Ken Root** (Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network, Dyersville, Iowa) has started a new weekend radio show. He says it is a half hour that is a little lighter than weekday fare and has some humor and some inspiration. On the week that Judge **Brett Kavanaugh** was being grilled by the Senate Judiciary Committee, Ken's song of the week was *I Like Beer* by **Tom T. Hall**. Ken wrapped his Christmas show around old cowboy stars singing Christmas songs. **Gene Autry**, a native of Ken's home state of Oklahoma, was the man who popularized *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*; and **Roy Rogers** closed the show. His new weekend show includes plenty of agricultural information. Ken interviewed **Anna Hastert** and **Dustin Hoffman** about their biggest news story of the week for the network. The show is also turned into a podcast. You can find it as *Iowa Weekend Ag Matters* on *Podbean* and *iTunes*.





## RETIRED AG JOURNALIST JERRY LACKEY CONTINUES TO WRITE

– “I retired from the *San Angelo Standard-Times* and *Abilene Reporter-News* as agriculture editor emeritus in June 2018 and from *Voice of Southwest Agriculture* Radio Network in 2010.” On his 76th birthday in August, **Jerry Lackey** (Emeritus NAFB Member, San Angelo, Texas) agreed to “help out” at *Livestock Weekly*, a national newspaper known as the *Wall Street Journal* of the ranching industry. He is still there, working as “acting editor,” following several retirements. “It is kinda nice to have something constructive to do. After ten books, I was burned

out as an author and not so delighted spending time on the road at book signings.” Jerry has been a professional communicator for more than 50 years. For many of those years, his career as an agricultural journalist and farm broadcaster has run parallel. Following his official retirement, he continues to write for *Livestock Weekly*. Jerry was recognized by his peers in 2002 with the coveted *Oscar in Agriculture Award*; the honor saluted him for excellence in agricultural reporting during a lifetime career. In 2007, the Texas Farm Bureau recognized Jerry with the *Excellence in Agricultural Journalism* award. During the American Sheep Industry Association 2008 annual convention in Las Vegas, he received the coveted national *Shepherd's Voice Award*. Also, in 2008, Jerry was named *Man of the Year in Texas Agriculture* by the Texas County Agricultural Agents Association. He was given the *Meritorious Service in Communications Award* in 2011 by the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers. Jerry began his career at age 14, working for his hometown newspaper, the *Junction Eagle*. He later worked for *Ranch Magazine* as editor, *West Texas Business Journal* as publisher, *Livestock Weekly* as reporter, and *Cattleman Magazine* as field editor. His radio and television career spanned 25 years as farm broadcaster for KLST-TV and VSA Radio Network in San Angelo. During those years, he started the *Texas Agriculture Television Network* and produced a weekly 30-minute program that aired in Abilene, Midland, Odessa, Lubbock, Amarillo, San Angelo, and Waco, Texas; and Roswell, New Mexico. He has written 10 books, including five volumes of his *Homestead Series*. Jerry and his wife, **Dee**, have four grown daughters and eight grandchildren.



**GILL EARNS COMMUNICATOR AWARD** – “It has been an exciting ending to 2018 for the KASM Farm Department (Albany, Minnesota),” reports **Joe Gill**. In November, Joe received the *Agriculture Communicator of the Year Award* by the Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation. According to the Minnesota Farm Bureau website, this award is presented because an important mission of Farm Bureau is to inform the public about its policy positions and to tell agriculture’s story. Joe said he was honored to receive the award and is an advocate of farm organization membership, such as Farm Bureau, because they offer a voice to all in agriculture on a local, state and national level. “We all need to continue to be visible and vocal for agriculture as we move into the future,” he said. Joe has been at KASM Radio in Albany since 1999 and is only

their second farm broadcaster in the station’s history. He also current serves as West Region Vice President on the NAFB Board of Directors and supports many Minnesota commodity organizations. Joe has been an NAFB member for 6 years. “I truly treasure being a part of the NAFB family.” He also serves on the Stearns County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Joe helped to start his local FFA alumni chapter and is an active volunteer at his church. He and his wife, **Denise**, have two children: **Natalie** (age 11) and **Ben** (age 9).

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