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50
YEARS
1966-2016

2016 Annual Report

By GLT General Manager R.C. McBride

Let's say it one final time: Happy 50th, GLT! It was an unbelievably busy anniversary year, with much on which to reflect.

First, let's take another opportunity to celebrate Bruce Bergethon, GLT's boss since 1991. Bruce retired December 31, 2015, and went out with grace and a fantastic celebration at the Castle Theatre in January. It's important to note he hasn't left us entirely; Bruce continues to volunteer as host of Acousticity (8 p.m. Sundays) and as a member of the GLT Friends Council.

Without Bruce's contributions, GLT's commitment to local service would not exist as we know it. Without Ben Paxton, our first GM, it's fair to say WGLT would not exist at all.

Ben passed away on March 5 at the age of 88. Ben's efforts were key to founding the station in 1966, and he served as general manager until his retirement in 1991. I met Ben just a couple times, most recently at GLT's 50th anniversary broadcast in February. He was extremely generous; he seemed to know all about my 25-plus-year broadcasting career. I'll treasure that memory. Search for "Ben Paxton" on WGLT.org to find a number of stories about Ben, including the audio of a wonderful exchange between Ben and Bruce recorded for the 50th. Thanks, Ben, for all you did for GLT, Illinois State, and the Bloomington-Normal community.

Bruce's was not the only important retirement we saw in 2016. In May we said goodbye to two more local broadcast legends: one with an instantly recognizable voice, and another who worked diligently and capably behind the scenes to make sure others could be heard. Jim Browne with his booming baritone has been a staple on local radio and television for more than



Three GMs: RC McBride, Ben Paxton, Bruce Bergethon

40 years as a show host, newscaster and voiceover talent. Jim was GLT's Morning Edition host for more than a decade, and he even has a memorable stretch on TV as a Star Trek episode host ("Rusty Hammer." It's true.)

You might not recognize the name Mark Hill, but in his role as chief engineer, he kept WGLT (and student station WZND) on the air, FCC-compliant, and in all around solid working order since the 1980s. We're happy to report he's rejoined us in a part-time capacity.

In January, we added a new member to the development staff. Liz Larson joined us as business support manager, putting her journalism background and excellent people skills to use immediately. She's going to be a big part of GLT's financial stability moving forward.

You've heard some new voices on the air (or read their work online). We added a couple part-time special correspondents in 2016 - both well-known to followers of local news in McLean County. They are: Colleen Reynolds, who had a distinguished career as an award-winning journalist at WJBC; and social media guru and reporter Ryan Denham, who contributed to building the digital offerings at the Pantagraph, WJBC, and Illinois State.

These folks have teamed up with the very talented Willis Kern, Laura Kennedy, Charlie Schlenker, John Norton, and Judy Valente, and that crew continues to excel. They picked up five more Associated Press Awards: Best Newscast, Best Investigative Report, Best Use of Sound, and both first and second place in the Best Series or Documentary category. All total, GLT has won 95 AP awards in 17 years. Add those numbers to the 29 regional and 3 national Edward R. Murrow awards from RTNDA in 11 years, and you have an extremely impressive record.

GLT made some small changes to its programming lineup in May: adding the Illinois-focused The 21st with host Niala Boodhoo weekdays at 11 a.m., moving GLT's Sound Ideas to the more-accessible noon hour, and adding an hour of All Things Considered at 5 p.m. to replace PRI's The World. While some were sad to see The World go, this move helped further "right-size" our budget. Speaking of budgets, adding The 21st couldn't have been better timed, as they provided daily in-depth coverage of the ongoing drama in Springfield.

Our 50th anniversary provided an excellent opportunity to welcome back some old friends to the airwaves, and to engage the wider community in a service project. Mark Boon and Delta Frank both made return host appearances on special anniversary programs.

GLTrees was a partnership with a number of area businesses to plant ten trees at the Community Cancer



Center, commemorating a half century on the air.

You might have noticed we've tweaked our on-air slogan. We're now "Bloomington-Normal's public media." The reasoning here is pretty straightforward: tell people who you are, what you are, and where you are. The change was inspired by NPR president Jarl Mohn's "Spark" initiative, a nationwide effort to reinforce the brands of the network and its member stations. The project has been successful. NPR stations (including GLT) have seen a nice year-to-year bump in listenership and online & social traffic.



The station's financial picture is improving. We've made some tough budget decisions during the last two years, with most impacting national programming. There's no question we value NPR and other public radio programming; it is core to what and who we are. But GLT is a community station first and foremost, and as such, we'll always strive to protect our local coverage and personnel. I'm elated to report we're closer to our break-even point than we have been for several years, and I project we have a real shot at finishing FY17 in the black.

This year saw the introduction of the "Less Fund Drive, More GLT" concept.



