

CHEATERS NEVER PROSPER

Fifty-nine years ago, when I was seven, my father taught me a valuable lesson in honesty, that money is good when it is truly earned.

To keep myself in pocket money, to pay for my supply of soda pop, I had a list of jobs and what I charged for the service.

Polish shoes 1 penny
Go to the store 1 penny
Kill flies-25 for 1 penny

The most frequent job I was hired for was killing flies. One hundred and twenty five dead flies equaled one strawberry soda pop, my very favorite.

I had the busiest flyswatter in town and killed unmercifully. The remains went into a fruit jar with a lid, labeled FLIES.

One day I noticed there were more flies around food than anywhere else. I baited them with leftovers of every description, then waited to destroy them as they landed. Swat-pop . . . then click went the jar lid. Another fly had given his life for my cause.

There was a sticky, long coiled paper, called a flytrap that hung from the ceiling over the kitchen table. Its purpose was to attract flies and kill them. I thought "my purpose too."

I remember one Saturday, when I was thinking with the greedy side of my brain, "If I can get those flies off that paper and into my jar, I will save myself a lot of work." I crawled up on the table, took down the device, and went to my favorite hiding place behind the kitchen door.

I had the God-awfulest time getting the dead flies off that sticky paper without getting stuck to it myself, or leaving behind telltale heads, legs, and wings on the paper. I knew, by how full my jar was, that I must have doubled my usual take of 200.

The next morning, Sunday, was the day my father and I tallied my kill and I would get paid. This particular Sunday I opened the jar, turned it upside down on a piece of newspaper and out came the flies in a big clump. Normally they would spread out and be easy to count. My father just smiled and said, "I don't think we'll count them today, Lois," he continued, "It looks like about one hundred to me."

Instead of getting my anticipated sixteen cents, I, in fact, had lost half of the honest amount that was coming to me.

A lesson well learned...Cheaters never prosper...

by Lois Dill

