Today's Investor

By Thomas E. O'Hara

Q. I am interested primarily in income from my stock investments. As a result most of the stock I hold is in electric utilities. This bothers me because I am in just one line of business and I would like to be in some other businesses. At the same time I would like you to keep in mind that income is important. Can you tell me of some other investments that would be about as dependable as electric utilities and also have some possibility of growth? I really would like to have a chance for my dividends to increase pretty regularly.

* * *

A. I receive quite a few requests for the same information. An answer to your question is provided every month in a column entitled "High Yield and Progress" which appears in Better Investing. Let me cite some of the illustrations given in that column in recent months.

One is First Union Real Estate which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and headquartered in Cleveland. It is the largest equity real estate investment trust in the country. The dividend on its shares, which recently were selling at $29, is $2.00 and provides a yield of 6.9 percent. That's not quite as much as you are getting on your utilities, but for the last ten years the dividend has been increased at an annual rate of 10.4 percent per year.

Another company to consider is W.R. Grace. It is a combination of chemical, energy, retail and restaurant businesses that have grown at a good rate. Its price has tended to be low because a major part of its business is in the fertilier industry which has been hurting the depressed form economy. It also has an energy business which is suffering from the general condition of that industry.

At a recent price of $43, the $2.80 dividend gives a yield of 6.5 percent. Over the past five years the dividend has been increased at an average rate of 7.2 percent a year. The company is well managed and when the present problems in its industry are overcome, there could be a surge in profits that might yield even more income to shareholders.

Another company which could be of interest is Primark Corporation. Its $1.10 dividend gives a yield of only 5 percent on the recent price of $22, but in just three years the dividend has grown from 80 cents. That's a 37 percent increase. The major business of the company is the distributions of natural gas, but as the company generates cash it is diversifying into other businesses as well, and the prospects for growth seem to be very good.

Oneok is also a company that, like Primark, has a sizeable part of its business in natural gas distribution. In addition it is in the pipeline business and in the energy business searching for new oil and gas supplies. Its business is slow at the moment, but generally the company has had an excellent record of growth and dividend increases. Recently it sold at $31½ and it's $2.56 dividend provided a yield of 8.1 percent.

All of those businesses have a little more risk than your electric utilities, but their records suggest they also are likely to provide growing income for shareholders.

* * *

Mr. O'Hara welcomes your questions and comments, but will answer them only through this column. Readers who send in questions on a general investment subject or on a corporation with broad investor interest and whose questions are used, will receive a complimentary one-year's subscription to the investment magazine BETTER INVESTING. For a sample copy of BETTER INVESTING Magazine or information about Investment Clubs write: TODAY'S INVESTOR, P.O. Box 220, Royal Oak, Michigan 48068.

New York — Lloyd Christie, 50, and his wife, Nilva, enjoy Christmas in the spotlight as they claim his $10 million LOTTO prize on Dec. 24. A regular ticket buyer, he couldn't remember if he had bought all his usual numbers the day of the drawing. He rushed out to buy a few more—including the winning ticket. 'My wife was irritated,' he said, but she changed her tune when he won. UPI.

Driver wins race without drugs

By Leroux Washington

Who's dancing on the roof of his race car in the winner's circle? It's top black U.S. auto racer Willie T. Ribbs.

The enthusiastic 29-year-old has just finished a winning season with the Motorcraft Ford Capri team. Although edged out of the championship by fellow team member Wally Dallenbach, Jr. Ribbs won seven out of 15 Trans-Am races, which is no small feat.

Besides being a winner on the track, Ribbs won this year's "Set a Good Example" celebrity sports award from the Happiness Club, a project of the Concerned Businessmen's Association of America.

The club's efforts are aimed at getting youths and celebrities to set good examples for other youths by following the guidelines in a common sense booklet entitled "The Way to Happiness." Seven million soft cover copies of this guide to safer, happier living have been distributed since 1981, and a hard cover edition is available in major book stores.

"We give these awards four times a year to those who set a good example for youth from their position in society," said Happiness Club representative Karen Methvin.

Ribbs set a good example earlier this year when a radio interviewer asked him what part celebrities like him could play in curbing drug abuse. Ribbs said that since celebrities can influence others, they should either give up drugs or adopt a professional image that youths can look up to.

Ribbs himself has no time for drugs.

