

When I left KDHL radio at the end of November, 1990 to become the farm broadcaster at KMNS Radio in Sioux City, Iowa, I had a whole new group of co-workers to get to know. There's only two who I have kept any kind of contact with. Gary Ellenbolt was the program director and midday announcer when I first started at AM620 KMNS. Gary, originally from southwest Wisconsin went by the name Gary Erickson at that time. Later, when he took a job at South Dakota Public Radio, he used his real last name.

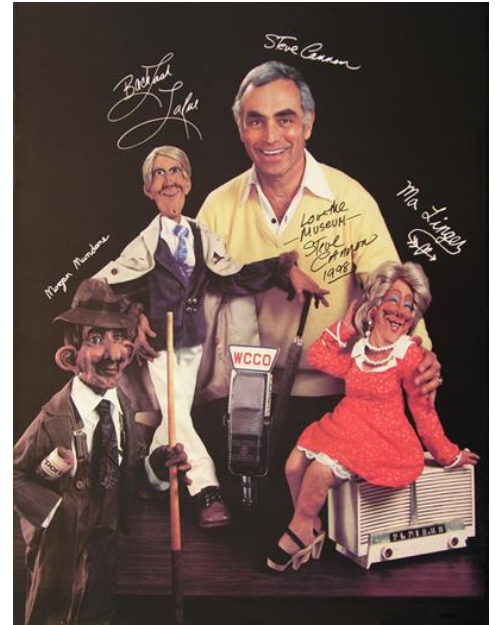
Gary and I were the morning team on KMNS for about 4 years. I was the morning newsman along with my farm news and markets. Early on in our tenure, Gary came up with a name for this morning duo calling us the 'Comrades of the Angry Dawn'. Why he came up with this name is still uncertain. Our station manager asked us politely one day if we could find a kinder, gentler name. We didn't say yes or no at the time but about a couple months later, in the middle of our morning broadcast, we had one of those feel good stories about someone who helped out a person in need. Gary called the person a real 'Heartland Hero'. I said, "That's it!" We'll call ourselves the 'Heartland Heroes'. Even though we didn't do anything quite as heroic as the person in the news story, the name stuck. And our boss was glad to get rid of the Comrades.



A much younger Gary 'Erickson' from the KMNS studios in Sioux City, Iowa in 1994.

Gary and I would always talk about our experiences growing up in a small rural town. I would always bring up the fact that I know exactly what I was doing on any given historic day. Such as the day Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt was assassinated. The date was October 6, 1981. I told the story how we were combining soybeans on the Marshall Svec farm just south of West Concord. I explained how the beans were a bit tough from the morning dew when we first started that day and I proceeded to plug the bean header and combine. After getting that situation resolved, the bean stalks dried and the harvest moved on. But then my dad and I hear on the radio that Sadat had been shot.

Then there was the day that Elvis died. Gary and I got talking about Elvis and his music and movies. So he asked what was happening on the Kleven farm on that August day in 1977. I proceeded to tell him about making room for a new grain bin just to the south of our grain dryer. We had to take part of the old grainery down along with getting all the ground work done so I had lots to do. I had the radio on listening to Steve Cannon on WCCO. You might remember the 'little Cannons' like Morgan Mundane, Ma Linger and Backlash LaRue. I was glued listening to all the reports plus I got a lot of work done that day.



Steve Cannon and the 'little Cannons'

Then there was the day that President Reagan was shot in Washington D.C. That story came up in our conversation and Gary again asked what was happening on the Kleven farm that day. "It was in March, right?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "March 30th, 1981." It was just over 6 months before the Sadat shooting. I recall it was a cool and cloudy day up and down highway 56. I bring that up because Gary and I had this running bit that he would say I grew up on a southeast Minnesota farm right there on highway 52. I would correct him every time by yelling 'FIFTY-SIX'. So on the day that Reagan got shot, the ground was too wet and the temps too cool to do field work so I was hauling brush and cleaning up the yard that day. It was while I was hauling branches when I heard on the pickup radio about the news out of Washington.



