

## Some don't deserve Christmas

Christmas is here again. Time for countless Santa Clauses to stand on countless corners lackadaisically swinging their arms next to a Salvation Army kettle. Time for Christmas trees, turkey and dressing and decking the halls with boughs of holly. Time for unwrapping presents, meeting relative strangers, or are they strange relatives?

But while some of us may spend the next few evenings roasting chestnuts over an open fire, certain men on Capitol Hill probably won't be jovially spreading good tidings down Pennsylvania Avenue.

And well they shouldn't.

One Col. Oliver North ought to hang his head in shame if, and we repeat if, he participated in any illegal shenanigans. Evidently, old Machiavelli's students still have some clout today—even in the good old U.S.A.

Some top-level government officials have indicated that if North & Associates had a hand in doublecrossing the Ayatollah Khomeini in order to assist the Nicaraguan contras, then we ought to salute them, kiss them on either cheek and stage a ticker tape parade.

In our opinion, any public official who feels that way is full of beans. Congress passed a law specifically prohibiting the American government from directly and indirectly offering aid in any form to the Nicaraguan contras. And until Congress decided to reopen the spigot, directing a \$100 million flow into the contras' empty buckets, no American government official should have attempted to remedy the temporary drought.

What kind of men are running our government? What does it say about the integrity of the powers that be when a majority of our 535 duly-elected legislators finally agree to slam the door on a certain act, and then various members of the executive branch simply choose to slip under it, around it and over it like some sort of slimy fungus taking over Capitol Hill's bathroom walls?

It's a sordid affair to come to light at any time of year, and some might accuse us of hanging around ol' Scrooge too long, but Christmas dinner in the houses of all who participated in "Transcam" should be deservedly unhappy.

And just wait, some of them may find themselves shaking hands with Santa Claus through parallel steel bars next Christmas.



"THERE'S ONLY ONE DRUG LAW THAT REALLY WORKS ... THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND."

## Budget cuts hurt local meal program

By Pamela Ray  
Guest Columnist

We hear so much today about the problem of world hunger. What are the causes? How can we alleviate it? Why is it that in a country of such rapidly increasing prosperity the problem only worsens?

Some of us are alarmed at the unheeded rise in the poverty level, and as we sit at the dinner table and discuss this heinous breach of justice in a land where so few have so much, we are amazed at the lack of concern.

Granted, all philanthropic works originate through extensive discussion. However, getting these good intentions from the dinner table to the deserving entails steps which the majority of us do not see as our duty to take. Should we choose to get involved there is always the great danger that we will get too close, that the heartache derived from seeing suffering made personal would be more than we could stand.

Ann Flynn, executive director of Asheville's "Meals On Wheels" program, shares that great fear, but she decided the satisfaction gained from taking action far outweighs the frustration of knowing the misery of the poor.

Since 1971, "Meals On Wheels" has been delivering lunches to over two hundred needy Ashevilleans each day. To qualify one need only be homebound, unable to prepare meals and living alone.

Many presume this service is offered only to the elderly but this is a misconception. I recently accompanied her on her luncheon rounds, and she noted that they serve several young adults with cerebral palsy and a middle aged woman with a degenerative brain disease.

As we pulled into the gravel driveway of our first stop, I could see the devastating effects of a life fraught with illness. The house was neglected—its occupant too ill to see it adequately maintained. We carried that day's lunch to the door: turkey with gravy, green beans, candied yams, a whole wheat roll, orange

juice, milk and an unusual treat, an oatmeal cookie.

Mrs. W. (her name is, as are all the MOW's recipients, confidential) greeted us with a smile and invited us in. She told us a charming story about her husband's marriage proposal made to her years ago, saying that although they had decided to get married at the ripe old age of fifteen, Mr. W. didn't ask for her hand till the following year. Her daddy was a preacher and opposed to having his daughter out of the house at such a young age.

As we left, Flynn said that this was indeed the most difficult part of her job. "You do become involved in their lives, and it is difficult to remain detached enough to be effective."

Flynn said that if MOW had the funds, a waiting list of more than 45 people could immediately benefit from the service, and that number grows daily.

The Asheville organization is funded by both federal money and private donations, and Flynn is concerned about federal budget cuts which (because of the Gramm-Rudman Act) resulted in a \$40,000 reduction in available funds. She explained that although MOW receives annual aid from Land of the Sky Regional Council, local churches and service clubs such as Kiwanis and Rhododendron, the amount is neither constant or guaranteed.

Therefore, much of the energy which could be channeled into increasing the program's effectiveness must now be diverted into assuring its very existence. And I believe its continued existence must somehow be assured, for the help MOW provides is astounding.

Programs such as this demand that we abandon dinner table talk, for what's most needed is action. The 190 volunteers now delivering lunches take between one and two hours a week to run their routes.

Pamela Ray is a senior literature major who recently accompanied the "Meals on Wheels" director on her daily rounds.

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