Working through the day — and sometimes into the night — at speeds in excess of 125 miles an hour tends to discourage one from substance abuse. Ribbs is too smart to let drugs dull his reflexes or impair his stamina or hand/eye coordination.

Ribbs feels that if people keep busy heading for a goal they have set themselves, they won't have time for drugs.

"That's an example we all can benefit from," said Methvin.

Residency rule in Chicago biased against blacks

The Justice Department has filed a civil suit challenging the residency requirements of a Chicago suburb that is virtually without black residents as unlawfully excluding blacks from municipal government jobs.

Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, head of the Department's Civil Rights Division, said that the employment discrimination suit was filed against the City of Northlake in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

The suit alleges that Northlake refuses to accept applications for employment as a police officer from anyone who has not resided in an area for one year prior to notification of the examination. This residency requirement has excluded all or virtually all blacks from employment and is not valid or otherwise required by business necessity, the suit charges.

Northlake has no blacks among approximately 63 employees, the suit said.

Reynolds said that the suit against Northlake is the eighth employment discrimination suit against a Chicago suburb in the last few weeks.

This suit, like the previous seven, charges that the exclusion of blacks from employment is purposeful and violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the non-discrimination provisions of the Revenue Sharing Act of 1972.

Reynolds said that Northlake's municipal employment practices were investigated for several months and that the city had been notified that its practices violated the law. Efforts to eliminate the practices through negotiation were unsuccessful, he said.

Other similar investigations in the Chicago suburbs are continuing, Reynolds said.

Reynolds noted that many cities across the nation require municipal employees to be city residents, but allow persons to move into the city after submitting a job application.

He said the adoption of a move-in residency requirement that gives new employees reasonable time after hiring to move into the city would be acceptable.

The suit seeks a preliminary and permanent injunction prohibiting Northlake from engaging in racially discriminatory employment practices and using residency and similar requirements as a qualification for municipal employment.

In addition, the suit seeks to require Northlake to start a vigorous recruitment program to attract qualified black applicants for municipal employment and to notify persons living in the Cook County labor market but outside the municipality that the municipality is an equal opportunity employer.

Mary S. Neal protects our health by stopping questionable foods

Mary S. Neal, officer-in charge of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection and Quarantine Office at Dulles International Airport, and her staff of five quarantine officers could be considered a first line of defense.

They make a career of protecting America's passengers for fresh meat, fruit, plants or other prohibited foreign agricultural products that could threaten the health of U.S. crops or livestock.

For Mrs. Neal and her inspectors, it's all in a day's work. They are among more than 1,000 officers in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, protecting America's agriculture from foreign pests and disease.

Seven a days a week, these inspection crews are on duty at every U.S. international airport. They also inspect ships' cargoes, rail or truck freight, and mail for abroad.

These inspectors guard aginst the entry of potentially dangerous pests such as the Mediterranean fruit fly that infested parts of California in 1981, costing taxpayers $100 million to eradicate.

The center's job is formidable. A few maggots on a piece of fruit smuggled into an agricultural area and carelessly discarded, could start an infestation. In 1983 more than 27 million travelers entered the U.S. in planes and ships, and another 40 million crossed the border from Mexico.

According to Neal, most travelers are aware of the importance of the inspections and are cooperative, but others try to circumvent the checks.

"Some people try to use political clout," she said, "They will say, 'I know my congressman, let me bring this in'."

"I tell them even packages for the President are checked and are seized if they are excluded items."

Neal says people get upset when the lines are long, when there are delays, and especially when baggage carts are in short supply.

"A woman brought in a small ham from a European country," Neal recalled. "I spent 45 minutes explaining why it couldn't be allowed in. There was a virus known to occur in meats from that country."

An emhassy in Washington recently abandoned 40 cases of oranges in tiny gift packages after scale insects were discovered in the shipment Embassy officials decided to have the oranges destroyed.

"We use as many exclusionary methods as necessary to keep out," Neal said. "People frequently carry fruit and meat inside of hand luggage. Most people don't intend to smuggle, but they just don't know all the laws, or are forgetful. However, there is a small percentage that sets out to smuggle. We give them our closest attention."

"Sometimes they'll hide things in unlikely places such as boxes of diapers, but we usually find them," she said.

