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# HOMeward

## Street Journal

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## Sacramento Homeless Connect

May 31st at Cal Expo

This will be a one day event that will provide many homeless services in a "one stop shop" format, such as:

Housing and employment programs • legal • medical  
dental • food • entertainment • haircuts • bike repair  
and more!

Affiliated with the 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Sacramento  
For more information email Susanna at [scurry@communitycouncil.org](mailto:scurry@communitycouncil.org)  
[www.communitycouncil.org/homelessplan](http://www.communitycouncil.org/homelessplan)

Sacramento Homeless Connect is a one-day event that will take place on May 31, 2008 at Cal Expo. The event will provide services for homeless people in a consumer-centric "one stop shop" format. The event is modeled after the national Project Homeless Connect, which links people to services in a convenient and welcoming environment. The event provides opportunities for homeless guests to be linked to housing and employment programs, receive legal, medical, dental and other assistance and enjoy food and entertainment. Special services such as haircuts, pedicures, wheelchair maintenance, bike repair, chiropractic and massage may also be provided.

Project Homeless Connect has taken place in cities across the United States. In California, communities such as San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, San

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## The Magnet Myth

by Israel Bayer  
StreetRoots, Portland, OR

*Are people on the streets migrating, or have they been our neighbors all along?*

In communities throughout the country you will hear a common complaint by critics of homeless services – our city is a magnet for homeless people because of services. If we build it, they will come.

Often times the idea that a city is a homeless Mecca is perpetuated by newspapers writing as fact that their city attracts individuals experiencing homelessness from other regions in the country. You will hear this common thread, sometimes whispered, some times shouted, among neighborhood and cultural groups, police bureaus, business communities and politicians.

Liberal communities up and down the West Coast have been dubbed by many as a place of last resort for people experiencing homelessness. Los Angeles has been called the homeless capital of the United States, San Francisco, a bum's paradise, Seattle and Portland, a place to go to access great services available

for poor folk.

There's two really damaging mythologies. One is that people choose to be homeless, and the other is if we provide services, all the homeless people from around the country will flock to our city," says Marshall Runkel with the Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

In cities up and down the West Coast, the gap between the rich and the poor is at an all time high – and growing. Could it be that a homeless and housing crisis is taking place because of the lack of affordable housing coupled with loss of jobs, inadequate healthcare and the lack of supportive services in every region of the country?

Street Roots wanted to know what's happening on the ground in six cities on the West Coast to find just where individuals experiencing homelessness are coming from.

Numbers are based one-night homeless and shelter counts. Many organizations and advocates believe the numbers to be low because of the restrictive nature

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of the Housing and Urban Development's guidelines for who is considered homeless. For example, individuals and families that are living in hotels or are doubled-up sleeping on couches are not included in local counts of people experiencing homelessness.

### San Diego County

According to San Diego's Regional Task Force on Homelessness, more than 7,300 individuals are experiencing homelessness in the urban area – the majority in San Diego proper.

Outside of the city, more than 2,300 adult farm workers and day laborers live in encampments. The workers' tenuous living conditions and their geographical, language and cultural isolation make it difficult to closely estimate their numbers, according to the Task Force. Officials claim this number is low because outreach workers on the count were unable to access many local canyons.

According to officials with the City of San

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## Chicago Receives Record \$49 Million to Fight Homelessness

by Suzanne Hanney

Chicago programs to end homelessness will have a record \$49 million in federal funds this year up from last year's \$45 million.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alfonso Jackson announced the grant — the lion's share of money spent toward Chicago homelessness — on January 29 as he toured the Margo and Harold Schiff Residences with Mayor Richard M. Daley. A Single Room Occupancy (SRO) building at 1244 N. Clybourn Ave., the Schiff Residences opened last year and were funded in part by the federal government.

The HUD money will support more than 150 homeless programs in Chicago and was awarded on the basis of annual, competitive applications. Programs encompass the full spectrum or "continuum of care" for homeless individuals and families — from street outreach and emergency shelter to transitional and permanent housing. In addition, the funding will provide supportive services such as job training, child care, substance

abuse treatment and mental health

This year, HUD homelessness funding will go toward 81 permanent supportive housing programs in Chicago, as well as 40 transitional housing programs and 22 supportive service programs.

For the third year in a row Chicago has received the HUD Samaritan Initiative Award to serve chronically homeless individuals in permanent housing. This particular funding, which is awarded to successful programs, has helped add 450 units of permanent housing for chronically homeless.

This year, Mercy Housing Lakefront, which developed the Schiff residences, will receive the Samaritan Award funding: \$4.2 million for two years, all of which will be spent on programs to help the chronically homeless. Part of the money will go toward development of a new SRO in Englewood.

Only 1 in 5 homeless persons are chronically homeless, but these people use half of all emergency shelter resources, so getting them into permanent housing has been a

federal and Chicago priority. Once they receive stable housing, they also can receive support — from substance abuse to employment training — to help them stay housed.

Daley said the new focus on "permanent solutions, not short-term strategies," has led to progress in eliminating homelessness. "We're changing from a system based on temporary shelters into one that moves people quickly into permanent housing with extensive support services, such as job training, literacy and substance abuse treatment," Daley said.