Instead of longer appeals that interrupt programming, you're hearing short reminders to give during regular station breaks. The response from you has been overwhelmingly positive. We surpassed our goal in the spring and came very close to hitting the fall goal. It's our hope to keep this method rolling, but it all depends on whether we're able to raise the funds necessary to support our programming service.

Last fall we saw the completion of a quiet capital campaign raising \$75,000 to replace our aging antenna, thanks to just over 60 generous GLT supporters. It proved to be an extremely timely and essential campaign, as that aging antenna - which has outlived its expected lifetime by 10 years, in spite of two lightning strikes - took its last breath and is being replaced as I write this.

Another source of funding came from O'Brien Mitsubishi Motors and

the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, which awarded the station a generous \$10,000 grant to support the WGLT Public Radio Student Internship Program. This funding ensures we can continue offering high impact, valuable internship experiences in support of our commitment to providing the highest quality public media service possible.

Our always successful Radio Faces event shattered an all-time attendance record. More than five hundred people attended, representing a substantial increase from our previous record of 350. No doubt the timing of the event following a contentious election helped. But the real difference maker was On Point host and native son Tom Ashbrook. We know Tom enjoyed his homecoming and we loved having him. We're very proud Radio Faces has grown to become not only GLT's marquee event, but also one of the most anticipated annual events in our community.

This is a good time to remind you just how important are your contributions to WGLT. While funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting remains steady for now, state grant funding - once as high as \$100,000/yr - has disappeared. ISU's contribution remains steady, and that's really saying something, considering the budget challenges imposed by the state. But while these things stay flat, costs don't. Our development team of Carlo Robustelli, Pat Peterson, Linda



2016 Radio Faces guest Tom Ashbrook, with sister Cynthia and dad Dave

Healy, and the aforementioned Liz Larson continue to work wonders with both business supporters and individual donors.

However, in the end, the decisions you make - to give, to underwrite, to frequent our business supporters, to share our stories on social media, and simply to tell your friends - allow GLT to keep providing the exceptional public service in which we all take so much pride.

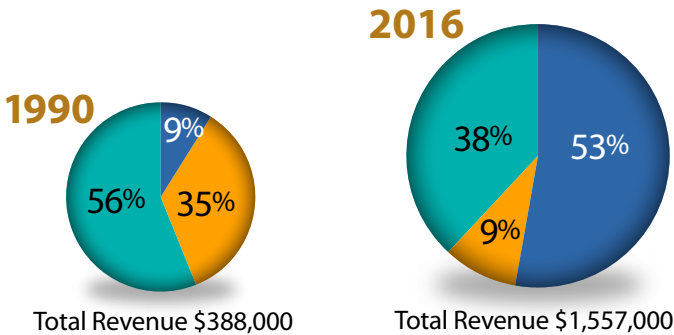
I've briefly mentioned both the election and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. It's far too early to sound any alarms, but don't be surprised if CPB funding starts being questioned again. The CPB provides about \$135,000 annually to GLT, and while I'm confident we could survive and serve without that grant, there's no doubt the quality of service would suffer. We might again find ourselves in a situation where we ask GLT users to step up to remind Congress just how valuable Public Media is to communities like ours.

I'd like to end on a positive personal note. Some of you know that Bruce Bergethon actively recruited me to be his replacement when I was at a point in my life where I assumed my media days were behind me. But he and School of Communication chair Dr. Steve Hunt kept after me until I took the job on an interim basis. I'm glad I did, and I'm proud to say I've now accepted the job permanently effective January 1, 2017.

It's unbelievably humbling to be just the third General Manager in the history of this radio station. Think about that: three GMs in fifty years! As they say, "no pressure."

Special thanks to our entire staff, but especially to the "direct reports" team of Carlo Robustelli, Mike McCurdy, Travis Meadors, and Nicole Welsh for making the transition a smooth one. Thanks as well to the GLT Friends Council, ably led by Rob McDade, for its continued support. Most importantly, and it's worth repeating: thank you to our users and contributors, without whom none of GLT's great work would be possible.

Rest assured GLT will always strive to keep our community engaged and informed through great reporting and insightful interviews, and by providing a platform for a broad spectrum of ideas and lending its voice to the voiceless. I can't wait to see what the future brings!



- Local support from listeners, businesses, and special events
- Illinois State University
- Federal & State Grants

All figures from fiscal year audits/Audit results available at wgl.org

Save the Date(s) - 2017

By GLT Events and Outreach Director Linda Healy

As we look ahead to 2017, we're already planning ways we can engage our community and interact with you. The calendar is filling up with opportunities for you to spend time with fellow GLT supporters and staff. GLT events are also an important source of funding for our on-air programming. When you attend a GLT event, you support GLT. Full details of all events can be found at wgl.org.

