

# Opinion

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## Pickets, prayers won't halt nukes

WHEN PEOPLE get frustrated with government, it's often because they seek the wrong remedy.

A person writes to his congressman when his problem is with city hall. A property owner complains about high taxes to the assessor when it's a free spending school board that's raising his bill.

People recall a state senator or two, falsely believing it will lower their taxes, only to find the Legislature gerrymandering itself so that the situation will be worse than ever.

And people opposed to America's use of nuclear weapons try to shut down a defense subcontractor by blockades and prayers.

LET'S THINK through what has been happening with the 53 people who attempted earlier this month to blockade the plant gate of Williams International Corp. in Walled Lake.

Their media event — for they were entirely dependent on the news media to carry their tale — occurred in the congressional district of one William S. Broomfield, R-Birmingham. Broomfield is a known quantity. A member of Congress since the 1950s, Broomfield is a "hawk," as they say, on foreign policy and defense spending. He voted for the cruise missile and the MX warheads. He has consistently advocated the Reagan line on foreign policy. And he doesn't hide it.

Last election the opposition put up a "peace" candidate, Al Sipher, an anti-war fellow since at least the Vietnam War days. He was a respectable candidate — a businessman knowledgeable in economics, a Democratic Party worker knowledgeable in politics, a reader of history.

Well, the voters made their choice and gave something like 70 percent of the vote to Bill Broomfield. The anti-nuclear folks lost one, fair and square.

THE NEXT arena was Congress itself. The bills to manufacture and deploy the cruise and Pershing II missiles were debated loud and long, first in committees, then in one house, then in another batch of committees, then in the second house, finally being signed by the president.

The anti-nuclear people needed to win



Tim Richard

at only one of the five steps, but they lost at all five. They failed to persuade the elected representatives of the American people in two branches of government that manufacturing and deploying nuclear weapons is immoral and dangerous.

Nuclear weapons are now constitutional, the law of the land and the policy of the United States government — like it or lump it.

THE BATTLEGROUND shifted to the manufacturers.

General Dynamics, one of the contractors, is a publicly-held corporation, which means anyone can buy shares. Within the last year it was traded on the New York Stock Exchange for as low as \$30.50 a share, and today it's running close to \$60. There was nothing to prevent all the anti-nuclear people in the nation from buying a controlling interest in General Dynamics and getting that company out of the nuclear weapons business.

To my knowledge, no one even tried. And so they are reduced to the 7 a.m. picketing of an obscure defense subcontractor making engines in the hills of Oakland County. Further, they are dependent on the press — which enjoys a miserable 13.7 percent confidence rating from the public — to tell their story.

IN COURT, they tried to preach their version of morality to Circuit Judge George LaPlata. "I would like nothing better than to debate philosophy with you," said the judge, "but this isn't the time or place. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

The lesson for the anti-nuclear people is the same as for the recall people: Join the political party of your choice; work for candidates who think as you do; when you've learned the ropes, become a candidate yourself.

In the same way recalls don't lower taxes, picket lines at Williams International won't halt nuclear weapons.



## Hunger: narrower but deeper

EVERYONE KNOWS the economy has improved. Unemployment is down, and many of the jobless have been recalled. Inflation has slowed.

One top White House official even doubts if there is a hunger problem in this country. He suggests many people who could afford to pay are going to soup kitchens for free meals.

Don't tell that to anyone trying to help the poor in this area.

FATHER MARTIN of Duns Scotus College in Southfield said, "The river is narrower, but it is deeper." By that he means fewer people may be poor today compared to a year ago, but their problems are more severe.

Lewis Hickson, general manager of the Capuchin Community Center, commented on Father Martin's description. "I'd say it's more like a crack that has become a crater."

Whatever comparison is made, this area has many poor and hungry people. For examples:

The Capuchin soup kitchen has prepared 6,000 more food packages during 1983 compared to 1982.

In December 1982 there were six soup kitchens set up around the Detroit area. This year, there are 22.

Duns Scotus College received 1,263 letters this year from families asking for



Nick Sharkey

food and clothing. Last year, about 1,000 requests were received.

This is the second year Focus: HOPE has delivered food baskets to the low-income elderly. "Requests are up significantly," said Edna Jackson, director of food programs for Focus: HOPE.

WHY HAVE we not seen a reduction in the requests for food and clothing?

"Last year there was much talk of a 'new poor' — meaning people who had never been out of work before," Father Martin said. "Well, they are not new any more. The poor are getting more desperate. They have now lost their possessions — homes and material goods."

Jackson of Focus: HOPE explained that the elderly must first pay utility bills and mortgages before they can start worrying about food.

"Utility bills have skyrocketed in the past year," she said. "At the same time, the federal government has restricted the food stamp program. This means that

many seniors are left with little food."

Sister Helen Danenberg of the Capuchin center said many unemployed persons have no hope of being re-employed.

"Automation has passed them by," she said. "Their jobs have been eliminated by a machine. They will never go back to work."

FOR MOST OF US Christmas is a time for joy. But as a family joins together, it may shut out the rest of the world.

The real spirit of Christmas is one of giving to others. Many churches and social groups are taking on charity projects.

Canned food for the poor can be dropped off at Elias Brothers restaurants or Harmony House record stores.

Look in the garage or basement for used furniture, clothing, appliances and household goods. A call to the Capuchin center at 379-1330 will bring a pickup truck to your house.

Focus: HOPE (883-7440) needs food and clothing for the elderly poor. It is also looking for volunteers to deliver food baskets.

