

Hunger: unpalatable political issue

Thursday, October 10, 1985 O&E

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LAST SUNDAY I had a strange encounter of the uncomfortable kind. It happened somewhere along Six Mile Road in the middle of the CROP walk for hunger.

The encounter of which I speak had nothing to do with creatures from strange planets unless we can call our own planet strange.

Rather it was a meeting between people truly concerned about the plight of the hungry. After all, that was the purpose of the walk. The CROP-sponsored event was to raise both consciousness and money to relieve the hunger of at least some folks who put their children to bed with empty stomachs on a regular basis.

What I came upon was a discussion between walkers. It seems that one of the walkers was carrying a petition concerning the arms race. She was seeking signatures from among the walkers. The discussion was about the petition. Mind you, it was a discussion not a fight but nonetheless disturbing.

Some of the walkers, who, as I have said, obviously cared about the welfare



perspectives

Rev. Robert Schaden

of humankind, took issue with "bringing politics to a walk for hunger." They were apparently unable to understand that hunger is a very political issue in more ways than one.

Obviously many places in this world are agriculturally undeveloped. They do not have the means to feed even their own. There are also more people than most of us would want to put a number on who simply cannot afford food when it is available.

We may wish to attribute these unfortunate circumstances to chance or to laziness but when one looks more closely it becomes evident that there is more than chance or laziness at work.

IN SOME instances it is economical-

ly expedient to leave things as they are. In other instances it may not be blatantly planned but it is the direct result of other endeavors getting dollar priority. In either instance we are talking politics.

On the bottom line, politics is the process that determines when and where and how this world's resources are going to be used. It is just such a process that determines whether the north woods is given to camping and recreation or to oil and gas exploration.

It is such a process that determines whether money goes for education or for highways — and the list goes on. It is also the process that determines whether priority, and therefore money, goes to develop food potential or to test weapons. It is politics that determines timing in South Africa sanctions.

ONE WONDER what would happen to this world's hungry people if the efforts and the resources of the arms industry were matched in endeavors to redistribute food and food technology.

Granted we funneled tons of foodstuffs into Ethiopia when the call went out. It is also true that much of it never reached the people in need. That is politics.

The real food question is not how well we respond to crisis but how willing we are to change priorities and thereby eliminate many crises before they happen.

The bottom-line issue is not even good will. We have a lot of that as evidenced by hunger walks and the other efforts people put forth for the welfare of others.

No the bottom line is becoming aware of the connections between issues such as hunger and arms. It is frightening to learn about connections we do not want to see, but then that is why hunger walks, food baskets and such, as necessary and commendable as they are, will never be enough. It is all very political but with the number of good people obviously out there we can make politics work even if it means letting go of missiles and providing food.

volunteers

Bureau to have open house

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau (OCVB) has a current file of volunteer opportunities for more than 200 agencies. Non-profit organizations needing assistance may list with the bureau. For more information about these and other volunteer openings, please call the bureau at 642-7272.

OPEN HOUSE: The bureau will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 17, second floor, First United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple, Birmingham. Let volunteer interviewers match you with a volunteer job.

CARE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS — Training sessions for volunteers will be given in October by Light House Caregivers in Pontiac. Volunteers provide home visits, transportation, respite care, or light maintenance for seniors in their own

homes. Phone 642-7272.

PARADE WORKERS — Many volunteers are needed to work on Michigan Thanksgiving Parade. Needed for hospitality, costumes, mechanical work, floats and signs, and office workers. Days, evenings, weekends. Phone 642-7272.

PACEMAKER AIDE — Area hospital needs volunteers, 21 and up, who like working with elderly, to perform phone transmissions to pacemaker clinic for home-bound patients. Weekdays, time is flexible. Car necessary. Phone 642-7272.

COUNSELORS — experienced in substance abuse therapy are needed by Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries and Christian Guidance Center. Also needed are Bible study leaders, public relations specialist, and office workers. Hours vary. Phone 642-7272.

Regularity a problem for older people

Dear Jo:
Could you discuss constipation in your column? I know it's not a popular subject.

Mrs. N. (65)

Dear Mrs. N.:
You're right. It's not a popular subject, but it is a common concern found in your age group. Older people are five times as likely as younger people to report problems with constipation.

Constipation is a symptom, not a disease. It is defined as a decrease in the frequency of bowel movements, accompanied by prolonged or difficult passage of stool.

There is no accepted rule for the correct number of bowel movements; regularity for some may be twice daily while others have just two bowel movements weekly. Experts agree that too often older people become overly concerned with constipation and it often becomes over-emphasized ailment.

There appears to be no single cause of constipation. But an older person who eats a poor diet, drinks too few fluids, exercises minimally or misuses laxatives can easily become constipated.

If constipation becomes a problem, the older person should first see his or her doctor to rule out a more serious

problem. If the results show that no intestinal disease or abnormality exists, the following remedies can be helpful:

- Drink plenty of liquids up to two quarts daily. If milk is constipating, avoid it. Calcium intake can be achieved by eating certain other foods.

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables whether cooked or raw and wholegrain cereals and breads. Dried fruits such as prunes, apricots and figs are very high in fiber. Cut back on highly processed foods (sweets) and foods high in fat.

- Add small amounts of unprocessed bran to baked goods, cereals, fruits and yogurt as a way of increasing the fiber content of the diet.

- Keep active. Walking, particularly after dinner is a good way to keep you muscles in tone.

- Avoid laxatives, particularly mineral oil.

- Limit your intake of antacids; some can cause constipation as well as other health problems.

- Attempt to have a bowel movement at the same time each day. Older persons, with constipation problems should try to help themselves with these common remedies and should try very hard not to become preoccupied with this all too-common problem.

Dear Jo:
My friend Steve (age 66) has diabetes pretty bad and has moved to a medium care nursing home. I was wondering if it would be OK to take him out for a drink or a few flats of beer like we used to at our local pub. I'd like to see

him again, but then maybe he can't drink because of his health. Somehow the thought of visiting him in the lobby of the nursing home or in his room just turns me off.

T.O.

Dear Mr. O:
Most residents of nursing homes are able to leave for visits with family and friends, so you can probably take Steve anywhere you and he want to go, even

to your local pub. Steve should know his diabetic diet well, so he can tell you if he can have a drink or not. If he can't drink — you really shouldn't let it interfere with your continuing friendship — he can still eat, laugh, talk etc.

Readers can write to Joyanne Farrell at PO Box 66, Postal Station G, 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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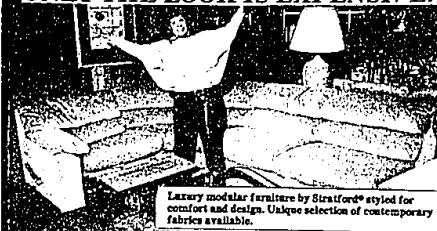
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