Since 2003, the City has added 2,500 units of permanent housing citywide for the homeless and now has a total of more than 6,100 units of supportive housing for its homeless residents. In 2007, 758 units of permanent housing were added, Daley said.

"In our effort to end homelessness, one of our most constant and important partners has been the Department of Housing and Urban Development," he added. Since 2001, HUD has awarded more than \$294 million in funding to the City of

Chicago to support the housing and service needs of homeless individuals and families. HUD's funding is provided in two ways.

HUD's Continuum of Care programs (\$45.31 million of the money announced January 29) provide permanent and transitional housing to homeless persons. In addition, Continuum grants fund important services including job training, health care, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and child care.

Emergency Shelter Grants (\$3.7 million of what was announced last week) provide funds for the operation of local shelters and fund related social service and homeless prevention programs. These funds may also support essential services including job training, health care, drug/alcohol treatment, child care and homelessness prevention activities.

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## Yes They Can

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Norm Barber  
The Big Issue Australia

From the streets of Adelaide, Australia, Norm Barber describes a different kind of sustainability: finding value in items other people toss out.

"Practising for your high-wire act? A can collector laughs as Harry trundles his one-wheeled fridge trolley, swamped with fibreglass derro bags, through the maze of government buildings at the back of Victoria Square. "Water off a duck's back," he responds, showing no embarrassment.

Harry retired his solid rubber-wheeled trolley yesterday for this crimson machine with pneumatic tires, but it failed him on day one. Now the punctured tire hangs ignominiously from a handle.

Half a dozen scrap collectors waiting in the food queue peer inside his bags, giving their professional appraisal. One bag contains sections of PVC from a plastic outdoor chair, one of those \$10 jobs in which you lean back and a leg collapses and everybody laughs. As PVC scrap, one chair earns \$2 at a recycling depot. Scrap collectors see value in rubbish others consider worthless. It is a crucial aspect of their professional skills.

A drunk grabs a dead jigsaw power tool from his trolley, the motor contains copper. "Put it back," Harry says

without rancour, but the pisspot makes drilling sounds and pokes it at Grinder, whose eyes widen in fear. Grinder has thick blue lines running from his cheekbones past the hairline like an embossed welding seam, as if his skull had been sawn open, then rejoined. It was. He was using an angle grinder when it broke; part of the spinning disc sawed through his skull and into his brain. The doctors said "I got brain damage," he told us, after getting out of hospital. "But I haven't," he adds. "I can still talk."

Harry stopped collecting ferrous metal last month, saying it was too awkward and the price too low at 40c a kilo. He carries a magnet and concentrates on non-ferrous aluminium and stainless steel, which attract \$2.50 a kilogram, leaving the other stuff (like iron strapping at 10c a kilo) to those with vehicles. Two other veterans share their experiences collecting bald tires: "You sell them to the Aborigines, for five bucks apiece in the outback," one says, stifling a laugh, although he's not joking.

The Pitantatjara rope a dozen onto the roofs of their clapped-out sedans, but only if the tires have no wire or fabric showing. Sidewall piercing of soft-wall tires is common on gravel and dirt roads: one sidewall puncture ruins a \$90 tire that can't be repaired, but losing a \$5 tire is no problem.

We reach the head of the meals queue and grab vegetarian curry and rice, meat-eaters also take sausages

on bread. Stand-up diners retreat to their preferred areas, locked in conversation, argument, deals. One drunk wants a mouthful of my curry.

"Nah," I tell him.

"But I want to see if it's any good," he pleads.

"Germs," I exclaim, standing back in case he smacks the bowl into my face.

"Get your own. There's heaps."

But he loses concentration and throws the dregs of his coffee at an Irish wolfhound, hovering quietly for discarded sausages. He accuses the hound of stealing his cask and bag earlier that day. "He doesn't steal wine," its owner says, eyes bulging, standing up. A white-bearded man wearing an op-shop beanie backs him up as they calm the drunk and defend the hound.

The scrap collectors remain near the serving table, waiting to pounce on new food brought from the van: sandwiches in paper bags, fruit cakes. "Hey," Steve shouts at a girl taking two boxes back to the van. She's distributed containers of yoghurt individually. Everybody received two or three, but now Steve wants the rest.

"I'm saving them for tomorrow night," she says.

"But you don't come here tomorrow,"

he replies, "and the yoghurt will be off when you're here next week."

She sees his logic and gives him both boxes, plus two more from the van: 192 containers in all. He takes 48 for himself, then distributes the rest to "his people." Diplomacy and generosity are key ingredients to successful scavenging: you don't want to antagonise anyone.

A group of us head for the casino for free coffee and comedy. We encounter Ron, the sharp-eyed man with the thick dark beard from Port Adelaide. He's ripping open office-building garbage bags along Gawler Place, his bicycle and tiny-wheeled trailer bursting with striped derro bags. He passes me a handful of pens. "Individual pens don't excite me anymore," he says. "Only unopened packages."