February/March Candidate Forum Live Broadcasts

6:00 - 7:00 pm *University Galleries, Uptown Normal Free, open to all*

Doors open at 5:30 for you to be part of the live audience during our series of municipal candidate forums. They'll be broadcast on GLT's Sound Ideas.

Find the complete schedule at wgl.org

Saturday, March 4th GLT Trivia Night

7:00 - 9:30 pm *Castle Theater, Bloomington \$200/team of 8 or \$25/person*

Teams of 8 compete for marvelous prizes and bragging rights. The competition is fierce, but it's also a silly and raucous night. Start putting your team together now! Tickets at wgl.org.

Thursday, May 18th Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me! bus trip to Chicago

11:30am - midnight *Chicago \$170/person*

Day trip to Chicago for a live taping of Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me! Ticket includes two meals, roundtrip bus fare, live taping, free time for shopping/sightseeing, and gratuities.

Tickets available at wgl.org.

Saturday, June 10th CEFCU presents the GLT Summer Concert & Festival

5:00 - 10:00 pm *Downtown Bloomington Free and family friendly*

Look for another stellar lineup for our annual outdoor music festival. Beer/wine garden, street dancing, festival food, and the lovely ambiance of the Museum Square lawn.

Saturday, September 9th GLT Bocce at the Village

1:00 - 6:00 pm *Normandy Village, Normal \$30/team of 2*

Grab a friend and sign up a 2-person team (all ages welcome) for our 1st annual Bocce Tournament! Normandy Village in north Normal is graciously hosting on their beautiful lawns nestled among charming brick cottages. Double-elimination tournament with incredibly amazing prizes. Beer/wine gazebo, food trucks, family fun. Tickets at wgl.org.

September 16-26 Spain's Classics

Our next travel adventure takes you to Madrid, Toledo, Cordoba, Seville, Granada, Valencia, and Barcelona, led by an outstanding Collette tour manager and local expert guides. You'll visit the capital of medieval Spain, Gothic cathedrals, the world-famous Alhambra and other historic palaces, have a paella feast, and experience a flamenco performance. Full itinerary, pricing and registration for our next informational meeting at wgl.org.

Friday, November 10th Radio Faces

5:30 - 9:30 pm *DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton 2 ticket levels*

An elegant evening of conversation, cocktails, dinner, and a presentation by one of the best radio journalists in the business. Tickets go on sale August 1st at wgl.org.

GLT Event Sponsors - 2016



GLT Trivia Night:
Twin City Trivia
Meghan Rogers
Pete Moore
Karla Huffman



CEFCU presents the GLT Summer Concert:

Ronda Glenn Law Offices
Fox & Hounds Day Spa
Epiphany Farms
Maguire's Pub
Bud Johnson
City of Bloomington
CEFCU

Specs Around Town
Jack Bataoel Real Estate Group
Downtown Bloomington Assoc.
Mid-Illini Credit Union
Central Illinois Regional Airport
McLean Co. NEXT Professionals

Sweet Corn
Blues Festival Stage:
CEFCU



GLTrees commemorative
Tree Planting
Friends of the Trail
Niepagen Garden Center
Community Cancer Center
Stave Wine Bar
Coffee Hound
White Oak Brewing
The Garlic Press
Kemp's Upper Tap
Patrick Murphy



GLT Radio Faces with Tom Ashbrook
COUNTRY Financial

We also thank
Ralph Weisheit,
who continues to serve as
honorary GLT staff in the role
of official photographer.
Most of the photos in this
Report and many at our
website have been expertly
taken by Ralph (with some
help from intern Emma Shores).
He generously donates his
gifts of a good eye and the
ability to be in the right place
at just the right moment.

GLT Major Donors 2016

Thanks to an ever growing community of generous contributors, GLT's 50th anniversary year brought significant growth in listener support. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to help sustain GLT's excellent public service in 2016, including the following major donors who made significant investments in the annual operating budget, the equipment fund and the station's future.

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
John Eymann

Jonathan and Lisa Rosenthal
Dr. Robert & Marilyn Sutherland
Drake Zimmerman and Jan Elfline

GLT Leaders Circle

Thank you for your significant contributions to GLT's annual operating fund.

Directors (\$1,500 plus):

W. Brad & Tonya Barker
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Curtis Hayden
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Linda Kimber
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Rob McDade*
Julie Payne
Jonathan Rosenthal
Alan Sender
Mary Margart Simpson
Jeff Woodard
Cat Woods**
Heather Young

*Chair

**Vice Chair

Become a GLT Ongoing Contributor

Ongoing monthly contributions are convenient for you and for GLT. Your automatic monthly contribution from your bank account or credit card provides GLT with a reliable, steady stream of financial support. It's a comfortable way to fit your support for GLT into your budget, and because your ongoing contribution continues until you say otherwise, you don't have to remember to renew. Set up your monthly contribution today at wgl.org/contribute. Thanks!

