Get medical care to those who cannot afford it

My grandmother was admitted to the hospital for back surgery months ago. She lived in New York, where the best doctors are, for the operation. The whole procedure lasted two weeks. Thanks to the benefits of Medicare, the government pays many farmers not to grow crops on their land, it’s ostracized that the world’s most technologically advanced nation produces an over-abundance of grain yet has people starving within its own borders.

Medical costs are prohibitively expensive. Only the wealthy are able to afford the best care while the poor get little. Doctors gravitate to big city hospitals to study on the most advanced equipment rather than to areas where they are needed.

One doctor providing vaccinations and basic medical care in an impoverished community will accomplish a lot more than an intern in some radiology lab.

But who wants to volunteer for these duties? It’s easy enough for me to sit and write about what should be done. It’s another for me to do it. Very few people would be willing to make that kind of sacrifice. There is another way—moderated socialized medicine—free medical care for all with the more advanced techniques still available on a pay-as-you-will basis until they become economically feasible to be offered.

I think about my grandmother undergoing extensive surgery while somebody’s son dies of an infection because he couldn’t afford a tetanus shot.

Critics will cry “It’ll never work” and many times they will be correct. Mismanagement and greed in those administering and benefiting from support programs make the whole process undesirable. Welfare cheats ruined the system for many who really needed the aid. Corrupt and uncarrying government officials in Ethiopia prevented much of the relief sent from ever reaching their citizens.

A friend of mine sat patiently through this argument a few months ago. She said, “Sure, I think about those things sometimes but I don’t let them bother me; there’s nothing I can do about it anyway.”

Collectively we can do a hell of a lot. The saying is a hackneyed one, but failing in the attempt is a lot more valuable than not trying at all. Ignorance is our own worst enemy.

Good friends won’t leave you flat.

The moon was up, the stars were out and—pftf!—your rear tire was down. Good thing there was a phone nearby. And a few good friends who were willing to drive a dozen miles, on a Saturday night, to give you a lift. When you get back, you want to do more than just say “thanks” So tonight, let it be Löwenbräü.

Lowenbräu. Here’s to good friends.