Harry is already working the Rundle Mall bins and debating territory with another collector. Three schoolgirls scatter in amazed embarrassment as two old men fight over a rubbish bin: powerful underclass men refusing to succumb to the passive welfare role.

We continue to the casino and are welcomed by the front door bouncer.

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# Magnet Myth

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Diego, more than 80 percent of individuals accessing services report being from the city itself – with 25 percent being from the county

"A very small percentage of people on the streets in San Diego come from other areas," says Sharon Johnson, Homeless Service administrator with the City of San Diego. "We do have snowbirds that come down in the winter, but it's only a handful of individuals."

## Los Angeles County

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority, 141,737 people experienced homelessness in Los Angeles County in 2007 – nearly 1.5 percent of the population. More than 40,000 of those individuals are living in Los Angeles proper, with the highest concentration being downtown in one of the country's last remaining skid rows. More than 5,000 homeless individuals call L.A.'s Skid Row home.

The Authority's figures say an estimated 84 percent of those individuals lived in the area when they became homeless with another 6 percent being from Southern California.

"Sixty-five percent of those individuals have lived in Los Angeles County for more than 10 years," said Syd Peterson, communications manager with the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority. "I think it's safe to say that people aren't coming to the region to access services."

Peterson went on to say the small percentage of people living on the streets who are not from L.A. mostly came looking for jobs or because family lived in the area.

## Santa Clara County (San Jose)

According to officials in Santa Clara County, 7,491 individuals are living on the streets and in shelters – with more than 18,000 people experiencing homelessness every year. County figures there show that an estimated 78 percent of individuals experiencing homelessness lived in the county when they became homeless, with 15 percent being from another county in California.

"Every community across the nation has homeless people, and every community does its best to provide services and supportive housing," says Marjorie Matthews, director of the county's Office of Affordable Housing. "We have more homeless individuals than San Francisco, but we have a larger geographical region."

Matthews says the vast majority of housing being provided to individuals

are from Santa Clara County

"People have been priced out of their homes," she says. "We have Silicon Valley. We've seen a huge increase of population. The hope of finding a job draws people to Santa Clara County. When the recessions have hit, it's been people who live here that are hit the hardest."

## San Francisco

If there's a city that has been dubbed the homeless Mecca more than any other city in the United States, it is San Francisco. The city is just a quick train ride away from Alameda County where more than 8,000 individuals experience homelessness – mostly in Berkeley and Oakland.

More than 6,300 people are experiencing homelessness in the city by day, according to officials. The City of San Francisco estimates that nearly 15,000 people experience homelessness in the city every year.

According to city records, an estimated 60 percent of individuals experiencing homelessness lived in the city prior to becoming homeless – the lowest of any city that collects this specific data.

## Multnomah County (Portland, Gresham)

According to city and county authorities, 4,458 individuals are experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County, and nearly 15,000 people experience homelessness at some point during the year.

Based upon data provided by the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, an estimated 77 percent of people living on the streets accessing services in Portland gave their last permanent address in Multnomah County. An estimated 15 percent became homeless in Oregon – the bulk being from the region of Clark, Clackamas and Washington counties.

Some of the numbers provided included individuals who refused to give services their last permanent address.

## King County (Seattle)

According to the Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless, which works with the City of Seattle to conduct the one-night homeless count, more than 8,300 individuals are experiencing homelessness in King County. Approximately 24,000 individuals experience homelessness in King County on any given year.

Seattle is encountering internal grumblings within the mainstream social service community about the effec-

tiveness of the federal government's 10-year plan to end homelessness. The Emerald City has seen a 15 percent increase in homelessness over 2007 figures.

More than 80 percent of individuals surveyed through the 2008 one-night shelter count were residents of King County when they became homeless. "When people say providing good services will attract more homelessness, they aren't taking into consideration that every single community up and down the West Coast and around the nation are dealing with a homelessness and affordable housing crisis," says Alison Eisinger, executive director of the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. "It's no joke."

## The rural and suburban effect

While individuals from other parts of the country are not flocking to cities for supportive services – it's clear that geographical regions are dealing with a very complex set of circumstances. A perfect storm, so to speak.

During the past few years, rural and suburban communities have seen a spike in homelessness and the loss of affordable housing units. Individuals with disabilities or on fixed incomes simply can't afford market-rate housing. Couple this with low-paying jobs, lack of health care, recessions and a gutting of human services over the past 15 years and many rural and suburban residents are being left out in the cold.

Suburban communities are also being squeezed with a population increase due to individuals and families being priced out of urban cores. Portland is no different. If you combine the four-county region (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Clark), more than 10,000 people are sleeping on the streets and in shelters with well more than 25,000 experiencing homelessness in a given year. That doesn't include people living in motels or individuals and families doubled-up in crowded living quarters. Washington County recently counted 1,241 individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Washington County authorities say the county lacks basic infrastructure to help a growing population of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and poverty. They say that local law enforcement doesn't have places to direct the homeless population to, resulting in officers asking individuals to leave the area for services. Social service providers in the region say they have seen a tremendous increase in single men and women from Portland who feel safer in Washington County or have left due to continued harassment from law enforcement in Portland.

