



# OPINION

## Miles Of Copy

We've learned how fragile our hold on life can be, with the death early this week of former and longtime Lancaster County Extension Director John Schwartz, who contributed what can only be measured in the miles — of copy, that is. His contributions to *Lancaster Farming* can't go unnoticed.

A half generation of readers participated in his work, with John's weekly dedication to writing *Now Is The Time* (he never missed a deadline). His contributions to our story-gathering, providing story tips, allowing us to attend countless Penn State gatherings, informing us of important happenings, and the untold way he influenced how we gathered the news... it's a Herculean task, at least, to recall all he has done for the editorial staff and readers of *Lancaster Farming*.

I remember John mostly for the countless Penn State Poultry Health and Management Seminars, still ongoing almost monthly, at Kreider's Restaurant in Manheim. Of course, John was instrumental in helping us cover the Poultry Progress Days seminar every March in Lancaster, in addition to the long-past Northeast Poultry Conference, and in past Poultry Sales and Service Conference meetings at Penn State. He also contributed Poultry Pointers columns for our paper.

I remember attending a Lancaster Cooperative Extension banquet a few years ago when John was still extension director in Lancaster. As part of his duties, he addressed those in attendance. He recited numbers — I seem to remember something about how many people attended the meetings and the number of articles about cooperative extension, many of which appeared here. It was then I realized how much extension meant to our paper, how critical their work, and his work, was to ours.

One final thought: what stands out most about John was that he was one of the few people I knew who began and ended a meeting right on time. He was a stickler for timeliness — this made a perfect match for his "Now Is The Time" contributions.

We're proud to be able to honor him mostly for his work as columnist, for his countless editorial contributions to *Lancaster Farming*, and for his contributions to farming in general.



**Now Is The Time**  
By Leon Ressler  
Lancaster County Extension Director

### To Remember John Schwartz

Agriculture lost a friend and enthusiastic supporter when Dr. John Schwartz passed away unexpectedly August 20. John worked tirelessly to promote agriculture. Virtually all of John's adult life he served in a number of assignments with Penn State Cooperative Extension.

He began his career working on the extension staff in Adams and Chester counties and later served as a regional poultry agent. He was known by many for his efforts during his 10-year tenure as Lancaster County extension director, including writing this column. John was very committed to youth development and strongly supported the 4-H program.



John Schwartz

In recent years John shared on numerous occasions with this staff the importance of balancing work and family commitments. I respected him greatly for demonstrating this in his own life when he stepped down as Lancaster County extension director, a position he loved and fulfilled with all his energy, to take the director position in York County. Since John lived in York, this change allowed him to spend more time with his family. Sadly he only had several months to enjoy this extra time at home. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife Kathryn and children Katie and John.

John also served in numerous capacities at his church, Advent Lutheran Church in York. He served as usher, senior high Sunday school teacher, Christian Education committee member, and finance committee member.

Brent Landis, agricultural services manager for the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, worked closely with John and shares the following memories: "John joined the agriculture committee of The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry in 1991. John served with a strong devotion on the agriculture committee for nearly 10 years. He was a major contributor to nearly every sub-committee during his tenure, including the formation of the Farm Business School, Family Farm Days, Clean & Green regulations, nutrient management legislation, Agriculture Industry Banquet, township agriculture education, and the 'Lancaster Farming Facts' brochure, along with many other areas.

"John brought dynamic leadership to the agriculture industry in Lancaster County. His extensive knowledge of almost every area of agriculture, complimented with his personal approach, made him a strong consensus builder among people. John was always the person I turned to when facing a difficult decision or when searching for wisdom for future planning. His opinion was highly respected by our agriculture community.

"He was always very involved in the ag community's outreach and education. John loved to put on a chef's hat and make omelets for the Chamber's Board Farm Breakfast. During Family Farm Days, you would find him with the chick-hatching display, educating children about a newborn chick."

Tom Stouffer, president of Lancaster Farmland Trust, also worked closely with John and shares the following comments: "John Schwartz became a trustee of Lancaster Farmland Trust in December 1994. In 1996 he was elected secretary and joined the executive committee. From December 1997 until the end of November 2000, he was chairman of the board of trustees.

"I believe John's leadership during his entire period of board service was instrumental in keeping the organization's focus on preservation as it related to the needs of Lancaster County agriculture. John's approach to problem-solving always took into account the wants and needs of the people involved or affected. This was more than just organizational political savvy. Rather, John cared about others, and he always sought solutions that respected others. He was unafraid of controversy, yet he spoke ill of no one, and he facilitat-

ed realistic conflict resolution. Similarly, because he understood organizations, he appreciated the challenges and opportunities of the day-to-day business activities of the Trust. When he spoke, we listened carefully, and usually heeded!

"John was a strong advocate of farmland preservation. He often pointed out that Lancaster County could be the next Los Angeles County if it did not emphasize the permanent stewardship of its fertile farmland. He supported our efforts at the Trust, and he used his influence to support the growth of county and state preservation programs. As much as any other single individual, I believe he was responsible for bringing farmland preservation into the mainstream of Lancaster County agriculture.

"John was my mentor. He educated me in the ways of agriculture, particularly in Lancaster County, and he assisted me in my role as leader of the Lancaster Farmland Trust staff. I always sought his advice and insight, and he never let me down. I am one of very many who will sorely miss him."

