2013 ANNUAL REPORT
by GLT General Manager Bruce Bergethon

Usually I have to grope for a theme for these year-in-review articles. Not this year. 2013 was all about change at GLT.

We made the most significant changes to our programming in two decades. We welcomed two new folks to the GLT staff, double the number of new hires in any average year. We eliminated a service that wasn’t serving many people; we bid farewell to a legacy event that had reached a point of diminishing returns. And we drafted a blueprint for the station’s next five years.

One thing that didn’t change was our commitment to serve you, our listeners and investors. While we recognize that some of the changes weren’t to everyone’s liking, the impulse driving all of them was increased community service and impact. The thought process that led to the decisions involved lots of input from listeners and stakeholders. Service and responsiveness – these are our first principles. We also remain appreciative of your dedicated support through these changing times. Thank you.

PROGRAMMING SERVICES AND STAFF

The transition to GLT’s new program lineup, “News and Ideas”, took effect in August, but was the result of five years of research and planning. Responding to majority sentiment from listeners for more NPR-style news and information programming, with a particular emphasis on local news and culture coverage, we replaced daytime jazz with On Point, Q with Jian Ghomeshi, Here and Now, and GLT’s Sound Ideas. The latter program represented an ambitious escalation of the strengths of our local news gathering team. Read more about Sound Ideas on page 7.

It was a banner year of awards for the GLT newsroom. In March, we earned seven commendations from the Illinois Associated Press (AP), including first place awards for Best News Series (for a five-part report on the future of agriculture), Best Reporter (Charlie Schlenker, for the sixth time), and Outstanding News Operation overall. In April we received four regional Edward R. Murrow citations from the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA), the most ever in our history. GLT coverage of the school shooting at NCHS in September 2012 was honored both by the RTDNA, and later in the year, by the Public Radio News Directors Association.

One of the Murrow Award winners was reporter Daniel Hajek, who worked for GLT while an ISU student, and as a full time staffer for a good part of fiscal year 2013. In May, Hajek was hired away from GLT by NPR West – the Los Angeles production facilities for the national network. We knew Danny was talented, but jumping from a small market like ours to the halls of NPR is a pretty dramatic indication of the caliber of his potential. We’re proud to say “we knew him when.”

After Danny left, we initiated a search for a full-time news reporter to augment the already strong GLT newsroom, and to contribute material to Sound Ideas. In October, we hired another strong reporter with a national reputation – Judy Valente. Valente has reported for the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and has been a producer for WBEZ and PBS. We’re excited to add her background in religion, ethics and cultural reporting to the existing strengths of the newsroom.

We also hired a new receptionist/business manager in mid-year. You may have encountered the friendly voice of Jeremy Schultz if you’ve called GLT in the last few months; if you’re a business sponsor or a listeners-supporter, he’s also been handling your money and helping GLT management keep track of it. Jeremy is a recent ISU graduate, and the living refutation of the stereotype that technical writers and librarians are introverted.
FINANCES AND PLANNING

Sustainability, in the broadest sense, was much on our minds in 2013. Last year in this report, I mentioned our concern, shared with many fellow public broadcasters, about the apparent leveling-off of audience growth to traditional radio. Similarly, there has been a decline in the numbers of contributors, both individuals and businesses, to public stations. Our programming format changes were fueled, in part, by such considerations, the hope being that we will see increased listening and contributions after an initial adjustment. Our underwriting support in 2013 was down 10%, and fewer individual donors generously contributed more, almost matching our fund drive total dollars for the prior year. While we are grateful to those supporters, this is a worrisome and continuing pattern that we cannot allow to continue without becoming unsustainable in the conventional business sense.

In this context, we are encouraged by the continued, significant support of Illinois State University and the extraordinary generosity of many local listeners and business supporters. The accompanying charts give a 20-year snapshot of the way in which the pieces of our financial pie have shifted over the years, with the most dramatic growth coming from local sources.

