

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By Dieter Krieg, Editor

Let's set a good example

Abram and John Barley of Lancaster County are faced with a nightmarish situation: They may have to see their fertile farmland seized through the power of eminent domain so that bulldozers can scratch the life out of it and refill it with the County's trash.

It's a case the Barley Brothers and their many allies intend to fight standing up, even though the odds against winning may be slim. The fight is a very important one. Not only for the Barleys, but for thousands of other farms in the Garden Spot and elsewhere. The question is: If this farm can be taken so indiscriminantly and callously, how many others will face the same kind of fate in years to come?

With all the talk about conservation of natural resources going on, it's ironic and hypocritical that an A-1 farm such as the Barleys' is even being considered for a landfill. What can possibly be a more precious resource than the soil which feeds us?

Credit must be given here to a majority of people who evidently understand the potential consequences of the landfill idea if it is carried out. Support for the Barleys has come from just about everyone except the Lancaster Area Refuse Authority (LARA) and its attorneys. The Barleys have been swamped with favorable phone calls and mail. On Wednesday of next week there'll be a large gathering at their farm to demonstrate the solidarity among Lancaster Countians who believe that LARA should reconsider its plans.

The Barley Brothers own about 300 acres, of which 58 might be taken in the near future for a landfill. In years to come they may be faced with similar situations. And if not them, then possibly their neighbors. The farm's main source of income is milk, of which 2,000 pounds are produced daily.

There is reason to believe that some

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Shelhamer deserves credit

Pennsylvania's new secretary of agriculture, Kent Shelhamer, deserves a lot of credit for the efforts he's making in establishing definite contacts with the people whom his department serves. The Columbia County farmer and legislator became head of the department by appointment from Governor Shapp on Jan 15. On Valentine's Day, appropriately enough, the Pennsylvania Senate gave unanimous approval.

Ever since, Kent Shelhamer has left it be known that his door is open, and that he wants to do all he can for Pennsylvania's farmers.

The new secretary has gone about his "campaign" in a unique way, especially when one considers that a man in his position could make things a lot easier for himself. Shelhamer could have chosen to put his name before the public by way of a "propaganda blast," an onslaught of so-called news releases and the like. Shelhamer, an amiable and down-to-earth kind of individual, chose to go directly to the farmers he's supposed to serve. He has accepted one

speaking engagement after another, chatted with complete strangers and extended a warm welcome to all who care to communicate with him. All along he has also been keeping close contact with his responsibilities at the office in Harrisburg. The pages of this newspaper attest to the fact that Shelhamer is active.

It must be a grueling schedule and we observers may be right in wondering how long the enthusiasm, sincerity and dedication can last. We can all hope that it will last a long time in the months and years ahead, we may not always agree with what the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is doing or has planned. But we can take satisfaction in the fact that with Shelhamer the state's 72,000 farmers have a man who's trying hard not to isolate himself from anything.

"I am proud to be serving as your secretary of agriculture," Shelhamer told a group of farmers in Lancaster this week.

Pennsylvania farmers can be proud to have him.

Greedy bankers

A scheme by financial giants to buy up huge tracts of highly productive farmland in the Midwest is apparently temporarily stalled. Concerned legislators and agricultural organizations banded together to slow down the plan. But the battle is anything but over, as it generally never is when one is dealing with big money. An Illinois bank, ranked eighth largest in the nation, and a brokerage firm which ranks as biggest of them all, are big money. So is farming if you control enough of it.

While actions are already underway

to hold back schemes which would put farmland in the control of financial giants, instead of individual farmers, this is one of those situations where a little more effort wouldn't hurt. It would undoubtedly be a good idea to write to senators and congressmen to let them know how you feel.

A plan to buy up tens of thousands of acres of good corn and soybean land isn't likely to benefit the ordinary farmer, who thrives on the ideas of self-employment and pride of property ownership.

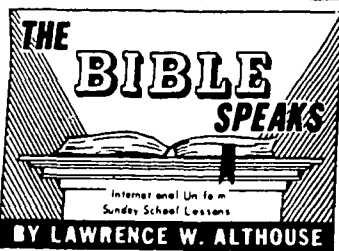
Good neighbors

Some words of praise are in order to those who work hard to minimize the grief of others who suffer through tragedies. The "Good Samaritan" trait is fortunately one which surfaces over and over again among rural folks, especially in this part of the country. There's keen competition when all is in order, and then there is vigorous help; lots of it - when tragedy strikes.