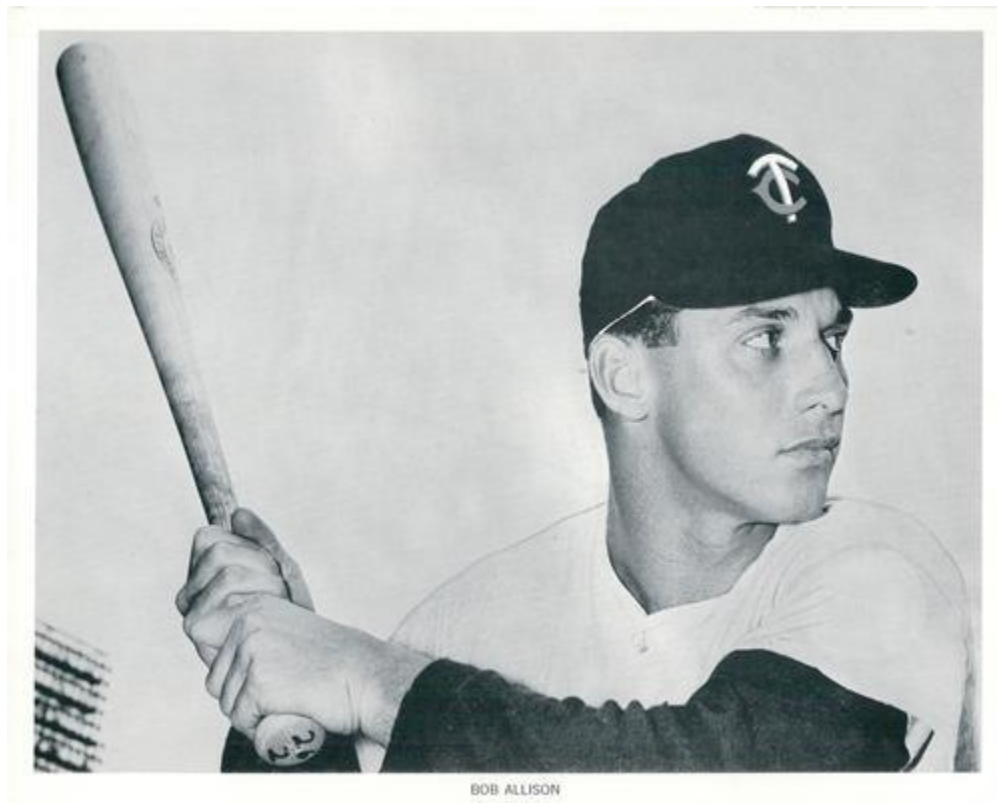
Any day that had an historic event happen, I would explain what I was doing on the farm. And still to this day, even though Gary lives out in Stockton, California now, in emails and on Facebook he confuses highways 52 and 56. And I still have to correct him.

Gary was the morning host on South Dakota Public Radio for 19 years before he moved out west to be closer to grandchildren. He was always one of the best radio play by play sports

broadcasters I've heard. He did play by play on radio for South Dakota High School state tournament games for many years. Today he's doing public address announcing for various sports at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. That's not to be confused with Pacific University which is in Oregon. Gary is also the PA announcer for the Stockton Ports, a class A baseball team which is part of the Oakland Athletics organization. His wife Sandy works at the University of the Pacific as well.

I have one other note on remembering events. The date was July 18th, 1962. That was the day the Minnesota Twins hit two grand slam homeruns in the same inning. Harmon Killebrew and Bob Allison did what hadn't been done since 1890. I was at my Uncle Gordy Ryg's place playing with cousins Gene and Alan. We had the barn radio on when we heard Herb Carneal and Halsey Hall describe the game against the Cleveland Indians. The date is also memorable to me as it was the first and only time I rode a horse. I know that sounds odd but I never really had much opportunity to ride a horse. Cousin Gene lives in Montana now and rarely is he not on a horse.

Below is a synopsis of the Killebrew/Allison story:



Bob Allison's first inning grand slam was his eleventh home run of the 1962 season.



Harmon Killebrew won five home run titles during the 1960s.

(July 18, 1962) At Metropolitan Stadium in Minneapolis, the Minnesota Twins today pulled into a virtual tie for third place with the Cleveland Indians by blasting the Tribe 14-3.

The game was over by the end of the first inning. The Twins pounded Cleveland starter Barry Latman and reliever Jim Perry for 11 runs. Included among those runs were grand slam home runs by Bob Allison and Harmon Killebrew.

Allison's bases-loaded blast came off Latman, and followed an RBI single from third baseman Rich Rollins. Catcher Earl Battey followed Allison's slam with a solo homer.

With the score 6-0, Perry replaced Latman and gave up a single to second baseman Bernie Allen before retiring Zoilo Versalles and Twins pitcher Dick Stigman. But then Bob Tuttle walked and Vic Power's single drove in Allen.

A walk to Rollins loaded the bases for Killebrew, who hit the inning's second grand slam, putting the Twins in front 11-0.

It marked the first time since 1890 that two grand slams had been hit by the same team in one inning. It's been done five times since.

Stigman (4-2) allowed three runs on six hits to pick up the complete game victory. He struck out 11 Indians batters.

In addition to his grand slam, Killebrew hit a solo home run in the third inning, his 24th of the season. He would finish the 1962 season with 48 home runs, the most in the American League.