

# EDITORIAL

## Keeping Christmas

In her poem called "Leisure," Grace Noll Crowell wrote: "I shall attend to my little errands of love early this year, so that the brief days before Christmas may be unhampered and clear..."

As for any errands connected with the Yuletide, be they errands of love or the routine ones that go with the season—could anyone start them early enough to have days "unhampered and clear" just before Christmas?

Anyway, the thought is lovely, and it's a worthy goal. We know, as you do, what it's like to be caught up in a kind of frenzy known as Christmas preparations—a pleasant kind of whirlwind we must say.

But has it any merit?

For years the thought has plagued us: Where do we miss the way at Christmas?

All of us work with joy and give with love, but who gets at the heart of things throughout the Christmas season?

Always in the background, wistful and haunting, is the question: What important urgency have we overlooked as we wrapped those shining packages and set up bright red candles in their accustomed place?

If hours run out and there's no time for visits with the lonely, then we've missed the meaning of the celebration.

If weariness and rushing result in frayed nerves, sharp words and lack of patience, then we've been too busy at the wrong things.

If hearts are black with grievances and dulled with jealous grudging, then we haven't heard the angels' proclamation.

If selfishly we gather 'round our fireside and forget to share our bounty, then we don't believe the Christmas story.

We have a little time left—we who dash around in circles, thinking that we're keeping Christmas.

## Spoiled Children

With the acceptance of Red China into the United Nations, a right wing element of U.S. Congressional leaders have raised their voices in protest. Led by Sen. James L. Buckley of New York and ultra-conservative Sen. Peter Dominick of Colorado, a congressional move has begun to withhold U. S. funds to the UN because of the obvious glee in the General Assembly the night Nationalist China was voted out by a majority of the 131 member nations.

Costs to operate the UN have like everything else, steadily increased through the years. Unpaid assessed contributions to the regular UN budget from all countries, including the U.S., amount to \$164 million. A U.S. Congressional subcommittee has decided to withhold a \$20 million appropriation for the proposed UN building expansion in New York, thus adding to the groundswell among UN delegates for a transfer of Secretariat offices from New York to Geneva.

The actions of Senators Buckley and Dominick would appear to be like the proverbial ballgame among youngsters where by the owner of the ball picks up his possession and goes home because he doesn't like the rules.

Secretary General U Thant told the budgetary committee last Oct. 6 that a UN budget for 1972 would amount to \$215 million. The UN, he said, was "in a state of near and hopeless insolvency." Its ability to continue current activities, much less to undertake new ones, "must be seriously questioned," he stated.

Unless enough financial support was forthcoming from member countries, he added, he would have to propose that expenditures be circumscribed by available resources. Such measures "would of necessity be arbitrary in nature and potentially disruptive of important activities and services."

While reform measures are obviously long overdue in many areas surrounding the UN, the location of the 131 member states is an obvious benefit to the U.S. To relocate even part of the big glass house on the East River because of fiscal problems would be appalling when considered that the entire costs of the UN for all member states is less than the cost of operating the New York City fire department for a year.

## Insights and Illusions

by Bruce Hopkins

These things must be explained to me. They are totally beyond my comprehension. Often I am accused of being too sarcastic, too snide, in my views toward the government of this country. Often I have been accused of being unpatriotic. If patriotism means that I support unquestionably the United States policies, then I am indeed unpatriotic. I prefer to believe that patriotism means support of the ideal upon which the American system of government is supposed to be built. It is an ideal that our patriots have somehow gotten away from. Take for example, the following events of the past month:

**Amchitka.** In the interest of national security, the United States takes it upon itself to risk serious damage to world environment by exploding an underground hydrogen bomb of incredible power. It blows up, gives the earth a tremendous shaking, and thus is somehow supposed to make us all feel more secure. It rather did the opposite to me. The very idea that this weapon might possibly be used someday above the ground, is absolutely the most horrifying thought I can come up with. Common sense, and my own personal sense of security, tells me that building a bonfire in my basement to see if the house will burn is not a smart idea.

