

# GLT GUIDE

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## 2009 Annual Report

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The Year's Best Blues  
The Year's Best Folk  
The Year's Best Jazz

# GLT Annual Report 2009

by GLT General Manager Bruce Bergethon

I am by nature a) an optimist, and b) a person who tends to take the long view. The past year provided a rugged test for the first proclivity, with challenges ranging from the recession's domino effect to the vagaries of weather (lightning struck once, and that was more than enough). With business-threatening changes all around us, however, I'm confident that GLT's long-range outlook continues to be good. The evidence is below.

## Challenges

2009 was a year during which billions flowed to relief of huge businesses, unemployment climbed above 10%, and the oldest journalistic enterprise in the country (newspapers) questioned its continued viability. Against that backdrop, public radio's troubles seemed small. NPR laid off hundreds of employees, and many of our station colleagues reduced staff by the dozens. At GLT, we were able to avoid those kinds of cuts, but for the first time in two decades, both local business and listener support were down compared to the previous year. (Copies of our annual audit are available on the GLT Website at [www.wgl.org/about/annual\\_reports.phtml](http://www.wgl.org/about/annual_reports.phtml)). Coupled with dramatic reductions in state grant funding, that amounted to a cash flow problem we have not faced since the mid 1990s, and one that is likely to continue into 2010.

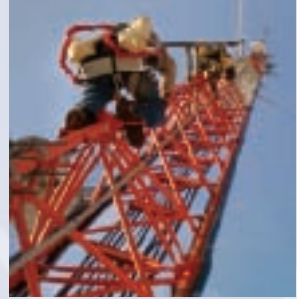
A longer term paradigm shift is affecting the entire media industry – the increasing segmentation of audiences into smaller and more active groups of consumers. Multiple delivery platforms fragment the economies of scale on which media companies (yes, this includes even not-for-profits like GLT) have grown dependent. On the other hand, on-demand audio and a variety of content access delivery systems (Web, cell phone, podcast, etc.) provide more of what GLT is all about: **listener service**. We've invested heavily in the last few years, both in terms of capital and staff time, in these diverse platforms, including our new digital channels and multiple program streams. We haven't quite figured out the ongoing economic sustainability of these efforts, but I believe we are well-positioned for a new and expansive set of audience expectations.

All of this long-term strategic stuff, though, was temporarily eclipsed by a close and unfriendly encounter of the disaster kind. In October, GLT's new transmitter went down after a lightning storm. We quickly deter-



Damaged part on right, what it should look like on left

mined that the transmitter itself was OK. The older antenna (erected in 1992) was not so lucky. Damaged in multiple places, the antenna couldn't function, forcing us to revert to our lower-powered backup transmitter, which meant that for over a month, we were unable to reach roughly 30% of our usual coverage area. The lower-power transmission also forced us to shut off the HD channels.



Tower crew climbing up to replace repaired antenna

Repair of the antenna took much longer than we would have liked, with delays caused by weather and the necessity of refabricating the core elements on the West Coast. In the interim, we provided services on our webstreams, and through a creative jerry-rigging of our Peoria translator at 103.5. We were able to keep listeners apprised of the situation, and our progress toward fixing it, on our Website and on Facebook.



The literal "nuts and bolts" of the antenna

We thank all of you for your patience, as well as your moral and financial support during what we are calling "the GLTH" (Grueling and Lengthy Transmitter Hiatus). We were ecstatic to return to full service just before Thanksgiving. Dozens of listeners let us know, through enthusiastic emails and calls, that you too were glad we were back – and we appreciate your graciousness and encouraging words.

## Initiatives

As suggested above, social media and interactive communication played a big part in our 2009 activities. Thanks to the efforts of Program Director Mike McCurdy and Individual Giving Director Pat Peterson, along with program staff Willis Kern and Jon Norton, and student host/producer Danny Hajek, GLT's Facebook and MySpace presence and impact are significantly greater now than a year ago. We're also using Twitter and conventional email to disseminate information about community and station news. In addition, NPR updated its Website and unveiled a new NPR app for the iPhone, both of which are intended to increase the accessibility of NPR and member station content to users.

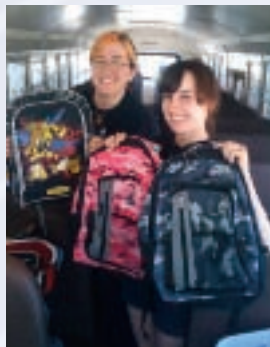




Good old face-to-face engagement is a strength of GLT, and we enjoyed sharing with the community in several new ways during 2009. In March, we counted down listeners' favorite blues performers in an NCAA-styled elimination tournament on the air; we called it "Mojo Madness," and it was fun for both listeners and staff. (B.B. King was the champion.)

