

**Editor's
Notebook**



Mark Newhall
Editor &
Publisher

Harold Johnson, Rest In Peace

FARM SHOW founder Harold Johnson died Sept. 10, 2006 of complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 77 years old.

I worked for Harold for 16 years and I can honestly say we never had a disagreement of any kind. He was the best boss a fellow could ever have because as long as you did your job, he stayed out of your way. Everyone liked Harold because there wasn't a mean bone in his body. He was a bit of a character who liked to make people smile. Next to his family and church, there was nothing Harold liked better than a good joke. So at his funeral, funny stories were flying as thick as snowflakes in January. He also loved FARM SHOW, the magazine he started from scratch in 1977. In fact, he asked to have a copy of the very first issue of FARM SHOW placed in his casket. His daughter, Julie, also spread copies of FARM SHOW around the funeral home, complete with subscription coupons. "Dad was always trying to sell a few more subscriptions," she told people.



Harold M. Johnson
8/10/1929 - 9/10/2006

Harold was born and raised on a farm near Beresford, South Dakota. After a stint in the army in Germany, he earned an ag journalism degree from South Dakota State University and a Master's Degree from Iowa State. He worked as an editor at Webb Publishing in St. Paul for 20 years, eventually helping to launch Farm Industry News and serving as its editor for 7 years.

In 1977, with three children approaching college age, he left his job to launch a first-of-its-kind "no advertising" magazine unlike anything ever published. He started FARM SHOW from scratch, going from 0 to 25,000 subscribers the first year. After five years, FARM SHOW had more than 150,000 paid subscribers in the U.S. and Canada. Today the publication is approaching 200,000 subscribers and is completing its 30th year. The magazine still accepts no advertising, relying solely on subscriptions from readers.

Harold retired in 1994, and spent the past 12 years surrounded by friends and family. He traveled a great deal, including a trip to the 2000 Olympics in Sidney, Australia, and could often be found "down at the farm" in South Dakota, where he still owned his family's original homestead. Although he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease shortly before retirement, he did not let it keep him from getting out in the world, and he continued to actively "make the rounds" of friends and family, always ready to brighten the day of any and all who got to spend time with him.

In addition to publishing, Harold was an active member of his church, singing in the choir and soloing for weddings and funerals. He was also an active member of a local barbershop chorus for many years. In fact, members of the chorus sang hymns "barbershop style" at his funeral.

His wife Joan, who co-founded FARM SHOW with Harold and worked here for 17 years, passed away in 1997. He is survived by his sister, three children, and six grandchildren.

If Harold were here today, he'd tell me not to make too much of a fuss. Then he'd probably tell a joke. Since his favorite jokes often involved those hapless Swedes, Ole &

Lena, I thought I'd pass along a few of the ones he was especially fond of:

- So, one night Ole was sitting reading the paper when he looked out the window and saw that his barn was on fire. He quick jumped up and called the fire department and said, "Hurry, come quick, my barn's burnin' down!" The fire chief replied, "Ole, slow down. Now how do we get there?" And Ole said, "Well don't you have that little red truck anymore?"

- In the middle of the show, Ole stands up and yells at the ventriloquist, "Hey! You've been making jokes about us Swedish people long enough! Cut it out!"

And the ventriloquist says, "Take it easy. They're only jokes!"

And Ole says, "I'm not talking to you, I'm talking to that little guy sitting on your knee!"

- Ole and Sven grabbed their poles and headed out to do some ice fishing. As they were augering a hole in the ice they heard a loud voice from above say, "There are no fish under the ice."

Ole and Sven moved about 25 ft. over and started to make another hole. The voice said a little stronger, "There are no fish under the ice."

They both looked around and then looked up. Ole said in a humble voice, "Are you God?" The voice spoke back, "No ya idiots! I'm the ice rink attendant."

- A man stumbles up to the only other patron in a bar and asks if he could buy him a drink. "Vy sure," comes the reply. The first man then asks: "Ver ya from?"

"Sveeden," replies the second man. The first man responds, "Ya don't say, I'm from Sveeden too! Let's have anudder round to Sveeden."

Curious, the first man then asks: "Vere in Sveeden are ya from?"

"Stalkhome," comes the reply.

"I can't believe it," says the first man. "I'm from Stalkhome too! Let's have anudder drink to old Stalkhome."

Curiosity again strikes and the first man asks: "So, vere did you live?"

"On a boat, at da fishin docks," replies the second man.

"Dis is unbelievable!" the first man says. "I lived on a boat at da fishin docks, too!"