We appreciate all GLT contributors, no matter how much you are able to give. Thank you for helping to sustain outstanding public media in central Illinois.

We try to include all 2016 major donors in this acknowledgement but, due to press deadlines, we may have inadvertently left out some names. Please contact GLT Contributor Services with additions or corrections at 309-438-3581.

Underwriter Spotlights

We receive so many positive comments from our Business Supporters throughout the year. They value community involvement, support the things they believe in and are proud to help bring this public radio station to central Illinois.



As a dedicated listener and longtime underwriter, I can't imagine a day without GLT and the access it gives me to the outside world. I feel the station provides a valuable community service that improves the quality of life for everyone in the area, and so, like many listeners, if I have the option, I consider doing business with GLT underwriters first because I like supporting those who also support that valuable service.

– *Linda Kimber, Edward Jones Financial Advisor*

By using WGLT, we're able to market to our local customers, while we use other gateways to market nationally. Our best sales people are our local customers. They began in Bloomington-Normal and have moved elsewhere. Their passion and pride drives Beer Nuts to want to do more. We have great resources here with great people who want great opportunities. We're proud to partner with GLT in their efforts to inform and engage the people of Bloomington-Normal.

– *Andy Shirk, BEER NUTS®*



Underwriting on GLT has been an excellent way for me to increase awareness of Retrofit Culture and show support for the quality public service GLT provides. I especially appreciate GLT's local programming, like Sound Ideas, and the station's involvement in the community. It feels great to know we are contributing to these efforts and I'm proud to be a part of the GLT community of listeners.

– *Tahnee Lathrop, Retrofit Culture*

GLT thanks the underwriters who make our programs and community engagement possible. Each of these businesses contributed significantly to GLT during the past year.

- @ Midwest Conference
- AARP
- Alligator Records
- Alzheimer's Association
- Axline Pharmacy
- Banks Remodeling
- BEER NUTS
- Bellas Landscaping
- Birth Center of Bloomington Normal
- Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts
- Bloomington Criterium
- B-N Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Blues Blast Magazine
- Body of Bloomington
- Brad Barker Honda
- Castle Theatre
- CEFCU
- Center for Youth & Family Solutions
- Central Illinois Regional Airport
- Cheese and Crackers
- Coffee Hound
- Community Cancer Center
- Community Players
- Connect Transit
- Constitution Place, LLC
- Cornerstone Wealth Consultants
- COUNTRY Financial
- Dennison Ford-Toyota
- Destihl Restaurant & Brew Works
- DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington
- Downtown Bloomington Association
- Ecology Action Center
- Economic Development Council
- Ensenberger Condominiums
- Epiphany Farms/Anju Above
- Farmer City Antiques Merchants
- Forget Me Not Flowers
- Fox & Hounds Salon & Day Spa
- The Garlic Press & Market Café
- Gastrointestinal Institute
- Gingerbread House
- Harper College
- Heartland Community College
- Henry's Farm
- Heritage Health
- Hile Group
- Illinois Prairie Community Foundation
- Illinois Shakespeare Festival
- Illinois Symphony Orchestra
- ISU Athletics
- ISU CAST - Gamma Phi Circus
- ISU Office of Admissions
- ISU School of Theatre & Dance
- Jack Bataoel Real Estate Group
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- Jay Goldberg Events & Entertainment
- Jazz Upfront
- Justin Boyd, Country Financial Representative
- Kurt's Autobody
- Linda Kimber, Edward Jones Financial Advisor
- Martin's Home Furniture
- McLean County Arts Center
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce
- McLean County Museum of History
- Mid Central Community Action
- Mid-Illini Credit Union
- The Music Shoppe/Pro-Sound Center
- Often Running
- OSF St. Joseph Medical Center
- Peoria Charter Travel
- Peoria Riverfront Museum
- Peoria Symphony Orchestra
- Performance Growth Partners
- PIP Printing
- Prairie Fire Theatre
- Prairie Oak Veterinary Center
- Prairie Pride Coalition
- Red Raccoon Games
- Retrofit Culture
- Ronda Glenn Law Offices
- Sangamon Auditorium
- Soderstrom Skin Institute
- Specs Around Town
- Starved Rock Area Businesses
- State Farm Bank
- Sugar Creek Orthodontics
- Sulaski & Webb, CPAs
- Town of Normal
- Twin City Self Storage
- Twin City Trivia
- Vitesse Cycle
- Wendell Niepagen Greenhouses
& Garden Center
- Westminster Presbyterian Church
- Westminster Village
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