While still aboard the plane, incoming passengers are given declaration cards on which to list all types of foreign items they are bringing into the country. Later, in the baggage inspection area, they have two more chances to declare items.

Then, if undeclared agricultural articles are discovered, the prohibited products are seized and the offending passenger is fined from $25 to $50 on the spot.

But there's really no need for this, Neal says. "We're just a phone call away. If people planning to travel abroad will talk with us about what they plan to bring back, we can save them a lot of trouble and bother. We'll tell them what can and cannot be brought into the country."

"All they have to do is look in the telephone directory under USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, in major cities across the country."

EDITOR'S NOTE: To find out which foreign food, plant and animal products are prohibited or restricted, write for a free copy of 'TRAVELERS' TIPS. Address requests to TRAVELERS' TIPS, USDA/APHIS, 700 Federal Building, Hyattsville, MD 20782. (Specify English, Spanish, Italian or Japanese.)

Family comedy makes TV comeback

NEW YORK — Garth Ancier, NBC vice president for current comedy programs, would love to meet Bill Cosby's real-life kids.

That's because he is fascinated with the way "The Cosby Show" deals with family life and parent-child relationships. It may or may not be a coincidence that Bill Cosby has four children — the same number of kids that his character, Dr. Cliff Huxtable, has on the TV sitcom.

"The Cosby Show" not only is the most popular show on television today; it also was a major factor in catapulting NBC into first place in the network ratings race.

Ancier believes "Cosby" marks not only the comeback of situation comedy in general but the comeback of the family comedy that for a long time was overshadowed by the office sitcom.

Situation comedy was in its heyday in the late 1970s — in the 1978-79 television season, nine of the top 10 network shows were half-hour sitcoms, many of them office-related. Then the format went into decline.

"The last big comedy hit was 'Mork & Mindy' back in 1978," Ancier said. "That was sort of a transition show. It was about an alien coming to earth and experiencing families for the first time. It was really a reality-oriented famiy comedy with a warmth and (an) emotional level."

"The Cosby Show," of course, is family-oriented, which, Ancier pointed out, is something to which everyone can relate. Not everyone works in an office, he said, but everyone knows about families.

"The Cosby Show" also breaks a lot of rules, he noted.

"It is not particularly story-oriented," he said. "There isn't necessarily a strong story line, like Denise falls in love with a guy Cliff doesn't like. It is more a series of vignettes of family life loosely strung together.

"Since it is not a story-driven show, its pace is slower than other shows.

"And it has a very interesting style to it. It is not predictable. I read all the scripts and drafts in Los Angeles (the show is shot in New York), and when I see the rough cut, they have thrown in entire scenes I have never heard of."

The key to the show is Cosby himself.

"He will always opt for integrity in storytelling in ways other people won't," Ancier said. "He has very strong points of view (about) other shows, and what bothers him most is when they try to titillate the audience, as opposed to telling something honest that happens every day — like sending a kid out to buy a $7.99 record with a $10 bill and never getting any change.

"That's honest growing-up in a family situation."

Ancier compared that to the first episode of the new Mary Tyler Moore sitcom, "Mary," on CBS.

"Within the first few minutes," he said, "Mary Tyler Moore is mistaken for a hooker. That's not something that normally happens."

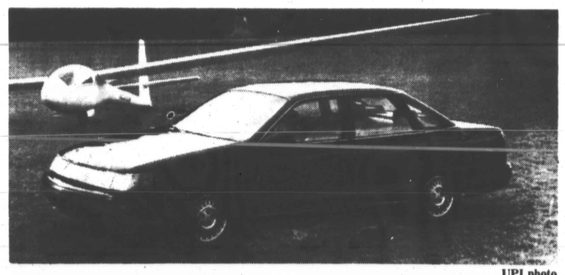
Another reason for "The Cosby Show" popularity is that the parents are strong people who are in charge of the household. The tone was set in the first Cosby show, in which the son tries to excuse his poor school achievement with an impassioned plea to his father to accept him and love him as he is. The audience, accustomed to this kind of youthful self-indulgence, applauded sympathetically.

Cosby as the father stared at his son and said, with impeccable timing, words to the effect of, "I never heard anything so stupid in my life." That brought a surprised and spontaneous roar of laughter.

