



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Don't get stung

Remember the movie that appeared on the big screens throughout the nation a number of years back called "The Sting" that depicted the razzle-dazzle times of the 1920's?

For those with short memories for movie titles, calling to mind the stars' names — Redford and Newman — might help to bring back memories of the Academy Award winning film for most fans of Hollywood's most celebrated male actors.

But, if this, too, fails to help you recall the plot, a quick review would go something like this.

The story evolves around two felons, one an experienced, big-time con artist, the other a fledgling thief who's taken under the wing of the first. With the aid of other convicts and bunko artists, the pair manages to cunningly swindle the biggest 'fish' in New York City, a mob leader.

Well, that short review doesn't do justice to the exciting, involved plot that unfolds the tale of one of Hollywood's masterpieces. But it does set the stage for a surprisingly similar situation that is being acted out in Pennsylvania's farm community today.

Although the elaborate set and the handsome actors are missing from this scene, the plot is much the same. A 'pigeon' is singled out by a group of swindlers and the play to take the money and run begins.

The con artists are disguising themselves as reputable business people in this act, and are using the current economy as a backdrop in order for their scam to succeed. They're offering folks, especially small businesses, farmers, and families looking for a home, what is an 'unbelievable' deal — low interest rates of 8 75 percent when commercial lenders are charging around 19 percent.

The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association has warned its members to be "extremely cautious" before becoming a borrower when approached by a purveyor of low-interest money. In their recent newsletter, PFA has reported the Pennsylvania Department of Banking is currently working on an investigation involving these "unknown lenders."

"Similar operations are under investigation in Indiana and Ohio," reports PFA "At least 60 Indiana farmers and another 24 in Ohio have not received low interest loans after paying \$1,000 each to secure their loans plus application fees of several hundred dollars. Farmers in New York, Minnesota,

Wisconsin, Colorado, and New Mexico have also reportedly applied for similar low interest loans"

Unlike Hollywood's version that kept its audience rooting for the underdogs Redford and Newman, in today's drama the villains truly are the bad guys and unsuspecting, trusting farmers are the ones that need support.

A word to the wise is sufficient, they say. In this case, we'll make an exception and use two words — "Be skeptical", at least until a legal service has checked every dotted 'i' and crossed 't' for you.

The same skepticism needs to be employed when approached for donations from groups claiming to represent the farm community.

It has been brought to our attention that a person "representing" the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been calling on local farmers requesting contributions in the amount of \$125 minimum. These funds are said to be going toward lobbying efforts for ag legislation in Washington, D.C.

According to an informed source, this person is using the reputation of local Ag Chamber of Commerce Councils to get a foothold, even though his group has no connection with the local Chamber

"This person is telling farmers the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is supporting 75 percent parity and is sup-

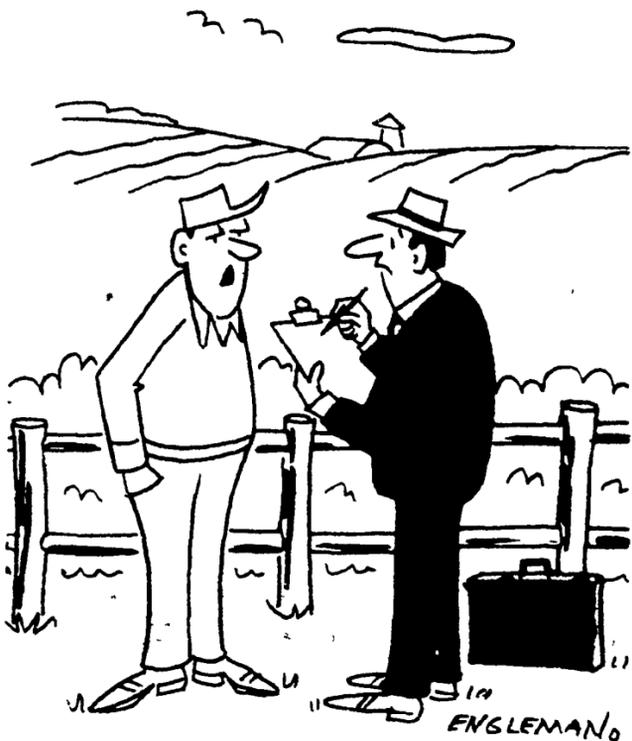
porting the Senate Bill," reports the source. "When we checked with the U.S. Chamber office in Washington, which is more interested in business than farming, we learned the only mention the U.S. Chamber has of agriculture in their lobbying efforts is that the Secretary of Agriculture should have the discretion to make a semi-annual price adjustment in dairy pricing."

The question here is not whether it is right or wrong to contribute to the U.S. Chamber, but is there a sound reason to donate funds? If a farmer's hard-earned dollars are going to support ag lobbying efforts in legislation, aren't they better invested in well-established farm representatives such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, Grange, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Farmers' Union, and other similar lobbying organizations whose interests are strictly for the farmer?