At about the same time, we began information sessions for our first station-sponsored trip in a long time. "Begin the Beijing" took 15 travelers to China in November, and was the first in a series – watch for more travel opportunities in the year ahead, perhaps a little closer to home this round.

In July, we partnered with both Unit 5 and District 87, ISU's Extended University, and many other community groups to "Pack the Bus," an initiative to collect backpacks stuffed with school supplies for local students in



GLT student staff Mandie Groves and Kate Sheahan show off some of their favorite backpacks



We filled a 40 foot bus with backpacks and school supplies

need. This effort resulted in over 400 backpacks, and 10 bins of supplies, distributed just before the start of the school year.

Another collaboration with ISU this year was our participation in the Uptown and Gown Gala during Homecoming Weekend. Some of our

best musical friends, Sally Weisenburg and the Famous Sidemen and the ISU Jazz Quartet (Tom Marko, Kevin Hart, Bill Koehler, and Paul Nolan), helped the University throw a fine party celebrating connections with the local community.

On the air, our new programming in 2009 included – from high atop Lexington Avenue – **Radio Deluxe** (Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m.), and a month-long tribute to classic jazz albums celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We called it "59 in 09," and featured Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and Dave Brubeck's *Time Out*.

### Ongoing Activities

New is good, but GLT is also proud of our continuing service(s). Certainly one of the chief among these is our local news department. "Award winning" has become almost an involuntary adjective for our news team, and this year they



Radio Faces guests enjoy lively conversation

broke their own records with nine Associated Press awards, plus four regional Edward R. Murrow citations. We also take reflected credit for the 2009 Peabody Award won by NPR for its coverage of the 2008 Chinese earthquake. Among the recipients of that award was a GLT alumnus, Brendan Banaszak, currently a producer for **All Things Considered**<sup>®</sup> (ATC).

We were proud to feature Brendan, along with ATC host Melissa Block, in our 2009 edition of Radio Faces. That November event wrapped up a typically full slate of station events that included the GLT Summer Concert in June; blues festivals in July, August, and September; and August's GLT Shakespeare Night and Recycled Music Sale.



Retired GLT Development Director Kathryn Carter, ATC host Melissa Block, and GLT News Director Willis Kern at Radio Faces

Two final notes about continuity. We were proud and gratified in 2009 to promote Travis Meadors, a relatively new but invaluable staff member, to the position of Broadcast Technologist. Travis, along with Chief Engineer Mark Hill, guided us through the dark days of the GLTH to a successful resumption of service. And we thank Christine Schuring of State Farm Creative Services for her great work during the last several years as the designer of the *GLT Guide*. She's been promoted, and we congratulate her. We welcome another outstanding State Farm designer, Jeff Little, to the *Guide* team and are gratified that State Farm is committed to providing this publication as a corporate gift to GLT and you.

You are the reason for everything we do, and for that, as always, we continue to be grateful.

Many thanks.  
*Thank You*

# GLT Major Donors 2009

To all of GLT's major donors, *thank you*. Your generosity helped sustain GLT through a tumultuous year, inspired others to join with you in supporting the station and affirmed once again the enduring value of thoughtful, engaging public media. - *GLT Individual Giving Director Pat Peterson*

## GLT Leaders Circle

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### Directors (\$1,500 plus):

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 Brad and Tonya Barker  
 Michael and Eva DeVore  
 Bruce Bergethon  
 and Jo Porter  
 Eric Hutchison  
 Robert and  
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### Broadcasters (\$1,000 plus):

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 and Warren Odekirk  
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### Leaders (\$500 plus):

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Susan Hillabold

On behalf of the entire GLT staff, I'd like to extend this thank you to all contributing GLT listeners. We are proud to have earned your confidence and your friendship. Thank you again for choosing to support your public radio station.

*(We work very hard to include all 2009 GLT major donors in this acknowledgment but, due to press deadlines, we may have inadvertently left out some names. Please contact GLT Donor Services with additions or corrections at 309-438-3581. Thanks.)*

# GLT Event Sponsors

We are honored to have so many steadfast sponsors of GLT events throughout the year. Your corporate support unites the community by providing unique musical, news-related, and theatrical experiences that would simply not be possible without you. From the GLT staff and on behalf of the thousands of GLT event attendees, we thank you for making good things happen in our community. ~ *GLT Events Director Linda Healy*



GLT Jazz Masters  
with Sara Gazarek:  
**Dunbar, Breitweiser  
& Company, LLP**

GLT Summer Concert:  
**Ameren  
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GLT Night at the  
Illinois Shakespeare Festival:  
**Busey Bank**

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Melissa Block and Brendan Banaszak:  
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