Duns Scotus College (357-3072) is preparing boxes of food and toys for delivery Thursday and Friday. Any donations will be appreciated. Financial contributions are welcomed throughout the year.

Look around and you'll find many more ways to help others.

## How Capuchins' kitchen was born

THE TRUTH of the old saying that great oaks from little acorns grow came to light very unexpectedly the other morning.

While The Stroller was enjoying his morning coffee, he glanced at the paper, and there in cold print was a picture of the lineup of hungry folks at the Capuchin Fathers' soup kitchen on Detroit's east side.

Immediately the calendar turned back a half-century ago, and there in the dining area of the Chene-Trombly Recreation — a bowling establishment — sat Johnny Paulus, the owner, and Johnny Smith, the former mayor of Detroit who at the time was postmaster.

With them was Father Bernard, head of the Capuchin group on Mt. Elliott. The good father was telling about the need for funds to increase the capacity of the soup kitchen he had just opened.

HE MADE an earnest plea. When he finished, owner Paulus, now among the departed, came up with the idea of staging a bowling match, with the funds going to the Capuchin Fathers.

"I'll get a team of old timers," Smith said, and in a few moments the match was arranged. The bowlers, always eager to do their part for charity, quickly consented.

In those few moments, the famed soup kitchen that now feeds as many as 4,000 a day was saved and given a birth that makes it one of the leading charities in the metropolitan area.

On the day of the match, the Chene-Trombly gathering place was filled to capacity, and there were no happier folks than Paulus, Smith and good Father Bernard.

The match was so successful that today it is still carried on though the Chene-Trombly Recreation is only a memory (it burned to the ground several years ago), and both Paulus and Smith have gone to their great rewards. But the bowlers still carry on.



the stroller  
W.W. Edgar

WHEN THE Chene-Trombly Recreation was no longer available, the annual event was moved to Mt. Elliott Recreation, then to Van Dyke Recreation, where each year it draws a crowd that takes up every nook and corner of the place.

The match has become so popular that bowlers vie for a place on either team. It is thought to be an honor to be invited to bowl for the soup kitchen.

The drive to aid the kitchen has advanced beyond the bowling lanes in the metropolitan area. It now encompasses an area "way beyond the city limits and far into the suburbs."

Not only do bowlers still vie for places on the team, but the followers of the ancient game send their checks on the days when they cannot be on hand.

THE SUCCESS of the soup kitchen match caused other bowling establishments to enter the charity field, and now in all sections of the state there are charity bowling matches. Chief among them is the Heart Tournament on the east side.

It long has been the motto in tennis circles that bowlers never forget. They usually are the first group to respond when aid is needed.

But all the activity goes back to that afternoon in the grill room of the now defunct Chene-Trombly Recreation when Johnny Paulus and Johnny Smith answered Father Bernard's plea for help in increasing the capacity of the now famous Capuchin Fathers Soup Kitchen.

It was solid proof that great oaks from little acorns grow.

I OFTEN tell the spouse, "There's no hope for humanity. People will never get together long enough to ban the bomb. They are too selfish to seriously consider actions which would save the world."

Witness the behavior of U.S. citizens in shopping centers who play bumper car to get a prime parking space and then elbow, jostle and stomp each other to buy computer and sale each light specials, Cabbage Patch dolls and other necessities of life.

Furthermore, have you ever seen anyone who returned a shopping cart to the store instead of leaving it blocking a parking space? I haven't. That's proof positive mankind is doomed.

THEN ALONG comes Edwin Meese, the White House staffer whose insensitive remark about feedlots at soup kitchens touched off a flood of publicity which proves there is hope.

Meese told a reporter that many people eat in soup kitchens because they would rather have a free meal than pay for one. He should be thanked by the many philanthropic organizations which have benefited by the ensuing publicity and by Democratic candidates for public office who have already started using the remark as an example of the callousness of the Reagan administration.



Bob Wisler

The soup kitchen line will never be as famous as Marie Antoinette's "Let them eat cake" — a remark, by the way, which was not as supercilious in those times as it has sounded since.

But Meese's remark certainly will rank with the political gaffes of former GM president and Secretary of Defense (under Eisenhower) Charles Wilson. "Engine Charlie" at one point infuriated many citizens when he proclaimed, "What's good for GM is good for the country." At another point, he likened people collecting unemployment benefits to kennel dogs who would rather whine and be fed and said he preferred "bird dogs" that would go out and hunt their own food.

MEESE'S REMARK came at a time of year when many people's fortunes are low and controversial news stories are in short supply.

This is a time when editors and columnists are scratching their heads, staring at the walls and mumbling to themselves.

## Meese boosts soup kitchens

Then, boom, Meese talks. "Hey, Joe," the wire editor yells to the news editor, "Ed Meese just said there's no poor in America. People in soup kitchens just don't want to pay for meals."

Joe springs into action, ordering five reporters to cover all the soup kitchens and to interview all the town's dog-owners to get reactions to Meese's remarks. Instead of a slow news time, we have wonderful three- and four-page spreads about the plight of people in soup kitchen lines.

NOT LONG ago, Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman noted in an interview concerning the probation sentences he gave to the killers of Vincent Chin, that he should be given some credit for uniting the Asian community.

Similarly, Meese's remark, although not intended to help charitable organizations, may have done just that. At the very least, the ensuing publicity has made us aware of organizations working to help less fortunate brethren.

It is when you hear of these things — listed in Nick Sharkey's column — that you realize the real spirit of Christmas is alive, and it becomes much easier to forget about the bumper car drivers, the elbow-jammers and department store jostlers and even the people who refuse to take their carts back to the store.