

I was the morning newsman along with my ag reporting duties at KMNS radio in Sioux City, Iowa from 1991 to 1995. I worked with a morning announcer named Gary Ellenbolt, who at the time used the stage name Gary Erickson. He later used his real name when he worked for South Dakota Public Radio as the morning host for 19 years. Public entities like that and governmental agencies make you use your real identity. There was a farm broadcaster in Washington State who went by the name of Andy Patrick. When he moved to Washington D.C. to work at USDA, he went by his real name Rod Bain. Stage names were more common in radio years ago than they are today. Other farm broadcasters used stage names like Gene Williams, long time farm broadcaster at WNAX in Yankton, SD. His real name was Gene Fiskus. Dean Curtiss, Hall of Fame farm broadcaster from Elysiian and for many years was the voice of KDHL in Faribault, had a real name of Bernard Andrew Zimprich.

But back to my reason for mentioning Gary Ellenbolt, one morning he asked me who was the most famous person I met. I thought back to my days as a cub scout in Pack 58 in West Concord. Gert Scarr was the Cub Scout leader then. We went down to Fredrick's Super Value to see Henry Hite, the world's tallest man. He advertised himself as 8'2" tall. I know as a short cub scout he could have been 11 feet tall for all I knew. I had to look him up on Wikipedia. Sure enough, he was promoted at the world's tallest man at 8'2" but his actual height was 'only' 7 foot, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. He was still the tallest person in West Concord that day. Hite made personal appearances for Wilson's Corn King Brand certified meats. I don't know for a fact but I think that was part of the promotion at Super Value that day. Hite was the Corn King Giant.





The other famous person I met as a small kid was Axel from WCCO TV. Clellen Card played Axel Torgeson on a kid's show called Axel and his Dog. His sidekick was Carmen the Nurse. Axel came to a farm which to the best of my recollection was the Gus Kolb farm south of town. This would have been 1959 so I was 5 years old. My big sister Karolyn took me there so I could see Axel. I have not asked her if, one, she remembers this or secondly she remembers that Axel called her a knucklehead. I don't know what she said to him but I'm just glad I didn't say it.

As I got into radio work, I met a number of well known people from politicians to singers to athletes. When KDHL started carrying the Minnesota North Stars hockey broadcasts in the late 1980's, Bill Goldsworthy came by the station to promote the team and the radio broadcasts. I got to spend a half hour talking hockey with the man who made the Goldy shuffle famous. I still have his autograph from that day along with his hockey card in a frame at home. On that same half hour show months later, I interviewed musician Dan Seals.

Through the years there were several people I had the opportunity to interview but by far the biggest star studded event I attended was at the White House in Washington. We were holding our annual National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) spring meeting in D.C. in May, 2000. I was working at KTIC Radio in West Point, Nebraska at the time. We had been at the White House on Sunday, May 8th to talk agriculture with Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Chief of Staff John Podesta. President Clinton was to be there but had to attend the funeral for Cardinal Cushing.



Emery Kleven, Larry Quinn and Larry Steckline sat in the front row for a White House press briefing with Chief of Staff John Podesta and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman.

So as we're leaving, Podesta tells us that the President has issued a special invitation to the NAFB members to be special guests the next day at a huge East Room meeting to promote PNTR, Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. This room was filled with a who's who of American politics. Vice President Al Gore, current and former cabinet secretaries like Henry Kissinger and James Baker, former members of Congress such as Mike Mansfield, Sen. Claibourne Pell and former Rep. Tom Foley were all present along with former military, business and religious leaders. It was my first time to meet the Governor of Minnesota Jesse Ventura.



There were three U.S. Presidents at this event, President Bill Clinton and former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. After the event was over, the three stood in a receiving line in the blue room and shook the hands of all who attended. I described it this way for this farm boy from small town Minnesota. I was like a fish out of water to be standing in the blue room of the

White House shaking the hands of three Presidents. I never thought that doing a report on disc jockeys back in Mr. Bob Doyle's 9th grade social studies class would lead to this.

They served some light food in the West Room and to this day I still have some napkins with the Presidential Seal on them along with some packets of Equal, a coffee sweetener, with the seal on them. My colleague Rod Zamerron from Ohio had to use the White House outhouse and found some larger paper towels with the Presidential Seal on them. I'm only sorry I didn't drink enough coffee to have to use the boy's room so I could have gotten some of those for souvenirs too.



More pictures from that memorable day in Washington D.C.

The receiving line. Standing behind President Clinton is Presidents Carter and Ford



Former Secretary of State
and advisor to several
Presidents Henry Kissinger



Vice President Al Gore addressed that gathering



As mentioned, Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura sat just in front of me