The county is currently implementing a 10-year plan to end homelessness and a growing poverty and social justice movement to end homelessness is unfolding among faith-based communities in the county (See *Cold Sweat*, Street Roots, Jan. 25, 2008). Reports put the number of people experiencing homelessness in Clackamas County at 3,543 with more than 8,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in a given year.

Like Washington County, Clackamas lacks basic infrastructure to support the rise in people experiencing homelessness. Clackamas County recently developed a 10-year plan to end homelessness that went into effect in November of 2006.

When asked if local communities are doing their part to address the problem, Mark Scirois, homeless service coordinator for Clackamas County says, "It's been delegated to the county to take care of housing."

"Small towns are just now starting to realize the severity of the problem," Scirois says. "Ultimately like countless individuals Street Roots spoke to for this story, Scirois points towards the federal government."

"We are barely being subsidized to retain the services we have," Scirois says. "We don't expect much help from the feds. We're more or less on our own. Possibly that will change when the administration changes."

Clackamas County has only 38 emergency shelter beds and 108 transitional housing beds for more than 3,000 people sleeping on the streets.

Like Portland, Seattle faces many of the same barriers. "These are regional issues," says Alison Eisinger with the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. "There are many cities around the country saying the surrounding areas need to take more of the slack and accept the need for emergency shelters and services for people, and they're right. Unfortunately, there's a staggering disinvestment by the federal government for public housing and that hits everybody – and that's why we're seeing an increase in suburban and rural homelessness."

"At the end of the day the overwhelming majority of people sleeping on the streets are from the United States of America," says Paul Boden with the Western Regional Advocacy Project. "It's time for bureaucrats to stop pointing the finger at the community next door, and demand that the federal government do something. It's a disgrace."

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## Homeless Connect

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Jose and San Diego have hosted such events. This will be the first time Sacramento will host a Project Homeless Connect event and it is hoped that the event will take place once or twice every year.

Homeless guests at Project Homeless Connect events in other cities have noted that the format of the event is useful because it reduces the stress associated with contacting different services separately. The format also allows people to become familiar with services of which they may have previously been unaware. The hope is that homeless guests at the event will gain access to services and long-term solutions that will help them eventually move off the streets and into permanent housing.

In a recent Gallup Poll funded by the Fannie Mae Foundation, approximately 58% of those surveyed believe

that "the nation is doing a bad job of addressing homelessness." In addition, 80% of adults surveyed "report a willingness to volunteer their time to a local organization that helps homeless people [i.d.]. By hosting a Project Homeless Connect event, Sacramento can not only contribute to the nation's efforts to more aggressively address the problem of homelessness, but can also create an opportunity for community members to participate in that process. Community members from schools, business, and faith-based groups have the opportunity to make connections with people who they may routinely ignore. These new and positive connections help debunk common myths and stereotypes about people who are homeless. San Francisco's Mayor Gavin Newsom said about their event, "Project Homeless Connect is breaking the myth that people do not seek assis-

tance and services and would rather be on the street. The data prove that when people are approached in a respectful and kind manner and with available resources, they are eager to accept help toward self-sufficiency."<sup>2</sup>

We need the entire community's help in working to end chronic homelessness in Sacramento. This event is a great way for individuals and organizations to become active leaders in ongoing community efforts to address this issue. Both public and private organizations can become partners in the effort by providing sponsorship, volunteer teams, and planning support for the Sacramento Homeless Connect event.

Organizations and businesses can contribute a team of volunteers, provide in-kind services, or make a financial contribution to the event.

planning team. Monetary donations can be used for general logistical support and more than 50% will go towards providing direct services for an emergency fund that will help individuals at the event.

Sacramento Homeless Connect is affiliated with the Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Sacramento County ([www.communitycouncil.org/homelessplan](http://www.communitycouncil.org/homelessplan)) and is being co-chaired by Mayor Heather Fargo and Supervisor Roger Dickinson. Contact Susanna at [scurry@communitycouncil.org](mailto:scurry@communitycouncil.org) or [scurry@communitycouncil.org](mailto:scurry@communitycouncil.org) for more information on how you can participate or donate.

<sup>1</sup>"Homelessness in America: Americans' Perceptions, Attitudes, and Knowledge" Fannie Mae Foundation Nov. 2007 ([www.fanniemaef.com](http://www.fanniemaef.com)).

<sup>2</sup>from the Interagency Council on Homelessness website ([www.usich.gov](http://www.usich.gov))

## StreetWise: The Movie

Street News Service:  
[www.streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org)

by Ben Cook

CHICAGO, IL | Three years ago Rob Federighi was walking near NBC studios, where he worked at the time, and decided to buy a paper from a nearby StreetWise vendor as he had often done before.

As he took the paper to a local coffee shop, he was filled with questions about the vendor himself—wondering who the vendor was as a person. Where did he come from? What was his story?

Rob figured that if he was having these questions, then no doubt other people were as well. "I think myself, and a lot of other people, have a vague understanding of what StreetWise really is, and are filled with questions like, why do people sell StreetWise as opposed to just panhandling?"