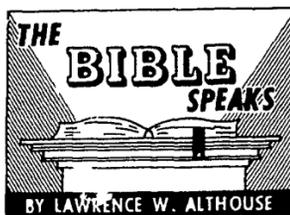
We commend farmers for taking an interest in their futures through legislative policy-making channels and also for being shrewd business people who try to make the most profitable investment decisions. Farming is a legitimate business with few ways of taking people across

Unfortunately that can't be said for other businesses in this free enterprise system So be cautious and careful — don't get stung

HAY HAWS



"Which pest gives me the most trouble? That's an easy one to answer — any guy who bugs me for money."



JUSTICE FOR THE STRANGER

August 2, 1981

Background Scriptures:
Deuteronomy 16:18 through 17:20; 24:1-22

Devotional Reading:
Isaiah 55:1-9.

When I was a boy I knew a little about the legendary Satchel Paige. I remember that my father told me he was one of the greatest baseball pitchers of all time. I also knew that he was black (in those days "Negro" was the proper term) and that because of this he had never played in the major leagues, although my father told me that he had appeared against some major league all-star teams in exhibition games and struck-out all of the big stars.

But for some reason, I cannot recall that I felt any overwhelming sense of injustice that this great athlete was denied his opportunity because of his color. Perhaps I did, but I can't recall it. Maybe I simply accepted that's the way things were.

One of Your Brethren

A few evenings ago I was watching a television presentation of the life of Satchel Paige. As I watched this man's story, I was overwhelmed with a sense of shame and indignation as I realized that "the way things were" in those days— whatever else we might say about them—was terribly unjust.

Worst of all, however, was the

realization that Satchel Paige's story is but a symbol or token of the monstrous injustices endured by the black people of this country, despite the prevalence of this nation's Judaic-Christian heritage which is founded so strongly on the concept of justice— particularly justice for those who do not have the power to grasp it for themselves: "you shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge..." (Deuteronomy 24:17).

Justice between equals is assumed, but what the ancient law of Israel was particularly concerned with was justice between the have and the have-not, between the strong and the weak: "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners who are in your land..." (24:14). It is one thing to refrain from being unjust to a family member, neighbor or friend, and something else to refrain from taking advantage of someone who seems permissible "fair game".

For He Is Poor

Furthermore, the law is concerned, not only with outright oppression, but the more subtle kinds of injustice. For example: "you shall give him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down (for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it); lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be sin in you" (24:15). Because he is weak and you are strong, it is unjust to take advantage of him or to stand by and permit someone else to do so. It is sin!

But you can't legislate morality, can you? Apparently Deuteronomy thought so: "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow" (24:21).

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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TO PREPARE THE SILO

The corn crop is developing rapidly and soon it will be silo-filling time. The condition of the silo should get some attention before the new crop crop is ensiled.

Many of the concrete silos may be pitted and have a rough inside surface. This will allow air pockets and cause moldy silage. Some inside joints may need to be re-pointed in order to keep out the air and have a smooth surface.

Don't wait until the silo filler is coming before you make these repairs.

Silage is one of the best and most economical feeds on our farms today; let's not spoil it after it is in the silo.

TO RENOVATE OLD PASTURES

Permanent pastures that contain poor stands of grasses and weeds, can be renovated and re-seeded with good results during late August and early September in this part of the country. The old sod should be destroyed by plowing, discing or killing with a herbicide, and a good seed bed prepared.

Lime and fertilizer should be applied according to a complete soil test. Early fall is one of the best times to make a new seeding of pasture or other turf. The cooler weather of the fall, along with normally extra moisture, will give the new plants a good start well before cold weather arrives. These plants will stand the heat of next summer better than a spring seeding.

ORDER LATE SUMMER AND FALL SEEDS

The late summer and fall seeding season is rapidly approaching. We should be making

plans now for the August seedings of alfalfa. Winter barley and wheat seedings should be planned and orders placed for the right kind of seed.

Don't wait until seeding time and then discover the supply is exhausted. We strongly suggest certified seed so you realize the most from the fertilizer and other inputs.

If you plan to use home-grown seeds, they should be tested at the Pennsylvania Department of Agricultural seed laboratory. Don't waste time and money on poor quality seed, you also could be spreading disease and weed seeds.

TO BEWARE OF LIGHTNING DANGER

High temperatures often bring severe thunder and lightning storms, we've had some in recent weeks and no doubt there will be more to come. Parents need to warn their youngsters of the danger of standing under a tree or swimming in a pond or creek before and during a storm. Safety in a truck, car or a building should be encouraged as the storm approaches as well as during the storm. Stay away from electric fences and farm equipment that is out in the open.

Buildings with lightning rods should be checked to be sure the rods are grounded in moist soil and free of debris that would prevent the cable from taking the charge into the ground.

Electrical storms are dangerous and safety measures should be adopted.