This year we also finalized our five year strategic plan update, with the help of The Hile Group. The plan focuses on five goals: 1) implementation of a programming shift; 2) implementation of internal efficiencies based on our 2012 capacity analysis; 3) improvement of our financial circumstances and the establishment of a sufficient operating reserve; 4) expansion of the GLT audience through effective marketing; and 5) enhanced attention to partnerships and community relationships.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Helping us with many of the goals outlined in our strategic plan is a group of community volunteers called the GLT Friends Council. Ably chaired by Brad Glenn, the Council took an active part this year in the success of several signature events, including Jazz Cabaret and Radio Faces. Toward the end of the year, we added a half dozen new members to Council, and we look forward to new levels of advocacy and financial enhancement in the years ahead.

In addition to Radio Faces (with Audie Cornish), GLT Night at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Trivia Night, and Jazz Cabaret were excellent as both fun and fund raising events. The annual GLT Summer Concert was, as always, well-attended, and we appreciate the multiple sponsors (see photos on pages 8-9) that make that event free to the public.

Though we made money in the liquidation of a multi-year inventory at this year’s Recycled Music Sale, we had decided after 2012’s RMS that 2013 would be the last year for the sale. The Sale had always been extremely labor-intensive, as myriad volunteers and GLT staff will attest, and the net receipts have been dropping steadily for the last five years. We felt it had finally passed the point of diminishing returns - a difficult decision because of the event’s long tradition and overall (as Brian Wilson would say) “Good Vibrations.” See page 6 for some of our favorite photos.

Another difficult decision we made this year was to abandon our experiment with Hybrid Digital (HD) radio. When we signed on the HD channels in 2007, it was with the intention of multiplying our streams of programming, with an all-blues and all-news channel. But HD radio has really never caught on with the public. In our 2010 audience research, HD usage by our audience was lower than 10%, while online listening to wglt.org was over 30%. Those trends continued in 2011 and 2012, while in early 2013 repairs to our HD digital transmission equipment exceeded $20,000 within a few months. With the probability of ongoing maintenance costs and the reality of extremely limited service provided by the HD channels, we made the call that discontinuing HD service was the most responsible stewardship of limited (and listener-generated) resources.

Decisions are always more difficult when they involve limited resources, and genuine questions of service. One of the satisfactions of working for constituents like you is that we are acutely aware of your passions about our service,
as we remain continuously grateful for your support. This year, we made some changes that we think will serve you better in the decade ahead, and we are always glad to hear from you about the wisdom of those changes. Feel free to contact me at bruce@wglt.org.

Thank you

Recycled Music Sale: Good Vibrations for a lot of years - thanks.

A One-Hour Aural Snapshot of Central Illinois
By GLT News Director Willis Kern

For several years, my award-winning colleagues have produced excellent sound-rich stories on important central Illinois issues and cultural goings-on, and we’ve conducted provocative interviews with newsmakers and interesting people. It’s been clear based on feedback from listeners and financial supporters that you’ve wanted more. Now, with GLT’s Sound Ideas every weekday from 11:00 am-Noon, that’s just what you get.

A one-hour daily news magazine show gives us the opportunity to expand on the excellence you’ve expected for a long time. Our daily 5 minute depth reports, features and interviews can finally be “unpacked”, giving us the freedom to explore a topic for 8 to 10 minutes. There are regular jazz, blues and acoustic music features, produced by GLT staffers who are experts in the genres.

“We were a leg up on producing a show like this because we were already producing a lot of interesting, entertaining programs – some of which were podcast only and never heard on-air,” said GLT Program Director and show host Mike McCurdy. “Sound Ideas gives some of these pieces the air time they deserve. We’ve also upgraded our phone system to allow for live listener participation, and encourage social media input.”