Armed with a determination to understand StreetWise better, Rob approached Deneen Weinz and the board of directors to get the go-ahead for his project to chronicle StreetWise vendors as the subject of a film. Through an audition process six vendors were ultimately selected: Linda Fisher, Everett Atkins, Melrose Quisen, Tyrone Moore, Don Nelson and Lonnie Lloyd. The film also features former vendor and current StreetWise employee Gregory Pritchett.

With the permission and subjects he needed, Rob began a lengthy labor of love. Accompanied by a small crew, Rob started collecting stories that would eventually accumulate into 50+ hours of raw footage, an amount that Rob says, "really isn't that much for a documentary."

Other people contributing to the film are Eric Schranz, who is responsible for the film's score, save for one song, "Big City Life" by the band Mettalfix, a band Rob heard while on vacation in Europe with his wife.

In regard to his approach for the film Rob said, "I didn't want to cherry pick and just find the greatest stories—that would be very easy to do. I didn't want to make it just a series of glorious stories, I think people would see right through that."

With his original conception of the project, Rob had planned to utilize voice-overs to connect the lives of the different vendors. Once he became involved he realized that, "What the vendors were saying was so articulate and so powerful that a voiceover really wasn't needed anymore."

Throughout the production one of the greatest obstacles would be coordinating schedules between Rob and his crew and the vendors, some of whom don't have cell phones, or regular access to e-mail. Rob, whose first job is commercial real estate, made this project as a labor of love despite the scheduling difficulties.

The reason for the long duration (3 years) of filming is intentional. Rob said, "The reason that this took so long is that we wanted it to mature a little bit. Also, we were raising funds along the way. I think the time lapse is good because it allowed us to show where the vendors were at the beginning of the film as compared to where they are now." During the course of production, Rob watched as themes evolved that could be used in the final cut of the film. Rob said, "Sometimes you have to swallow your pride a little bit and say, 'man even though I thought this might have been good, you know I'm realizing that this is the critical mass here.'" Rob tried to utilize an approach that was flexible enough to allow the vendors to tell their own stories.

Rob feels that in a documentary subjects evolve, and themes emerge that weren't in the initial objective, but should be followed anyway.

"With a film you know exactly what you

want to get—you script it out, and write your dialogue, and then you go film it, doing take after take until you get what you want. With a documentary you do the exact opposite—you know what you want, but you have no idea what anybody is going to say," said Rob.

The process of shaping the footage into the feature film was a tedious process that required a generous attention span. Rob recalled, "Once we digitized the film, I literally went back, line by line, and catalogued every piece of action, every piece of dialogue that happened." Once the hours of footage were scripted out, the pieces were rearranged into a narrative that became StreetWise the Movie.

Through the process of filming, Rob and his crew learned a great deal about how StreetWise functions, and how it impacts the lives of others.

One of the first misconceptions to be cleared up is the perception that StreetWise is an organization exclusively for homeless people, when in fact 95% of its workforce are not homeless.

At the beginning of Rob's film one of the vendors plainly says, "I'm not homeless, I've never been homeless, and I don't plan on being homeless." Rob also realized that there was a unique model functioning through StreetWise's vendors, in that they are all self-financed contractors. Rob elaborates that, "It's not a hand out, it's just like any other entrepreneurial business. StreetWise is unique in that it's not a hand out in any sense."

### Evaluation

Despite his own positive views of StreetWise, Rob didn't want his documentary to be just an extended commercial for the organization, but rather he wanted the audience to deduce for themselves what StreetWise is like. Rob said, "I want them to see who these people are

— that this not some form of glorified panhandling, these are real people who have objectives and who have goals."

Rob feels that people will be inspired by watching this movie, rather than depressed. He elaborated, "This film is not a depressing look at homelessness. It's not a look at what homelessness is—this film is very different from that. I think people are going to be pleasantly surprised. This is a very uplifting film with several humorous moments—and I think it's an inspirational film. I'm very proud of what this film has become—its very upbeat."

Rob feels that people will be inspired that the vendors in his film are going back to school and starting their own businesses. With these stories in StreetWise the Movie, Rob shows people who are trying to do something for themselves. He hopes that this will cause people to think about their own dreams, and how it's never too late to achieve them.

When asked what he has learned about StreetWise over the course of his documentary-making experience, Rob states that, "If StreetWise succeeds, everybody benefits—there's literally no downside to it. There's no public funding. Yeah, the paper costs a dollar, but you're getting something for that dollar." He added that, "StreetWise is the means that give them the opportunity to live their everyday lives in much the same way that you or I live our everyday lives."

He wants to see "street" papers like StreetWise get more attention than they do now, as he feels that if people knew what these papers can accomplish, they would get much more support than they do.

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## A Homeless Winter in Sacramento

The Natomas camp reported on in the last issue is gone. This is what happened.

by Cathleen

SACRAMENTO, CA: Winter can be brutal in California. In the week after New Year's day, storms brought slashing rains and high winds to the state's capital, tearing off limbs the size of trees, ripping through the power lines, littering the streets with debris. Before the storm, on a patch of open ground donated by a local land-owner homeless people had built an encampment in defiance of the anti-camping laws which are enforced by the city and county police in order to keep people who live outside constantly on the move.

