

Under the Streetlamp

It was November and time for the National Association of Farm Broadcaster's annual meeting in Kansas City, coincident with the American Royal and the FFA Convention. Derry was there working for KLIK Radio. I was there to trot out our plans for this new network.

I'd printed up a tri-fold, two-color brochure touting Derry and the business. Of course, we didn't have a business. What we had was hot air -- lots of wish, little substance. Still, at the convention, I worked the agencies and advertisers. I passed out hundreds of those brochures. Now remember that Derry was at the Convention on the radio station's dime; reporting every morning and noon hour. Unfortunately one of those brochures fell into the hands of the national sales rep for KLIK, and he quickly got it to the station manager, Stan Grieve, who incidentally lived a short three houses from me.

I badly wanted KLIK on the network; it was a 5000-watt powerhouse at 950 khz and covered much of the state. I saw it as a good marriage. And, I was willing to negotiate about anything to get them, including an equity position.

Back home on Sunday evening, I got a phone call from Grieve who asked about the venture. I excitedly told him we were wanting his radio station to be part of this new network and that I'd come in tomorrow. He said he wanted to "talk now", so I volunteered to walk to his house a block or so away. "No," he responded, "let's meet under the street lamp at the corner." We did. I pitched him hard and gave him a brochure. In spite of the night air, I was surprised at how chilly he seemed both to me and the idea.

The next morning he fired Derry.

That's when we set January 2, 1973 as the on-air date. We were a business now. There was no place else to go.

I learned two things under the street lamp that night:

1. Never despair, today's rejection is often tomorrow's opportunity
2. If you're going to play, you've got to get in the game; you can't sit in the stands.

October 23, 2007