There’s a regular series on finance called “Sound Money.” Jon Norton talks with local record store owners for the series “What’s on Your Turntable” and Judy Valente visits out-of-the-way destinations called “Unknown Illinois.” Jim Browne regularly gets in the kitchen with area chefs for “Dishing It Up”; Laura Kennedy’s “Animal House” focuses on pet care; and Charlie Schlenker produces “McHistory”, with McLean County Museum of History staff reading letters from their archives.

If you haven’t already, we hope you’ll give Sound Ideas a listen. We think you’ll like what you hear.
GLT Event Sponsors - 2013

GLT Jazz Cabaret with Matt Belsante: Cortese Foot & Ankle Clinic

GLT Summer Concert: Ronda Glenn Law Offices Spec Around Town Eastland Chiropractic and Wellness Center Fox & Hounds Day Spa

GLT Night at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival: Busey Bank

Sweet Corn Blues Festival Stage: CEFCU

GLT Radio Faces with Audie Cornish COUNTRY Financial

And a special thank you to Ralph Weisheit, who continues to serve as the official GLT photographer. Most of the photos in this Report and many at our website have been expertly taken by Ralph.
GLT Major Donors 2013

To the GLT major donors acknowledged here and to everyone else who contributes what they can, thank you for your thoughtful generosity and sustaining friendship.

All major contributors, from GLT Day Sponsor to GLT Legacy Donor, have the opportunity to create a personal on-air announcement. We’ve included some quotes taken from those announcements which open with, “Today’s programming is made possible by …”

GLT Legacy Donors
Thank you for helping to sustain the future of quality public radio in central Illinois by investing in one of the GLT endowments: the WGLT Future Fund; the Dr. Robert & Marilyn Sutherland Endowment for WGLT; or the Albert N. Attaway WGLT Endowment.

Anonymous (1)
The Attaway-Griffin Family

GLT Leaders Circle
Thank you for your significant contributions to GLT’s annual operating fund.

Directors ($1,500 plus):
W. Brad & Tonya Barker
Bruce Bergethon & Jo Porter
Michael & Eva DeVore
Mike Dolan
John Elterich & Karen Schmidt
Dennis Fox
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Rob McDade
John & Pamela Muirhead
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Janice Neuleib
Oliver Ngo
Paul & Kathy Packard
Ron Patterson

… in memory of her brother, Tim Emmons, on what would have been his 55th birthday. Tim’s love and support of public radio started at WGLT, where his influence is still felt today.

… in honor of the 16th birthday of a remarkable young man, their son Jonas. John and Karen are grateful to WGLT for keeping them well-informed and occasionally one step ahead of Jonas’ wit, humor and knowledge.

… celebrating their first 20 years of marriage and 21 years of supporting WGLT.

… honoring his darling wife Linda’s birthday and GLT’s service to our community.

Ben & Anne Paxton
Tarry & John Plattner
Kate Pole
John Pryor & Hannah Eisner
Tamarra Rennick
Pamela Rosa
William Semlak
Karyn Smith
Joe Strano & Janine Toth
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Barry & Marge Weaver
Gail & John Winkler
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GLT Day Sponsors ($365 a year)
Thank you for supporting GLT every day of the year.
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John Ringer & Cindy Ross-Ringer

To all GLT contributors, no matter how much you are able to give, thank you for your generous support of your public radio station.

We work very hard to include all 2013 GLT major donors in this acknowledgement, but due to press deadlines, we may have inadvertently left out some names. Please contact GLT Member Services with additions or corrections at 309-438-3581. Thanks.
Underwriter Spotlights

Over the years, we’ve spotlighted various businesses and organizations that provide financial support for the station as corporate underwriters. We’d like to identify those whose support spans decades. Make it a point to go into their business and say thanks.

The following list identifies additional businesses and organizations that have supported GLT financially in the past year.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
Adkins Pilates
Advanced Women’s Healthcare
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Beyond The Books Educational Foundation
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Kurt’s Autobody Repair Shop
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Mavidea Technology Group
McLean County Museum of History
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OSF St Joseph Medical Center
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Prairie Pride Coalition
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