However, the homeless weren't moving, and despite several visits and threats by county officials, they could not find a legal way to immediately evict the residents from private property without confronting the land owner in court.

The encampment included a com-

munal shelter of tarps and sticks, heated by a fire of scavenged wood, beach chairs arranged on the dirt floor so that residents could warm themselves in comfort and cook on the grill. The small community - including a young pregnant woman - found a haven under this fragile roof.

But on January 4th, 2008, when the winds came they tore it apart, stripped off the plastic walls and roof, broke the framework, and scattered the scraps into mud. During this same storm, two homeless people were found dead by the American River drowned in the surge of high water that the heavy rain sent roaring through the city.

One of the residents reported that they all stayed at the destroyed camp. Then three days after the storm, county representatives came out and offered them housing. They all took the housing except for one individual who had his own motor home.

## Restoring Teeth for a Better Life

SACRAMENTO, CA: Health Care for the Homeless Advisory Board began a dental project last year to try to find dental care for those that are homeless. Dental services at the county's dental clinic are very limited, usually consisting of extracting teeth with not enough funding for dentists or fillings or restorative dental care.

Homeless individuals that are transitioning out of homelessness are often held back from finding employment because of their appearance from bad or missing teeth. This can also effect their confidence and their health.

The project began with a wonderful collaboration of Health Care for the Homeless Advisory Board members, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (an advisory board member) supported the project by typing the names and addresses of dentists and dental groups from the phone book, looked up and entered their zip codes and merged that information into the project's letter of introductions. Health Care for the Homeless printed the letters and envelopes. Cottage Housing volunteers stuffed the letters in the envelopes. Then the county sent the letters out. Cottage Housing volun-

teers help run the program with Health Care for the Homeless. Board members select new dental patients. Then, transitional housing case workers sponsor the dental patients.

Residents of transitional housing programs are the first offered dental services through the program. It was determined that they have or will have gained some stability and have case workers sponsor the resident to help insure they can make their appointments. There can be many appointments and the care may last for several months for restorative dental work.

Now the dentists of Sacramento are collaborating to restore homeless people's teeth and dignity. So far, five dentists have responded favorably and have volunteered to take one or more patients per year without charge. Work has begun and has been completed on several patients, with gleaming results.

The Sacramento County Health Care for the Homeless Advisory Board is an organized board of representatives advocating the health and welfare of the County's homeless men, women and children. They meet on the third Friday of each month at 9:30 AM at Loaves & Fishes' conference room.

## Homeless People and the Need for Leadership

by Cathleen

On a Thursday early in February at Loaves and Fishes, the main service center for homeless people in Sacramento, California, a group of homeless people came together to talk about the need for leadership. They were diverse - both Anglo and African American, young, middle aged and older, women and men. And as they described the problems they faced, it was clear that there is no one answer for homeless people - some have developed skills that allow them to live in hidden places and support themselves through recycling, or the sale of handicrafts, for example; others are homeless because life issues overtook them, and they found themselves unable to afford stable housing.

As the individuals around the table described different personal situations, it was also clear that there is a great need for leadership. Leaders can speak out on behalf of homeless communities who are trying to establish a safe place to live outdoors - and can protest and change the

present policy of arresting and harassing homeless people. Leaders can assert the immediate demands of homeless people. Some have pets for company and protection, animals which cannot be taken into shelters; these homeless people want kennels made available for their pets. Some are concerned that there is nowhere for homeless people to be - they are chased out of parks, harassed by the police and private security patrols, told to move on even if they have an organized camp.

But how to lead? Several suggestions were made. First, leaders can become active in homeless organizations like the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, document the violations of the human right to housing and dignity and encourage others to become active in community affairs, both in terms of homelessness and other issues that are personally important, like building a sustainable future. There are city boards and commissions where homeless members could contribute their first hand knowledge of the hardships and needs of homeless people.

But to do this, to represent the interests not just of the individual but the entire population of homeless people, it's also important for leaders to learn about the context of homelessness. This is important even for those who have accepted, and come to welcome, living outside without support from this society. These homeless people believe in their own dignity and have concluded "I'm tired of waiting, I'll survive on my own, if you let me alone."

But without understanding the context of homelessness, it's all too easy to blame the individual. The media and the federal government have publicized the idea that homelessness is a matter of individual failure, rather than acknowledging that since the early eighties, as the homeless population exploded, the federal government has systematically eliminated funding for affordable housing. Now we see in New Orleans that structurally sound public housing is being torn down and people are being housed in tin trailers poisoned with formaldehyde fumes! Also, "blaming the victim" is extremely dangerous for homeless people, because it encour-

ages violence against them - violence that has risen to hundreds of attacks per year across the country especially by disoriented youth who have been taught not to care - and in fact to look at homeless people as not even human.

That it's not just a personal problem can be seen in Ontario, California, where the city fathers decided to permit a tent city on a muddy vacant lot near the airport. In a matter of weeks, in the dead of this winter over three hundred tents sprang up, including seniors and children, all people who simply can't afford apartments or, with the "subprime" mortgage meltdown, have been evicted from their homes. One woman, disabled and out of work, said "I never thought this would happen to me."

