



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

Memorial Day or "hayday"?

Memorial Day christens the long-awaited summer season with picnics, swimming pool parties, and parades.

But for most farm kids, Memorial Day memories aren't filled with these kinds of fun. Instead, our hard-working parents convinced us that a day spent making hay was the best possible way to observe this national holiday.

While all our other school friends were busy enjoying themselves at the park or in the pool, we 'lucky' few who lived on farms were equally busy raking, stacking, and sweating. Somehow, we never were the envy of our peers.

Occasionally, the innate salesmanship ability that seems to come to farm kids had a way of working in our favor, though. With only slight exaggeration, we'd broadcast the great muscle-building, weight losing benefits of spending the day in a sweltering hay mow. Sometimes we'd be so convincing, we'd sell the "townies" into a day on the farm — for physical fitness, of course. Unfortunately, these types of sales usually worked only once. After one day on the farm, most town kids never wanted to come back for a second bout with "hayrobics."

The constant struggle to find helping hands was usually fruitless, however. Speaking from experience, about the only kids who were "conned" into blistered hands and aching backs thanks to overweight hale bales were the ones who woke up every morning in the farmer's house.

Some good things did come out of those holidays spent haying. For instance, we farm kids kicked off the summer season with great tans — a little uneven though, thanks to T-shirts and long pants that were the armor needed to protect limbs from the prickling hay stems and occasional poison ivy leaves.

We also learned the basics of assembly-line manufacturing. One kid on the wagon, one at the elevator, and one in the hay mow was the ideal. But occasionally we learned how to improvise and "cut costs" by eliminating the elevator person. That allowed two people in the mow — one to pitch bales and the other to stack — and helped the wagon person to develop better aim and timing, accuracy needed to drop hay bales into the narrow mouth of an elevator.

By the end of the day, as we neared exhaustion, it was always a time for

celebration when we saw Dad heading in the farm lane pulling the last wagon behind the baler. That was a signal that our work detail was almost over and there might still be time to take a swim or play some volleyball. How great that water would feel on tired, aching muscles after the initial pain that is felt when scratched arms and legs are emersed.

But, nine times out of ten, just as we were climbing down out of the mountain of hay for the day, black, ominous clouds would roll across the horizon and put the final damper on our holiday spirits. Dodging raindrops in a mad dash to the house, we would have to forget about our chance to play until all the house windows were battened down.

While most folks wish for bright, sunny holidays, there were times when we all had the fleeting naughtiness to wish for a "harmless" drizzle. The damp weather might "rain on everybody else's parade," but it also would put an end to the day's haymaking efforts without ruining the crop. Then we could watch the twirling batons instead of the spinning rake teeth, and hear the beat of the drum instead of the pounding of the baler.

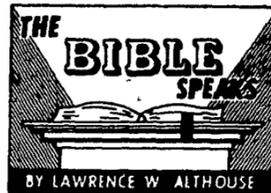
For all our complaining about Memorial Days on the farm — itchy, sweaty, sun-stroke holidays — most of us farm kids wouldn't trade them for the any other way of life. It's just one of the dues we pay for the numerous joys that life on the farm brings, not only on holidays but everyday.

Just recently we received a letter from two young students who would like to experience life on the farm — an American farm. The two students are in their third year at an agricultural college in France. They write

"Between the third and fourth year, we have the possibility of taking a sabbatical year. During this year, we decide to discover the states and especially the U.S. agriculture. So we would like to work in an American farm or in an associated business during several weeks."

Perhaps they wouldn't mind helping with the haying next Memorial Day. Heaven knows, we all could use some extra hands around the farm. They could improve their English, and we could learn French.

If you'd be interested in giving two students a taste of U.S. farm life, why not drop a line to Mr. Picard, G. and Mr. Aubry, J.F., 24 Rue Aug-Fonteneau, 49044, Angers Cedex, France.



COMING SOON
May 30, 1982

Background Scripture:
Revelation 21 through 22
Devotional Reading:
Matthew 11:25-30.

There is a sobering warning at the end of John's Revelation (22:18,19) that no one should miss:

I want everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

It is a warning, not only to those who would literally take away or add words, but those who would use words to make the prophecy say something that John's angel did not intend.

ALL THINGS NEW

But that leaves us with a tremendous problem, doesn't it? For the Book of Revelation is the most difficult to understand of all the books of the Bible. It literally begs us for interpretation. What is meant by the vision of "a new heaven and a new earth"? Where shall we find the "new" Jerusalem? Here on earth or in heaven? And where is it that "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be

mourning nor crying nor pain any more..." and when will "the former things have passed away?"

Furthermore, through John's Revelation Christ promises us, "Behold, I am coming soon." But how soon is soon? For almost 2,000 years Christians have been predicting that the Second Coming was right around the corner. But here we are in the year of 1982 and "I am coming soon" cannot mean what some of Christ's followers thought it meant. Do these words still have something to say to us?

I must confess that I have trouble with much of the Book of Revelation. John's visions confuse me in the same manner that my dreams confuse me sometimes. The pictures are fleeting, ever-changing and the symbolism could mean many things. Yet, like my dreams, the visions of John can convey a message even if I don't understand the complex pictures themselves.

COME, LORD JESUS

I really do not have to know the location of the "new heaven" and "new earth." I do not have to understand the symbolism of the timetable for the fulfillment of God's plan. I do not have to recognize all the beasts and figures in Revelation—or any. All of these details are like trees in a vast forest and I must not miss the forest for the trees. I do not know when, how or where all these things shall come to pass, but I can continue to hold fast to my discipleship in Christ in a darkened world convinced that the world is still in God's hands and will eventually become what he created it to be.

"Coming soon" may mean tomorrow or millennia from now. It matters not so long as I know Who is coming and what He means to me.

Farm Calendar

Saturday, May 29
York County Dairy Princess program, 4-H Center, near Bar.
High-tensil electric fence workshop, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., farm of Don and Carol Good, 2533

Broadenbaugh Rd., White Hall, Md.
Bradford County Dairy Festival, Towanda, parade at 11 a.m., milking contest at 1 p.m., dairy princess pageant at 8:15 a.m.,
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NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
Phone 717-394-6851



To Fertilize Alfalfa

Alfalfa is an important crop in our livestock program and every effort should be taken to maintain a healthy stand. This would include top-dressing, at least once a year, with phosphorus-potash fertilizer to replenish the roots with these two major elements.

A very good time to make this application is after the removal of the first cutting. A well fertilized stand of alfalfa can withstand insects and other abuses much better than one lacking fertilization.

Keep in mind that the first cutting of alfalfa removes about one-half of the tonnage produced on an acre for the year, so a lot of

plant food is used up in the first cutting.

To Check Corn Fields for Weed Control

Much of the corn that was planted during the first two weeks of May is now showing weed problems. The conditions were excellent for planting, warm and dry, so a lot of the herbicides that were applied were not activated in the dry soil. Then the rains started during the last part of May, bringing the corn and the weeds along.

At this time, we suggest you take a walk through your corn fields to determine if the weeds are being controlled or not. If weeds are actively growing, then consider

spraying with a herbicide. Depending on the kind of weed involved, broadleaf or grass weeds, use Bladex or Atrazine plus oil or surfactant or Banvel or Basagram.

Post-emergence weed control herbicides must be safe to use on corn and be applied according to precautions on the label.

To Be Aware of Ticks

The tick season is here. These pests may be on almost any dog or person that walks through uncultivated fields or woody areas from May to September.

Ticks await their victims on low-growing shrubs and on tall grass.

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HAY HAWS



"Leroy? Durned if I know. He was here a minute ago."