About that time in comes one of the regulars and sits down at the bar. "What's up?" he asks the bartender.

"Nothing much," replies the bartender, "Ole and his brother Sven are getting drunk again."

- A neighbor asked Ole why the Swedish government doesn't draft men until age 45. Ole Explained, "Dey vant to get dem right outta high school."

News From The World Of Lutefisk

One of Harold Johnson's favorite foods was lutefisk, an aromatic, jello-like white fish that many people find disgusting but others - mostly Scandinavians - call a little slice of heaven. I got a call from a friend of Harold's the other day who, until recently, sold lutefisk for one of the biggest



Got a hankering for some slimy white fish? Now you can get it delivered to your door!

lutefisk producers in North America, Mike's Fish in Glenwood, Minn. They were the "inventors" of the Lutefisk TV Dinners featured in our Vol. 29, No. 5 issue. Anyway, turns out Mike's Fish recently closed its doors due to the death of the owner. So Harold's friend wanted me to pass along to lutefisk lovers that there's a new place to get your fish fix called Jana Maes Lutefisk in Brooten, Minn. Jana sells it by mail for \$6.99 per lb. and it comes frozen, packed in ice. Just call 877 732-9997 or 320 346-4070. But beware! It's not for everyone!

Liberty Quotes

"If politicians don't respect the law, why should citizens respect politicians?" *Debra Saunders*

"Love your country, but never trust its government."

Robert A. Heinlein

"We must not overlook the role that extremists play. They are the gadflies that keep society from being too complacent." *Abraham Flexner*

"The last of the human freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." *Viktor Frankl*

"Truth always rests with the minority, and the minority is always stronger than the majority, because the minority is generally formed by those who really have an opinion, while the strength of a majority is illusory, formed by the gangs who have no opinion - and who, therefore, in the

next instant (when it is evident that the minority is the stronger) assume its opinion...while Truth again reverts to a new minority." *Soren Kierkegaard*

"Distrust everyone in whom the impulse to punish is powerful." *Friedrich Nietzsche*

"Politics must be the battle of principles...the principle of liberty against the principle of force." *Auberon Herbert*

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary." *H. L. Mencken*

"A government can be compared to our lungs. Our lungs are best when we don't realize they are helping us breathe. It is when we are constantly aware of our lungs that we know they have come down with an illness." *Lao-Tzu*

"In general, the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to the other." *Voltaire*

If You Were Busy Being Kind

If you were busy being kind
Before you knew it you would find,
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true
That someone was unkind to you.

If you were busy being good
And doing just the best you could,
You'd not have time to blame a man
Who's doing just the best he can.

If you were busy being true
To what you know you ought to do,
You'd be so long you would forget
The blunders of the folk's you met.

Aaron Byler

Great Gift Idea For Christmas

If you've got a hard-to-buy-for farmer or rancher on your Christmas gift list this year, why not do your shopping right here?

Many readers who gave FARM SHOW for Christmas last year wrote to tell us they've never given a gift which generated so much response from appreciative recipients.

Your first gift subscription is \$19.95 (\$25.95 Can.). Each additional gift is only \$12.95 (\$16.95 Can.). If you like, you can give the "First Gift" to yourself as a one-year extension of your own FARM SHOW subscription, entitling you to give reduced rate gift subscriptions to friends, relatives, business associates, students, or others.

Use the handy order form inserted elsewhere in this issue to order your Christmas gift subscriptions, or call us toll-free at 800 834-9665 24 hrs. a day.



Last year I replaced several windows in our house and they are the energy efficient kind. But this week I got a call from the contractor complaining that his work had been completed but that I had yet to pay for them.

Boy oh boy, did that get my blood boiling.

Now, I'm not stupid. I proceeded to tell him what his fast talking salesman told me last year. That in one year these windows would pay for themselves.

There was a silence on the other end of the line, so I just hung up and I haven't heard back. I guess I must have won that argument...

A father and son went fishing one day. After a couple hours out in the boat, the boy suddenly began asking questions about their surroundings. "How does this boat float?" he asked his father. His father thought for a moment, then replied, "I don't rightly know, son." The boy returned to his contemplation, then looked again at his father. "How do fish breathe underwater?" Once again the father replied, "Don't rightly know, son." Next the boy asked, "Why is the sky blue?" Again, the father replied, "Don't rightly know, son." Worried he would annoy his father, the boy said, "Dad, do you mind my asking all of these questions?" "Of course not, son. If you don't ask questions, you'll never learn anything."