It's up to homeless leaders to point out it's not her fault and it's not just an individual problem. We're all human, we're all vulnerable. We all have a right to dignity and, if we choose, housing, we all have a right to live without harassment even if we are not rich in material things.



# Bending Space and Gravity

by the homeless science writer

## Chongo

The last article described the straight lines of 'special' relativity. It explained the 'relativity' of space and time, distances and angles, in terms of tilting two-dimensional surfaces and the two-dimensional creature inhabiting this three-dimensional universe of rising services. Surfaces were 'stacked' upon each other across time, as a series of consecutive moments, creating stacks of moments in - or rather across - time. This simpler universe was used to make the concept of relativity easier to grasp in our universe, instead of stacks of two-dimensional surfaces tilting with respect to each other, stacks of three-dimensional spaces tilt with respect to each other in a universe with 'four' dimensions, not three.

The important point that the last article should have made upon the reader is that the concept of now - that corresponding to an all-inclusive, universal present-moment 'now' - is, and this is to use the same term that Einstein himself chose to use, a mere 'stipulation' that we place upon physical existence: nothing actually physically existent. In other words, there is no such thing existent outside of our mind, regardless of how convinced our minds might be that a universal, present moment corresponds to the entire universe. Put bluntly, spaces tilting into the future in one direction for a surface considering itself not moving, and tilting into the past in the opposite direction with respect to such a surface means there is no such thing nor can there ever be such a thing as a universal present-moment. Instead, there are many, as many as there are unique motions in the universe. We remember that this explanation was discovered by a two-dimensional Einstein, who explained how the speed of light, and correspondingly the laws of physics, the speed of light being an indispensable element of those laws, never changed with motion. This physicist explained the most simple case example, that for 'uniform' motion: motion that does not change speed or direction.

For this article, we return now to our two dimensional Einstein at the moment (albeit a stipulation that we impose upon physical existence, not existing beyond the motions of our thoughts) he explained the relativity of space and time, distances and angle for uniform motion, which is called special relativity: the relativity of space and time, distances and angles for uniform motion.

Special relativity's tilting of surfaces (as well as that of spaces and lines) would 'seem' to explain a great deal about two-dimensional reality though it would not immediately explain one rather significant aspect of it, namely gravity, though it would, quite naturally, most unavoidably, and rather obviously, lead straight to its explanation; and thus distinguish 'special' relativity as a unique and singularly 'special' case of a more 'generalized' form of relativity's geometry, namely 'general relativity' which, unlike special relativity's straight-line geometry, is a geometry with curves. Surprisingly, explaining how the speed of light never changes with uniform motion in order to keep the laws of nature (of physics) from ever changing (i.e. special relativity), explains also gravity! In other words, even though we might hardly imagine how, and perhaps even further hardly imagine that it even should explain it, the speed of light being constant and physical laws correspondingly never changing (a corollary) ultimately leads to a very, very, very accurate explanation, in the form of a description, for gravity. And, this explanation (this description) is absolutely the best testable explanation that has ever existed. In actual fact, every last test that science has ever made confirms relativity's validity for explaining space, time, 'big' motion, and, most significantly, gravity, making relativity's truth a cornerstone and fundamental foundation of physical theory.

Just as relativity's explaining gravity by virtue of the speed of light being constant might seem a surprising relationship, so is the ease with which this relationship can be understood surprising also, because applying special relativity's straight-line geometry of unchanging, uniform motion to changing, non-uniform motion, is, surprisingly, perfectly appropriate for doing the same thing for the phenomena of gravity. Gravity's effects are completely indistinguishable from non-uniform motion. And this is how.

Giving it any thought, the two-dimensional physicist who discovered the special relativity of space and time (their inseparability), with respect to 'uniform' motion, motion that does not change speed or direction, could not help but notice that not all motion occurred at the same 'uniform' speed and unchanging direction, but that a great deal of the motion in their universe, very often, occurred in a 'non-uniform' way. That is to say, that motion in their universe of surfaces would very often, just as it so very often does also in our universe of spaces, change in a 'non-uniform' way, either speed, direction, or both. Furthermore, because so much motion in their universe would be non-

uniform, changing from one speed or direction to another in a (seemingly) continuous way, then he or she could only conclude that where surfaces tilt as a result of uniform motion, surfaces must also be 'bending' with any motion that was non-uniform. Such a conclusion would be inescapable, since bending is really nothing more than just a progressively more and more, or less and less tilted frame (though in actual fact it is much more complex), corresponding to progressively changing speeds or directions (non-uniformly). Realizing that this bending created the 'equivalent' effect as gravity on his or her two-dimensional surface, this physicist who discovered the first half of the geometry of his or her universe. This physicist would have discovered the relativity of space and time measures (distances, and directions [angles]), subject to the effects of non-uniform motion and hence, equivalently to the effects of gravity. Like Einstein, such a physicist would have discovered the 'general' relativity of surface-time, describing how surface-time 'bends' relative to two-dimensional gravity and to non-uniform motion. Finally there would exist a description of two-dimensional gravity that worked accurately.