"The Cosby Show' is one in which the parents are firmly in control," Ancier said. "Adults appreciate strong role models. For years kids on family comedies were precocious little brats. Yes, they were cute, but they were unmanageable.

"We did a show last year called 'It's Your Move.' It had a very strong kid character who got away with an awful lot and parents who really didn't put a stop to it. Kids loved the series but parents despised it. They wanted to know why the parents didn't smack this kid.

"Parents really appreciate 'The Cosby Show.'" (UPI)



UPI photo

A PIONEER — The Mercury Sable LS sedan, along with the Ford Taurus, is part of Ford Motor Company's 5-year, $3 billion program to put an all-new, mid-sized car on the road and create a platform on which to build future models.

Track pull championship set here

The U.S. Hot Rod Association will conduct its first major winter championship event next Friday and Saturday (Jan. 10-11) at the Capital Centre with the presentation of the U.S.H.R.A. Winter Championships & Battle of the Monster Trucks.

Plenty of good seats are still available for the two-day event, to begin each evening at 8 p.m. Tickets, priced at $12 and $14 (Children age 12 and under are admitted for $8), are available at all TicketCenters, including all area Hecht's stores. For the TicketCenter nearest you, or to charge by phone, call (202) 432-0200.

The best 'pullers' and most mind-boggling of monster trucks are being assembled to invade the Capital Centre next week. But while the fans are roaring with delight at the sight of cars being crushed by the 'monsters,' those guys in the pull competition will be gearing up for some hefty prize money.

What is a truck pull? A simple explanation. Unlike many motor sports, time isn't important in pulling. All the pullers have to do is pull a 50,000 - pound piece of metal and wheels (called a sled, boat and battleship, to mention a few nicknames) the entire length of the track and they win. Easy enough, right? There's a catch, though.

As this sled or 'weight transfer machine' moves down the track, the box at the rear of the sled is moved forward by a series of chains hooked into transmissions. The boxes' forward motion and extreme weight — about 40,000 pounds — pushes down on a large pan just behind the pulling vehicle and the friction caused by the pan stops the vehicle. Your job as a driver is to get up enough steam at the outset to combat this 'dead' weight at the end. Congratulations! You've just completed your first lesson in 'Truck Pulling' 101 . . . Next class is set for Friday, Jan. 10 and Saturday, Jan. 11 at 8 p.m. at the Capital Centre. Yes, you could call it a field trip. Oh, do remember to bring some ear plugs or cotton!

Freedom Letter given Dr. Tutu

WASHINGTON (UPI) — South African Bishop Desmond Tutu says a petition condemning apartheid signed by 1 million Americans is "tremendous gesture of solidarity and sympathy" for oppressed blacks in his racially torn country.

The outspoken Nobel Peace Prize winner ceremoniously accepted the truckload of petitions Wednesday, several hundred yards from the South African Embassy, where protests against apartheid have been staged daily for more than a year.

"It isn't a question of economics or politics — it's a moral issue," the Anglican bishop shouted to a crowd of about 300. "Are you for justice or injustice? Are you for freedom or repression?

"The million signatures say we support the struggle for justice and peace in South Africa."

Several people were arrested after the rally for protesting in front of the embassy, including the members of the 1960s folk group Peter, Paul and Mary, but Tutu was not.

Tutu, standing on a milk crate to reach the near—100 microphones on the podium at the late-afternoon rally, called apartheid "a vicious, immoral, un-Christian and totally evil system."

He called the gathering of the signatures "a tremendous gesture of solidarity and sympathy — a wonderful boost for the victims of apartheid. They know they have friends. You are saying 'no' to injustice, evil and immorality.

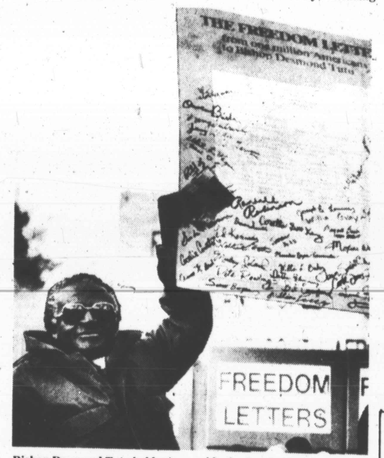
"You say yes to goodness, yes to compassion and yes to joy and laughter."

