

WASHINGTON REPORT

Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



First, let me define the term radical so there can be no mistake about those to whom this column refers.

The radicals are irresponsible individuals who promote causes which are repulsive to free and reasonable men. They are people who will manufacture anything from lies to bombs to advance their causes. They range from the Abbie Hoffmans on the left to the KKK Grand Wizards on the right.

Too often, those of us who disagree with the coddling of such radicals on campus are accused of trying to limit freedom of speech and/or academic freedom. As a firm believer in the soundness of both those freedoms, I resent the implication. I have no desire to prevent anyone from speaking his mind regardless of how obnoxious that speech might be. Nor do I have any desire to prevent those who thirst for

knowledge from becoming conscious of a variety of viewpoints.

But, I do question the use of extremists as "enlighteners."

My questions are based upon a belief that paying an irresponsible voice to use a college loud-speaker is misguided and unnecessary. It is misguided because it shows a complete disregard of priorities. It is unnecessary because in 90 per cent of the cases the speaker's message is stale and predictable.

The matter of priorities is particularly important. The handsome sum paid a radical for one hour of foulness and intemperance could obtain the services of a good teacher for several weeks at the same school.

But instead, it buys convicted felons, proven troublemakers and the like. Very often it is simply the price paid to prove that a school is liberal enough to allow an extremist to utter obscenities and/or nonsense.

The question arises whether self-evidence of broad-mindedness is worth \$3,000.

That kind of fee means that an extremist speaking on the average of once a week can make more than \$150,000 per year. That's \$150,000 which could surely be put to better uses within the academic community.

It also happens to be a sum about equal to that paid some of our top professional athletes. I mention this point simply because it has become a part of liberal orthodoxy to regard these sports salaries as symbols of misplaced values in our society.

Well, I, for one, regard the contributions of most professional athletes as more deserving of big money than the contributions of an Abbie Hoffman.

So, where are the misplaced priorities in society?

It's something to think about the next time you hear many of the same people, who are among the first to defend paying Abbie Hoffman and his friends \$3,000, telling us about the Nation losing its sense of direction.



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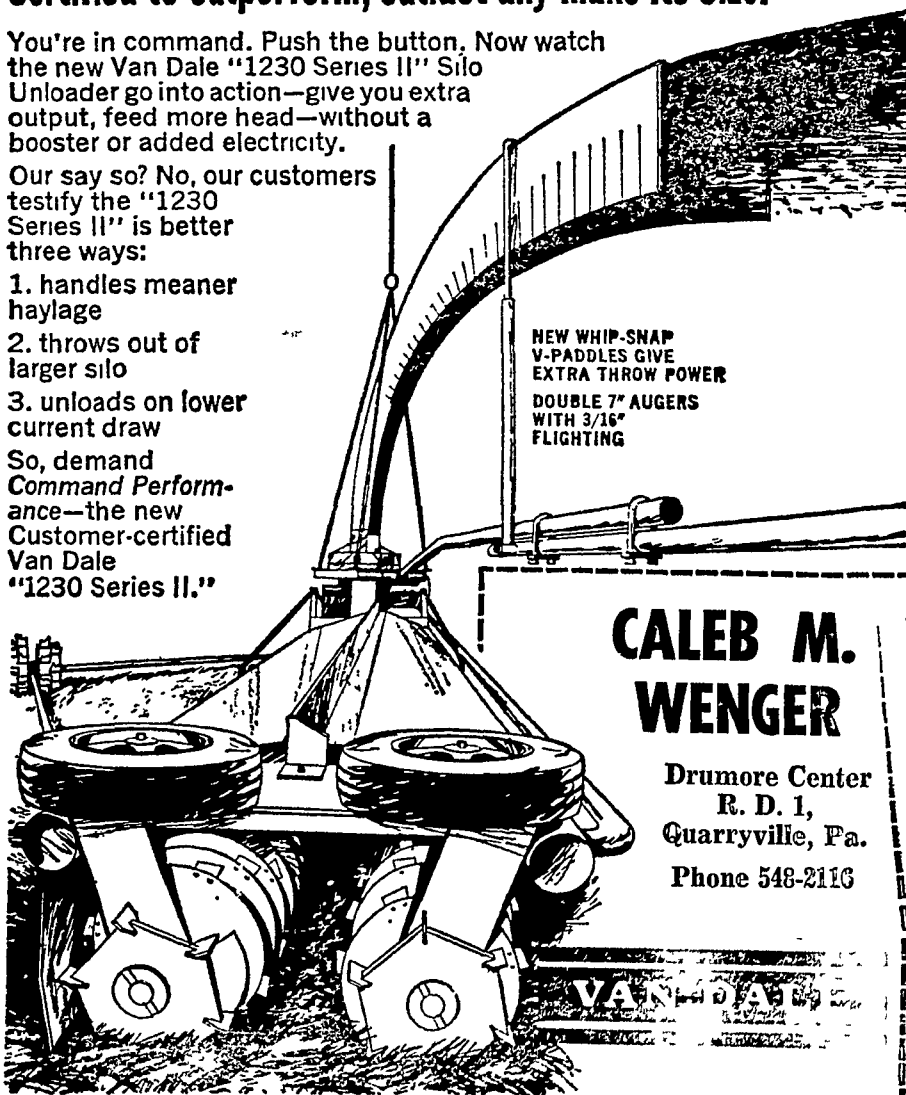
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