

GLT Annual Report 2008

by GLT General Manager Bruce Bergethon

Change. It's a word that was overused in this election year, claimed by divergent points on the political spectrum — perhaps verging on meaninglessness.

But, in reflecting on GLT's 2008, no better single word comes to mind. In the last twelve months, we made many changes — of personnel, in our delivery of services, perhaps even in the definition of what it means to be “GLT radio.” GLT continues to change in order to better serve you, whose tastes and expectations are changing also.

New technology

GLT's strategic plan for 2007–2012, described in last year's annual report, lists as one of its primary goals the “development of programming for multiple delivery platforms.” We were extraordinarily active on this front in 2008, most notably with the installation of a new, digital transmitter in August and the activation of two HD radio channels in October. Now, in addition to “News, Blues and all that Jazz” on our primary channel (HD1), you can hear an all-blues radio station on HD2 (Blues Radio 24/7) and an all-news/talk station on HD3 (News and Ideas).

We're excited about tripling the number of services that GLT offers, though we realize that it requires a new investment on your part — you can't hear these two new stations without buying an HD radio. We gave some away during our fall fund drive, and have initiated a “loaner” program for those who are curious, but hesitant. Learn how to borrow a radio, and sample the new stations at wgl.org

That website underwent a major update in 2008, and remains a source for significant supplementary content produced by the GLT staff, including an exciting array of podcasts. New podcasts this year include the Dean of Green™ Gardening Almanac and GLT's Best Week Ever. The latter, a half-hour retrospective of our best local production, is also available as a program on HD3.



GLT HD2 Blues 24/7



GLT HD3 News & Ideas

Good communication is not exactly a new technology, but we did make some changes in how we get in touch with you this year. We swapped out our old snail-mail newsletter for a spiffy (and more eco-friendly) e-mail newsletter, adding the capability to provide you with quicker updates on programming.

New programming

The additional content represented by Blues Radio 24/7 and News and Ideas are our most dramatic new programming initiatives this year. Program Director Mike McCurdy (who this year won his second national Award for Creative Excellence from the Public Radio Program Directors association) worked long and hard with News Director Willis Kern and Music Director Jon Norton to get these up and running, with a significant amount of locally generated content. But there were additions that these three, and their excellent staffs, made to our traditional radio service as well.

The GLT news team, honored in April with multiple awards from the Illinois Associated Press and the regional Radio Television News Directors Association, also found space on its walls for Charlie Schlenker's third Edward R. Murrow Award. Charlie was recognized, for the second time in three years, for the quality of his writing.

The news department undertook a few other new activities this year. Morning Edition® at the Garlic Press is a monthly live broadcast from the Garlic Press Market Café in uptown Normal, with Jim Browne hosting and Willis Kern interviewing community members on subjects ranging from uptown redevelopment to minor league baseball. Voices of Poverty was a week-long series on a little-recognized issue in McLean County, broadcast in May.

Campaign coverage was a major priority for GLT this year, with local races for county board receiving the same quality of attention as NPR's exploration of the historic national presidential and congressional elections. Other important services that NPR journalists rendered in 2008 included coverage of China's expanding world role (with breaking news from the Olympics and the May earthquake), and the most comprehensive analytical treatment of the financial crisis.

With all of the turmoil in the world this year, it might be easy to overlook the important comforting and diversionary role of GLT's outstanding music services. There were new developments here too. Our great stable of local blues hosts was augmented by guest DJs like Bryan Lee, and Janiva Magness on HD2.

On the jazz side, in 2008 we celebrated Laura Kennedy's 20th year at GLT. Besides being host of morning jazz, SwingTime™, and GLT Jazz Next — not to mention Dean of Green™ wrangler — she's taken on new roles this year as producer of GLT's Best Week Ever, and first-time sports reporter (with her news feature on vintage baseball!).

New staff

Laura and I (also a 20-year GLT veteran) represent the old guard at the station. Happily, we brought in a transfusion of new blood this year too.

Kevin Trueblood was just settling in as Broadcast Technologist when we issued our 2007 annual report. In December, he accepted a position in Madison, WI, much to our regret. In his year at GLT, Kevin, along with Chief Engineer Mark Hill, helped implement the new digital transmitter and the new HD channels. He also helped retool two production studios, hosted our overnight jazz, and tweaked computer processes in creative ways that amazed the "old school" staff — making us all more efficient. He'll be sorely missed.

Though retired from the position of Development Director, Kathryn Carter has remained an active member of the GLT family, serving this year as a consultant. Her daily duties as head of GLT's excellent development staff have been assumed by Aaron Wissmiller, former Corporate Support Coordinator. He brings fresh perspective and tremendous energy to his new leadership position.