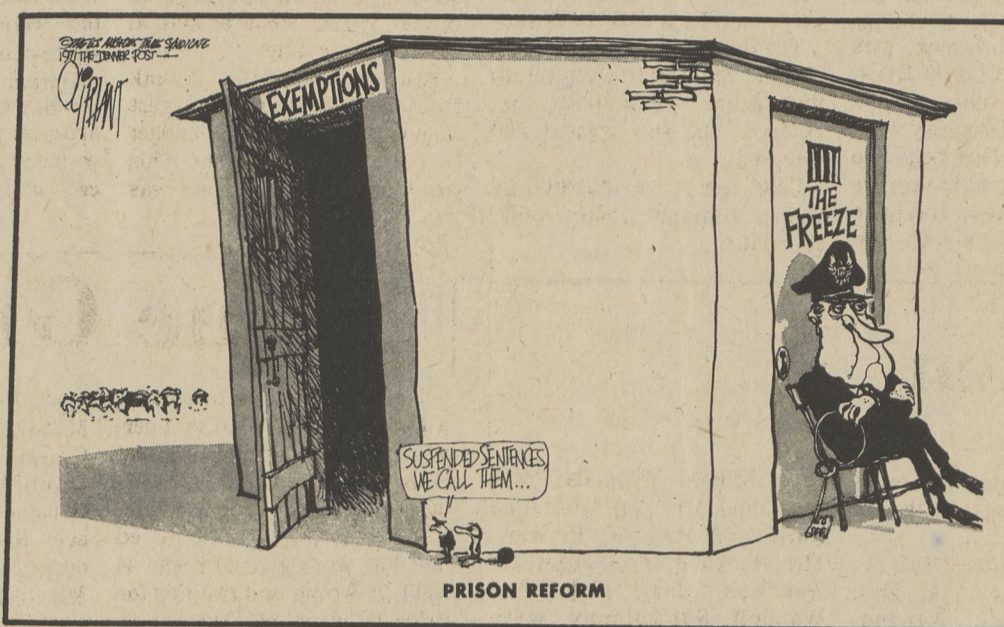
**Col. Anthony B. Herbert.** Here we have a fine example of the American system of justice. Col. Herbert, for those who are not up on these things, is one of the most decorated soldiers in this country. He has served his country in both Korea and Vietnam with admirable patriotism. His sense of humanity apparently obligated him to report several atrocities, to which he was a witness, to some superior officers. When these officers failed to act upon his report, he pressed charges against them. Whether or not he is telling the truth has not as yet been fully established. In the meantime, Col. Herbert is being urged, with little subtlety, to keep his mouth shut, and is undergoing a good deal of harassment by fellow military men. He has been denied

leave from Fort McPherson on the grounds that he must complete a project which consists of initialing a letter and carrying the letter across the hall to his commanding officer. This letter may arrive sometime before November 30. On one occasion, he was subjected to a long period of instruction on how to salute properly and how to stand at attention. I tend to assume that one of the most decorated officers in the country has a pretty good command of these skills.

**The United Nations vs. the United States.** In what was essentially a democratic action, that dastardly institution, the United Nations, opposed the better judgement of the United States in its decision on Red China. As a result, Senator Buckley has proposed that this country withdraw a major part of its financial support to the United Nations, and thus to the world peace and understanding. Worse yet Barry Goldwater has suggested that we force the United Nations to leave the United States and set up shop elsewhere. That's good

democratic thinking: if you don't get your own way, pout. I believe that judicial terms call this action blackmail. This is the American way?

**The Transportation Bond Issue.** New York voters were recently subjected to another experiment in blackmail. In order to receive a temporary postponement in the increase of subway fares, New York City voters were urged to support a bond issue which would also allow the state to continue building unnecessary highways that would cut down trees and destroy some very beautiful natural land, replacing it with concrete. In a huge Madison Avenue advertising campaign that must have cost a small fortune itself, City voters were deluged with ugly subway posters, billboards, and t.v. and radio ads demanding that we vote yes. We voted no, primarily on the principal of the thing. We were offered no choice. It was vote yes or else. We chose or else, and we will suffer the consequences.



## TRB from Washington

We sat staring moodily at the television set the other night as Mr. Nixon in the middle of a statement snapped on that winsome smile of his and said that he knew Phase II is going to work because of "the enormous public support" behind it. For Lyndon Johnson such a questionable utterance would have brought hoots of disdain but for Mr. Nixon we just let it pass; what's the use. If ever there was a nation whose mood is cranky, grumpy and morose this is it. Most of the public, we think, can't make head or tail of Phase II; and what Mr. Nixon interprets as "enormous support" is just the universal hope that maybe things will turn out better this time than they did in Game Plan I, which he abandoned like a sinking ship last August 15.

Well, the odd thing is, we think they will. Get better, we mean. We know what an outrageous statement this is at a time when being optimistic is as unfashionable as wearing a mini-skirt at a funeral but there it is; we just think the economy is going to improve almost no matter what Mr. Nixon does.

One reason is that Phase II finally accepts the fact that economists have been writing about for 40 years, ever since Berle and Means invented the phrase "administered prices." The old theory of Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall and Keynes and all the rest was that the law of supply and demand would ultimately regulate prices and jobs in the market place. But Gardiner Means

told Congress again just last year that that isn't the way things work anymore; that the Nixon Game Plan One would collapse in a year or so. It did.

