

Events

11-24-77

It's A Day To Be Thankful

By DALE POLLOCK
Sentinel Staff Writer

By now it's a familiar story. The handicapped, the elderly and the disabled spending Thanksgiving alone, no one to joke with about the size of the turkey, no one to ask to pass the stuffing.

What else can be added to this unfortunate tale, as old as humanity itself? Only that some people do care, every year giving of their time and effort and hope to make at least a few exceptions to the "olden rule."

The Thanksgiving Meals on Wheels program is distributing more than 300 meals today to Santa Cruz County residents who wouldn't have much of a Thanksgiving otherwise. For those who are shut-ins, or unable to open a can of cranberry sauce, this Thanksgiving dinner is indeed something to be thankful for.

"For many of these people," says Food and Nutrition Director Al DiLudivico, who supervises the program, "the time when the driver delivers the meal is the only contact with humanity they'll have. Otherwise, it's a very lonely holiday."

The kitchen at the Senior Citizens Center in Live Oak was bustling with activity, as 25 or so volunteers manned a meal assembly line right out of an Italian movie. It's no easy task contending with six special diets, including diabetic, salt free, low fat, low fiber and soft/bland foods. All were color-coded, with so many green, blue and yellow-tagged meals turned out.

Despite the differing ingredients, the dinner remains familiar to Thanksgiving traditionalists. Recipients of the hot and cold meals were treated to turkey with rice dressing, broccoli with cheese sauce, cranberry sauce, sweet potato and pumpkin pie, and jello. Milk was also included in the plastic-encased package.

Working on the program were DiLudivico's Food and Nutrition staff, members of the Visiting Nurses Association and volunteers. Mary Lou Coleman was quiet and direct when asked why she was there. "Because I know they need people. And I felt I could help."

"Hang in there, Al!" yelled one worker, as DiLudivico sped around the chaotic kitchen. Eleven routes would be manned, including Watsonville, the St. George hotel and homes throughout the cities and counties.

But the program is a struggle to finance, says DiLudivico. "We're hurting for money," he laments. "All we get from the county is \$1.30 per meal, and with rising food costs, we take a loss on something like this. But all the labor is volunteer, and the people are here because they care."

DiLudivico said the financial picture is so bleak that even the milk might have to be cut from the regular Meals on Wheels program. "We'll be asking the milk companies to donate it, but that's up to them," he said.

Meanwhile, the styrofoam containers were ready, and Caroline Ackerman, aided by her son Chuck, was off to deliver meals to 10 houses. "I had one man say to me, 'I hope we get turkey. If we don't get turkey, I'll have to send out for a meal.' Don't worry, they'll get turkey," she laughs.



(Sentinel Photo by Bill Lovejoy)

Al DiLudivico, left, and Elizabeth Forman prepare Thanksgiving meals

National Farm Strike Backed By Bergland

WASHINGTON (AP)—Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland says he supports a farmers' strike set to begin next month, but that the effort appears doomed.

An organization calling itself American Agriculture wants farmers, beginning Dec. 14, to stop producing and selling wheat and other commodities. The strike aims to force up prices and boost farmers' sagging incomes.

"I endorse the strike. I say go at it," Bergland said Wednesday. "I mean, it's not unlike a consumer boycott or unlike persons going to conven-

tions and waving banners or demonstrating in the streets."

Bergland told a meeting of the American Association of Agricultural College Editors that the strike movement "is a legitimate and proper" way of protest by farmers who are unhappy with depressed prices for wheat, cattle and other commodities.

"I don't think it's going to work because I've seen this tried before," Bergland said. "I wish them well but I don't think it's going to be effective."

A spokeswoman for American Agriculture in Denver said Bergland's dismissal of the

strike's effectiveness is not justified and earlier attempts by farmers "have never had this kind of enthusiasm" apparent now.

Several thousand farmers paraded tractors and other machines in Pueblo, Colo., two months ago during a visit by Bergland as strike fever picked up steam. Farmers said in addition to halting production, they plan to stop buying tractors and other supplies.

Dozens of protests and meetings have been held across the country since then. Organizers say that about 200 strike offices
SEE BACK PAGE