Our other new staffer, Jeff Paxton, fills Aaron's position in the corporate support area. Though his name will appear for the first time on GLT's payroll, Jeff is a long-time friend, supporter, and volunteer for the station, with extensive roots in the community. *Find out more about Jeff on pg 10.*

Events and community connection

GLT's mission statement proclaims our intention to be "a place vital to connected community." One of the ways we continue to meet that objective is by catalyzing community events, which also function as major fundraisers for the station.

Successful events this year included GLT Jazz Masters with pianist Bill Charlap; the GLT Summer Concert with Smokin' Joe Kubek & Bnois King, The Belleville Outfit, and Matthew Curry with Bill Porter; GLT Night at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival; the Recycled Music Sale; the hot bluegrass of The Infamous Stringdusters; and Radio Faces™ with Carl Kasell. Thanks to our Events Director, Linda Healy, for again pulling off this full schedule of important fundraisers — and great parties!

We expended significant attention and energy this year on our future, specifically the concept of relocating the station to a more accessible and visible community site. With support from the Illinois State University Foundation, GLT conducted a feasibility study of community leaders and station supporters in September and October. The results of that study, compiled in late November, will provide important information regarding the potential success of this ambitious, major project.

Resources and service

I began this report with "change." Having described many new features of GLT, I must say that two aspects of our relationship with you, our investor and stockholder, have not changed this year. As a staff, we are still driven by the pursuit of quality, in both programming and customer service, because we believe you deserve the best in both. To achieve that, we depend on your financial and emotional support.

In a year in which the word "recession" was used almost as frequently as "change," I am guardedly optimistic about the prospects for that continuing support. As usual, GLT held two successful fund drives during the year. The second occurred during the very weeks in which the stock market began its precipitous decline. In the midst of bad economic news, and in the spring, GLT listeners reaffirmed their investment of \$100,000 per drive — exceeding our projected goals.

In addition to listener contributions, we continue to benefit from the support of nearly 150 enlightened local businesses, whose sponsorship of events and daily GLT programming is crucial to the quality you enjoy. I hope you will take the time to thank these companies when you shop in their stores or use their services (*see pg 14–18 for a complete list*). A special thanks this year to Osborn & DeLong, who designed materials for our feasibility study as well as our snappy new logos for HD2 and HD3, and to State Farm Creative Services, who continue to make it possible for us to send you this bimonthly guide to what's going on at GLT.

What goes on in 2009 will, of course, be contingent on the rapidly shifting economic news that affects all of us. I know you will be able to rely on GLT to help you make sense of that landscape, and to chill out with the highest quality entertainment when you just can't think about it anymore. I also know that we are extraordinarily grateful for what you've done this year to fuel our historic changes. Thanks, and stay tuned.

GLT Major Donors 2008

It is my privilege to extend this thank you to GLT's major donors. Your generous support led the way as we successfully navigated the challenges and opportunities of a very unsettling year. You inspired others to join you in sustaining GLT as the vibrant and essential public service we all depend on. And you helped us move forward with efforts to ensure a viable future for your public radio station. Thank you for your support and your friendship. — from GLT Membership Director Pat Peterson

GLT Leaders Circle

Directors (\$1500 plus each year)

Anonymous (1)
Bruce Bergethon and Jo Porter
Jerry Kats

Broadcasters (\$1000 plus each year)

Brad and Tonya Barker
Chris and Kelly Black
Bruce and Jeannie Breitweiser
Michael and Eva DeVore
Dennis Fox
Robert and Victoria King
Carol Carey-Odekirk
and Warren Odekirk
James Pinder
Chris and Susan Prendergast

Leaders (\$500 plus each year)

Anonymous (8)
Jerry Antonini
Jill Attaway
Paul and Sharon Baker
Angela Bray
Kathryn and Bill Carter
Debra and Mark Ciskey
Beth Cunningham and David Wolfe
Linda Davis

Mary Dellorto and Paul Blackwell
Megan Devlin-Petty
Rhonda Diggs
Dale and Melinda Egeberg
Russel Francois
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Bob and Carol Hajek
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Dan and Kathy Steadman
Jean Sweet and Paul Bailey
Marge and Barry Weaver
Deb Wozniak
Dorothy Witte
Louise Ziemann

GLT Day Sponsors (\$365 or more each year)

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John Blank
Tom and Nancy Brokaw
Charlotte Brown and William Morris
Jessica Bryant
Gregg Chadwick and Robyn Walter
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Anders Dahlgren and Marcia Thomas
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Friends of Donna Simms
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Phil Holverson
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of Biological Sciences
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Jim Zaleschuk and Susan Hillabold

I'm proud to extend this thank you to all contributing GLT listeners. Your financial participation—no matter what the amount—keeps your public radio independent, free from commercial influence and responsive to you and your community. Thank you for choosing to support GLT.