It didn't work because power is now concentrated so narrowly in big corporations, and the big unions they deal with, that a recession doesn't drive down prices. They are "administered." Recently we had the example of the steel industry, flat on its back from high prices and with foreign steel flooding the country, and yet it gave a big wage boost to workers and set new high prices for its own products.

Nobody has explained this better than the Hon. John N. Mitchell, Attorney General, who, in a speech June 6, 1969 said that in 1948 the nation's 200 largest industrial firms controlled 48 percent of the manufacturing assets. "Today," he added, "these firms control 58 percent while the top 500 firms control 75 percent of the assets." All we can say is that if this sensational information has now seeped down to Mr. Mitchell it is pretty widespread and must be accepted. Mr. Nixon accepts it in his Phase II program which is largely based on it.

He has set up three tiers of corporations whose prices the government will monitor, with the biggest on top—the monsters with annual sales of \$100 million or over. America's top 1300 corporations. If you monitor them you pretty well monitor the economy on the industrial production side;

they probably account for 90 percent of the manufacturing assets of the nation. Their decisions are webbed together by banks. A staff report to Congress in 1968 found that the trust departments of the 49 largest commercial banks held \$607 billion in assets. But never mind the figures, the point is that the old *laissez faire*, free enterprise economy of supply-and-demand that Herbert Hoover used to worship now belongs pretty much to American folklore. It is naturally left to a Republican President to quietly accept the fact and to base his policy upon it.

Mr. Nixon plays along with business leaders, and they know and understand him: just the other day he addressed a series of \$500-a-plate GOP financing campaign dinners on closed circuit TV and raised \$5 million like shaking dimes out of a piggy bank. It should give everybody a cozy feeling that the country is in good hands; power and politics go together.

Every effort abroad to manage an economy by an incomes policy (i.e., what Mr. Nixon is trying now) has failed so far as we know; what makes us think this one will succeed? Largely because we think the recession hit bottom last year sometime and is gradually getting better anyway, though you may not have noticed it. The funny thing is that several of the top men administering the new Nixon program think so too—George Shultz, head of Budget and Management, and Herbert Stein, member of the Council of

All of this brings me to the most hilarious expression of patriotism of them all: the *Passport Loyalty Oath*. This oath taken by individuals who apply for passports, requires them to swear allegiance to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Since 1967 this oath has been optional. But Secretary of State Rogers recently made the oath mandatory. Anyone who wants a passport to leave the country, must swear to support the country. In a very humorous editorial in the Nov. 7, New York Times, Russell Baker pointed out that this presents rather a problem for the proponents of the "America Love It Or Leave It" philosophy. How can a person leave the country because he disagrees with its policies and political philosophy if in order to leave he must swear that he supports the country's policies and political philosophy? Mr. Baker entitled his column: "America Love It or Stay." Is not this demand that individuals unquestionably support our country similar to building a wall around the country to keep people in? Americans scoff at another country which does exactly that. We claim that a country who forces its citizens to stay there cannot have much confidence in its government. I rather wonder if our fearless leaders aren't running scared.

Is there anyone who can explain these inconsistencies to me? Is there anyone who can justify the absurdities our government currently busies itself with? There are so many I haven't even touched upon. The current fight to have prayers reinstated in schools. What is religious freedom if you cannot choose not to have religion? Tell me what patriotism is. Am I a patriot if I support government policies when they are so far away from the ideals upon which our government is based? We are approaching the 200th anniversary of a country built upon the ideals of freedom and equality. What is to be celebrated when we are still so far away from those ideals?

## Taking Stock in America

Economic Advisers who is a spokesman for the program. They are allied to the new monetarist school of Professor Milton Friedman, which believes that the amount of credit available from the Fed turns on prosperity or shuts it off, like water from a faucet. It's all pretty recondite, but the important thing is that they prayerfully believe that the economy is getting better, slowly, and will continue to do so, if Arthur Burns, head of the Fed, will just keep the credit faucet on. Their slogan is "In Arthur We Trust." Phase II is just a kind of icing on the cake.

In April, 1970, Mr. Nixon told a press conference, "Frankly, if I had any money I'd be buying stocks right now." The Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 735 and promptly dropped 10 points. By May, 1970, it was down to 631. Taking the formula 735-100, a Mutual Fund that invested \$10,000 on Mr. Nixon's advice would have declined to \$8,700. But then stocks rallied. They shot up to 950 after he froze wages and prices, or an increase of around 30 percent. The "Nixon Fund" was worth \$13,300. Stocks have fallen since then but last week the Fund still showed a comfortable \$11,200 or so. As Democrats ruefully remark, it all goes to prove that Mr. Nixon was wise to adopt a policy they urged. Indeed, he abandoned his aversion to Peking, Moscow and a managed economy all at the same time.