Washington Mayor Marion Barry told the crowd that he has asked the City Council to rename the two-block stretch of busy Massachusetts Avenue where the South African Embassy sits in honor of South Africa's jailed black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie.

"Everytime (the South African Embassy personnel) makes a call, they'll do it from Nelson and Winnie Mandela Avenue," Barry said.

Randall Robinson, leader of the Free South Africa Movement, said he will soon announce plans to have several corporate groups pull their money out of South Africa. He said he will also ask Congress for stiffer economic sanctions against the white-ruled nation.

"We need Ronald Reagan and the government of this country on the right side of this issue," he said.



Bishop Desmond Tutu holds up a copy of the Freedom Letter outside the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Shown above are two photographs of the Homeless Statue of The Ellipse in Washington, D.C. The work was sculptured by Baltimore artist James Reed. It depicted the plight of the homeless people in the capital city as well as throughout the nation. An inscription reads, 'and still there is no room at the inn.'

Tough being a man? help is on the way

By Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writer

It's a man's world, so goes the adage. But, according to the Urban League's Richard Rowe and Jack Kammer, a freelance writer, men are having a very hard time.

Statistics indicate that men account for three-quarters of the homicides in the state.

Homicide is the major cause of death for young black men, between 15 and 24 and that 94 percent of those processed into the state's correctional institutions are men.

Men now have to battle the Rambo image, the 80's personification of machismo. Rowe and Kammer think that many of the images before men are unrealistic and they'd like to do something about it.

With the help of Delegates Anne Perkins and Elijah Cummings, the two hope for the passage of a House Joint Resolution which would establish a task force on Manhood, Fatherhood and Family.

The bill was introduced in the 1985 session, but was literally laughed out of existence. Many legislators called it "The Wimp Bill" and refused to deal with the issues that it raised.

Cummings decided that perhaps the climate might be more favorable in 1987.

But repeated support from his constituents helped him to change his mind. And, Cummings said that his legislators were beginning to come to him, acknowledging that he might be on to something.

"I found that a lot of male legislators recognized that there were a lot of problems with men, but they didn't want to touch it because they didn't want to offend women," said Kammer.

"We're not in a battle with our female counterparts," said Richard Rowe. "We must begin to look at ourselves to understand why we act the way we do."

The bill would establish a 15-member task force that would examine problems facing the modern man.

"We're looking to redefine the meaning of manhood," said Rowe.

Apparently, other states, are looking to do likewise. Cummings said that he's spoken with people from at least 43 other states. "Maryland is basically taking the lead in this thing," he said.

With memories of the bill's past defeat, Cummings said this time, they're taking a different approach. "This bill deals with the major problems of life. If we as legislators stand by and look the other way, we're being foolish."

The efforts in the state legislator might get a little boost from many social scientists who indicate that the country is returning to old-fashioned values of home and family.

Jack Kammer thinks that the bill has a very good chance of passing. "If it doesn't succeed, it will be because the assembly will be distracted by the S&L crisis," he observed.

Perhaps the assembly would welcome a change of pace this bill might bring.

Oil Corporation donates to Scholarship Fund

A $3,000 grant was awarded to Fort Valley State College by the Cities Services Oil and Gas Corporation of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Mr. Joseph R. Huffstetler, Manager, College Relations and Recruiting, Cities Services Oil and Gas Corporation, presented the check to Dr. Luther Burse, President of Fort Valley State College on Friday, December 13, 1985.

The grant awarded to the college is part of a grant given to three historically black colleges.

Fort Valley State College's affiliation with Cities Services Oil and Gas Corporation grew out of the Cooperative Development Energy Program at the college which is designed to prepare students for potential employment in energy related industries.

According to Huffstetler, areas of opportunity are in accounting and computer science and high tech fields. Opportunities for students in the fine arts are limited but hopefully, companies will come to appreciate those who are in fine arts and can offer a wide variety of skills. Ways are being explored to use those skills that persons in non-technical areas offer.

Technical information and technical writing are areas that are rapidly being opened by companies throughout the country.

Because of the need for companies to maintain a good public image, public relations is another area in which there are job opportunities for non-technical personnel.

"Students should consider relocation when seeking employment," Huffstetler said. "The wage base in oil industry is one of the highest in industry. Life styles can be tailored to fit the career opportunity," he added.

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