Jim Shirk, with Penn Ag Industries and the Poultry Council, remembers John's tireless efforts on the behalf of that industry. "The poultry growers and processors in Pennsylvania have been especially fortunate to have John's dedication to their industry. John was a catalyst for distributing and creating knowledge plucked from research around the world that had a positive impact and a practical application for our poultry industry. His personal mission to improve poultry efficiency and profitability resulted in an annual Poultry Progress Day, monthly poultry health seminars, and attending countless association meetings that kept growers on the leading edge of production technology, food safety, and environmental stewardship.

"With his sharp eye for economics and politics, John advised the poultry industry on how to maintain a balance of profitability and community involvement that will keep the industry viable for generations to follow. We will truly miss his insight, vision, and passion for poultry as we move into the future he has helped us to see."

John served as my mentor as well for the last 10 years. His encouragement and investment in my life were major factors in my decision to accept the invitation to follow in his footsteps as Lancaster County extension director. His presence and encouragement will surely be missed.

### Quote of the Week:

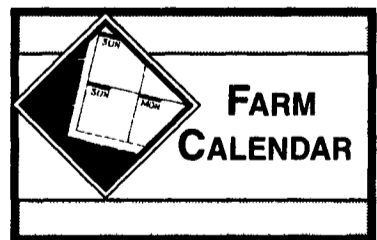
*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."*  
— Jesus (Matthew 5:4)



**Editor:**  
I find it a privilege in my role as regional director to write letters of recommendation and commendation for many of the staff in our organization. While I have never before experienced the loss through death of an

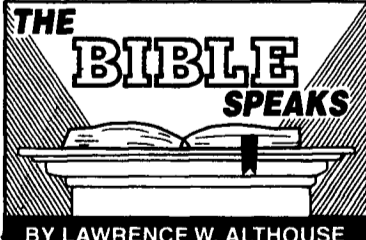
active extension agent, the recent unexpected loss of a colleague and friend, Dr. John Schwartz, prompts me to write this letter to share publicly some aspects of a man's life that has certainly touched and influ-

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- Saturday, August 25  
Pa. Guild of Craftsmen Pocono Craft Fair, Shawnee-On-The-Delaware, thru Aug. 26.
- Seven Springs Wine and Food Festival, Champion, (800) 452-2223, ext. 7757.
- New Hampshire Pork Producer - Council Meeting, Musterfield Farm Day, Sutton, N.H.
- Farm City Day, Laurie and Rob Todd Farm, Lansing, N.Y., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., (607) 272-2292.
- Sunday, August 26  
Indiana County Fair, thru Sept. 1.
- West End Fair, thru Sept. 1.  
Monday, August 27  
Manure Management Field

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### STILL TIME!

**Background Scripture:**  
2 Kings 17:1-23.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Exodus 20:1-16.

Many years ago, while I was teaching a confirmation class, a teen-ager told me he was confused about sin and forgiveness. There were times when he sought God's forgiveness, he told me, but he didn't feel forgiven because he still was paying the consequences of his sin.

Lots of people, I believe, share this young man's consternation. Confessing and repenting our sins does give God the opportunity to give us the most important gift we can seek of him: forgiveness, the restoration of our relation-

ship with our Creator. But that doesn't mean that because we are forgiven the situation is magically repaired. Sin causes other consequences: the damage to ourselves and others. God does not promise to cancel the consequences.

If we have sinned against another person, God will forgive us if we repent, but we may end up with a ruptured relationship that may never be healed. If we drive too fast and have an accident that cripples another person for life, God's forgiveness does not automatically set aside the tragic result of our carelessness. Sin costs dearly!

### Natural Consequences

That is what the people of Israel found — too late and the hardest of ways. Their humiliation and virtual extinction at the hands of the Assyrians were the natural consequences of the willful, arrogant lives they had been living.

The writer of 2 Kings tells us of Hoshea, the King of Israel, that "he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, yet not as the kings of Israel who were before him" (17:2). It is a curious passage, because the writer says that he was sinful, but not as sinful as most of the kings who had preceded him. I don't know if Hoshea would have taken comfort in knowing that he was not the most evil king of Israel, but it was a dubious distinction.

The bottom line is that Hoshea, while not the most evil king, was evil

enough to bring terrible consequences upon the northern kingdom. Sargon II, the King of Assyria, says that he carried away into captivity 27,290 inhabitants of Israel who were scattered in far-away places. History lost track of these people and the ten tribes are often referred to as "the ten lost tribes of Israel." The name of the land changed from "Israel" to "Samaria" and Israel disappeared from world history from that moment on, 722 B.C.

We can feel sorry for them and regret the final outcome, but we can see that they brought these terrible consequences on themselves by arrogantly living and worshipping in the customs of the pagans whom God had subdued. Again and again, God had sent them prophets and the plainest possible warnings: "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes..." (17:13).

### Time To Repent

God was giving them an opportunity, not only for forgiveness, but to escape the terrible consequences that lay in wait for them.

"But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been... They went after false idols, and became false, and they followed the nations that were round about them" (17:14, 15). Worst of all, they indulged in the sacrifice of their own children — with the best of intentions, of course...

It is hard to believe that a people could be so headstrong and rebellious. Of course, they didn't see themselves that way, just as today people would be shocked to see themselves categorized that way. "Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight; none was left but the tribe of Judah only" (17:18).

So, at least there was Judah. The southern kingdom of David could profit by the intransigence of Israel. They could — but they didn't: "Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced." It would take another 136 years for Judah to go the same way as Israel, but in 586 B.C., Judah also was humiliated and carried into captivity.

Why didn't these people ever learn? Why don't we — while there is still time?

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