Just as the great two-dimensional physicist discovering his or her two-dimensional version of 'special' relativity could extend that theory and its straight-line geometry by using this singularly simple geometry as a 'special' case 'curve' for a broader more comprehensive geometry that of two-dimensional 'general' relativity, so can we three-dimensional creatures do the same thing; which is exactly what the great three-dimensional physicist, Albert Einstein, did, by extending the description of special relativity's effects upon uniform motion (motion that does not change speed or direction) upon three-dimensional space (as opposed to a two-dimensional surface) and time, to non-uniform motion (again, motion that does change speed, direction, or both), and 'equivalently', to the effects of gravity, since the effects of gravity are absolutely indistinguishable from the effects of inertia. By imagining special relativity's straight lines as curved lines, we can create a conceptual description of space and time together (space-time), and a way to imagine the effects of mass, as the force of either inertia or gravity upon it. In this way, we can logically derive the Theory of General Relativity in terms of a concept (namely bending), just as Albert Einstein did (in a formal and more precise way using mathematics, instead of using words as we are doing here).

The Theory of General Relativity extends Special Relativity's principles for 'uniform' motion, applying them to the non-uniform motion of acceleration (motion that continuously changes speed, direction or both, corresponding to a 'bent' set of space and time measures [distances and angles]) and 'turning' (changing direction, corresponding to a 'skewed' set of space and time measures) to those of gravity in order to describe these effects upon space and time measurements. Gravity like motion, affects both the pace of time, and the length of spatial distances. Its effects are the same as those of acceleration and/or turning, compressing space, and dilating time, in a way that is non-uniform (and so curved or skewed, instead of straight). General Relativity uses the 'equivalence' of the inertial effects of non-uniform motion, in a way that is non-uniform (and so, 'bent' [curved], instead of straight).

General relativity describes how space and time bend (bending being a complexity of tilting), as a consequence of the effects of mass's gravity and likewise, as a consequence of the non-uniform motion of acceleration (the former gravity, being indistinguishable from the latter, acceleration). Needless to say every experiment ever conducted by science repeatedly confirms relativity's remarkably accurate description of space, time, 'big' motion, and gravity.

Because it works so flawlessly relativity's accuracy is unquestionably true - it is as true as space, time, mass, and energy's gravity are 'true', as true as the speed of light being constant and the laws of nature (physics) not changing as a consequence of motion or of anything else are true, as true as the conservation of energy and momentum are, as true as the passage of time is, while you read these words and think the thoughts that they yield as you do so. General relativity is a brilliantly stunning example of natural truths expression and of the marvels that such an expression can accurately reveal about nature's phenomena.

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(From the first ten minutes of RELATIVITY IN HALF AN HOUR, by Chongo in collaboration with Jose. To see all the books that Chongo has written on nature (physics theory), go to [chongonation.com](http://chongonation.com), which is a web site dedicated to educating those who have least opportunity for learning the scientific foundations that describe nature (accurately). Chongonation provides books that allow such opportunity, in lay terms, without any math. Simply go to the [www.chongonation.com](http://www.chongonation.com) home page and click on either 'Nature' or 'Products & Prices' to see just how many books are available.)



# Bob & Spencer

## The Homeless Guys



by Scott Valentine & Mike Diaz

### In Remembrance of Clifford "Art Clay" Crooks

September 11, 1944 to January 4, 2007

Art began his working life in heavy construction, traveling from site to site in a trailer. After he quit that work, he made a living making metal table top sculpture and then he started making pottery, especially raku, traveling around selling it at craft shows. By the time he arrived in Sacramento, he was getting a disability check. He called a van home because he had to choose between an apartment or a car, and he liked his freedom. In all the years he was here, he never lost his "home" to the police.



Shortly after he first arrived in Sacramento, he began a group he called the Homeless Artisans. Although it only lasted three or four years, he did manage to get a handful of people into the Second Saturday art show a few times. In 2000 he became President of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee and served until 2003. Art was outraged by the treatment of homeless people, especially how the system separated families and treated homeless people's possessions as nothing. He believed that through direct political action public opinion would be changed, and that would change how local authorities treated their poorest residents.

Sometime after leaving SHOC he was diagnosed with throat cancer. He stayed in-lodgers at Ray Hillestad's, an artist and long time friend, while undergoing chemotherapy for about six months. Then some of his relatives took him back to Concord where he had family. While in the hospital there he slipped and fell and broke his hip. The injury became infected and he died from that a short time later, on January 4, 2007. He was sixty-two years old.

# Obituary

**John Traylor**

d. 12/26/2007 Aged 62  
natural causes

**Robin Jardine**

d. 12/27/2007 Aged 50  
found dead behind a business  
on Floribgate  
cause pending

**Peter Short**

d. 12/27/2007 Aged 55  
found dead behind a business  
on Floribgate  
cause pending

**Evelyn Roper**

d. 1/1/2008 Aged 66  
natural causes

**Jon Gallagher**

d. 1/5/2008 Aged 30  
drowned in high water  
at river camp

**David Griffin**

d. 1/5/2008 Aged 58  
drowned in high water  
at river camp