## Changes

By Eric Mayer

Thanksgiving... November's cold rains have drowned the blaze of October. Leaves lie, like tattered, discarded robes at the black trunks of their trees. The few zinnias that held out so long this year, touching the garden dun with red, have been burned to dark ash by the first hard frosts. Yesterday some sparrows splashed in the bird bath but today the water is frozen. It seems that during a single rain swept night the lingering Indian Summer has given way to winter and the somber landscape silently denies any memory of warmth or greenery.

Thanksgiving... Even before the leaves come down the colored lights go up, to compete in vain with the city's neon glare. Countless Santas, paunches assisted in varying degree, take up their grueling department store vigils. Money can buy happiness, we are told. And just be thankful that last year's seasonal happiness, bought on the installment plan, has been paid off in time for this year's celebration. The abuse of Christmas is like the weather—everybody talks about it, but...

Thanksgiving... An odd holiday, marking roughly the end of the yearly cycle,

celebrating symbolically and a bit too late the harvest, but serving simultaneously as a kind of gigantic kick off dinner for Madison Avenue's annual \$mas campaign. Recollection of the Pilgrims' grim existence, during an age when full November larders were indeed something to be thankful for, is mingled with the expectant dread of December's plastic festivity.

I sometimes wonder about the way Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, about the kinds of things they seem to be thankful for. What spiritual significance can we find in the huge turkeys and heaps of cranberry sauce that weigh so heavily on our tables? Is it an act of reverence for us to gorge ourselves at the holiday feast when half the world is starving? Is this bounty so many of us share as Americans actually a "blessing" to be thankful for and if we are thus "blessed" in our material abundance, does it follow that the poorer countries like India and Pakistan, are cursed with its lack? Surely this uneven distribution of riches is purely accidental, hardly an act of divinity, hardly a matter for thanksgiving in a spiritual sense. There are more universal blessings for us to ponder.

## Thoughts on Thanksgiving

At this moment, 30 million miles from the green hills of earth a mariner spacecraft peers down into the yellow dust of the planet men have named Mars, after the god of war. But the horror of human war has never touched that alien world, human blood has never stained its rusty deserts, human suffering has never cried out in its tenuous atmosphere. Mariner is perhaps a crass example of that same American technology that cans our cranberries; a technology powerful enough to violate even the cosmic quarantine of the void. But Mariner, in its search for alien life, suggests something more important, something to be thankful for. The infinite possibilities of an infinite universe.

For isn't it possible, even probable, that somewhere amid the countless stars of our galaxy or amid the countless galaxies that spill forever into the dark abyss of space, there exists other life? Life that may succeed, may flourish in peace and wisdom even if the human race destroys itself in endless war?

We don't have to look to the stars to find infinite possibilities. Our own minds harbor innumerable worlds, many of them far

superior to 20th century civilization. Maybe we should be less thankful for the material "blessings" we have won, and more thankful for the non material visions of our Michelangelos, Beethovens and Shakespeares. Such men draw back the veil of the present and give us a brief glimpse into a possible future. Such men debunk those lesser minds who are forever whining about practicalities and impossibilities.

The philosopher and mathematician Descartes once argued that the existence of God was proved simply by the fact that he, with his seemingly finite mind, was able to form the idea of an infinite being. Might we say that our minds, bound physically to this universe, are incapable of conceiving an idea that is not possible within the universe? We might be thankful for the fact that whatever we imagine, be it peace or brotherhood or an end to starvation, no matter how improbable it seems, is possible. And these things, and all the other blessings we can think of, will remain possible as long as we can imagine them. This world is a lot bigger than some of its inhabitants would have us believe.

## Letters to the Editor

TO THE POST:

I want you to know that your publication of the editorial in the Oct. 27 issue of the Post in support of "opposition" and the two party system was appreciated.

The Back Mountain area, as you know, is a difficult one for a Democratic candidate and without the encouragement of local news media, it would be practically impossible to sustain a campaign.

Although I was unsuccessful, I believe

that the effort was worthwhile because at least a few more people are beginning to realize the importance of a two party system in encouragement of better government at all levels.

Thank you for your help and for a fair presentation of all candidates' views through both the primary and general elections.

Sincerely,  
PAUL LAUER  
Shavertown

## THE DALLAS POST

An independent newspaper published every Thursday morning by the Greenstreet News Co. from 41 Lehman Ave., Dallas, Pa. 18612. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Dallas, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1869. Subscription within county, \$5 a year. Out-of-county subscriptions, \$5.50 a year. Call 675-5211 for subscriptions.

The officers of the Greenstreet News Co. are William Scranton 3rd, president and managing editor; J.R. Freeman, vice president, news; William W. Davis, vice president and general manager; Doris Mallin, secretary-treasurer.

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