Two recent barn fires, one in York County and one in Lancaster County, stand as evidence that the "I don't

want to get involved syndrome" hasn't even the slightest foothold among farmers. And that's been proven with most every other tragedy which has hit a farmer.

The quick responses and dedicated help which people give to their neighbors so freely is something which is often overlooked by the media. It's something which should probably be publicized to a greater extent so that others in town can maybe learn something from it.



MISSING THE POINT

Lesson for March 6, 1977

Background Scripture: Mark 10:35-45; Luke 10.
Devotional Reading: Luke 10:30-37

The request that James and John made of Jesus is almost unbelievable - at least until we remember that audacity has never been in short supply, even in the church. Nevertheless, James and John still tend to shock us!

"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you" (Mark 10:35)

That by itself would be sufficient to cause our jaws to drop: how presumptuous to even make such a request, regardless of what they would ask! But their audacity seems to know no limits, for when Jesus responds with, "What do you want me to do for you?" they answer

"Grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory" (Mark 10:37)

Imagine! Just a little favor, Lord, make us Vice Presidents in the Kingdom - First and Second Vice Presidents, that is!

You do not know what you ask. There is but one thing that we must hand these two men. They were certainly candid about their desires. In fact, it is probably this innocence mixed with their brashness that softens Jesus' reply: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?" (10:38). And the breezy assurance with which they answer indicates that they really do not know what they are asking: "We are able."

Jesus' patient forbearance is almost as impressive as their arrogance is shocking, for instead of a stinging rebuke, it is a patient explanation which he gives to help them understand the issues they have raised. If Jesus had responded with some irritation or annoyance no one could have blamed him.

To us, of course, it is quite apparent that they did not understand what they were asking. For one thing, they apparently did not understand what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God. They are still holding the traditional and popular concept of a temporal kingdom with secular power, military might, and a royal court. Somehow they had missed the point. The kingdom of God was really the kingdom within, a kingdom of man's spirit, of God's rule in the heart.

Not so among you. Secondly, they obviously misunderstood what discipleship meant. They seemed to think it meant

being in on the "ground floor" for status and power in the kingdom. They thought in terms of rank, whereas Jesus emphasized not rank but service: "...whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (10:43).

Thirdly, they did not comprehend the kind of power that would compel with force, whereas Jesus spoke of the power of love and self denial: "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45).

From our vantage point, we wonder how James and John could have so badly missed the point, for to us it seems so obvious.

Can it be that we still miss the point?



NOW IS THE TIME...

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TO OBSERVE WINTER GRAIN CLOSELY

Many Winter wheat and barley growers are concerned about their grain crop; since it got off to a slow start last Fall, and due to the severity of the Winter, some may feel the crop is not worth saving. This depends upon several factors such as the amount of snow cover during January, and the amount of growth last Fall. I'd suggest that growers

check the field frequently when warmer weather arrives to observe the thickness of the stand. If the plants are there when Spring growth begins, then a top-dressing of nitrogen fertilizer might go a long way in getting a normal crop. Don't disc it down until it has a chance to grow.

TO CONSIDER BEEF REFERENDUM

All beef and dairy producers should be taking a look at the forthcoming

national referendum as a self-help check-off program to help the entire beef industry. This program includes a three-tenths of one percent of sale value deduction for all animals sold for meat purposes to provide funds for research and promotion in the beef industry. Both dairy and beef cattle owners are involved. The starting point is to sign up at the local ASC office before being eligible to vote later this Spring. This may be a controversial program, but producers should be evaluating the proposals and then fulfill their duty of voting as they see fit. Don't let someone else do your thinking and voting for you.

TO BE CAREFUL WITH PESTICIDES
This is "Old Hat!" because we have mentioned the

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Farm Calendar

Today, March 5
York County Swine Producers banquet, Menges Mills Restaurant, 7 p.m.
Monday, March 7
Kutztown FFA Chapter holds 35th annual banquet, 7 p.m. at the Kutztown Grange Hall.
Conrad Weiser YF Chapter begins courses on electricity.
Manheim area Young Farmers hold meeting on "Financing Equipment, Buildings and Cattle." 7:30 p.m. at the high school.
Manheim YF Machinery Reconditioning Workshop begins today.

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