



A VOICE FOR  
THE SACRAMENTO AREA  
HOMELESS COMMUNITY SINCE 1997

# HOMeward

## Street Journal

Volume 9, No. 3

Member NASNA  
North American Street Newspaper Association

May / June, 2005

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1774  
Sacramento, CA

### Attorneys Working to Keep the Homeless Out of Jail

Page 2  
A Note to Our  
Readers  
Homeless Crime  
Victims

Page 3  
Australian Housing  
Problems  
Northwest  
Homelessness

Page 4  
"War on Terror"  
Down-under

Page 5  
Lillian's Story  
Prosecuting  
Campers...  
Brutal Truth...

Page 6  
Primate Interprise

Page 7  
A Book Review  
Poetry  
Obituary

Page 8  
Homeless  
Resources  
Info

Right inside Loaves & Fishes' Friendship Park, Angie Mendoza staffs the Legal Clinic Office that helps people experiencing homelessness with the many legal issues caused very often because its illegal to be homeless. infractions and misdemeanors pile up as people are cited for doing things that most do legally indoors (for instance, sleep). Angie helps them navigate through the system, making sure people can get to court, that they know the date and place, reminders, warrant checks and community service opportunities in lieu of jail or fines or other alternate sentencing programs that can cost a bit of money and can be insensitive to those with disabilities.

The last Wednesday of every month, attorneys and interns

from the Public Defender's Office and private attorneys staff a monthly legal clinic at the Jail Visitation Office at Loaves & Fishes. Tommy Clinkenbeard, Assistant Public Defender, began the monthly sessions in 2000 to educate homeless people about their civil rights



Attorneys at monthly legal clinic

and legal issues. It has evolved into a clinic that has given free legal assistance, referrals, representation and advocacy to around 5,000 guests.

Last Wednesday I went to check out this monthly Legal Clinic. As I entered the office, after being greeted by a gentleman carrying out some community service hours, a bustle of activity swarmed around a large conference table with people seated or standing around or talking. I heard Angie say to a woman, "So, we'll see you in court?" She later offers another woman to send her a reminder at her Maryhouse mailing address, right before her court date

see Clinic page 5

### A Victory for the Homeless

Released by Street News Service • www.streetnewsservice.org

by Scott Samuel J.  
Spare Change News  
March 21, 2005

Call it a fitting conclusion, or maybe even karmic justice:

Three years after releasing the video "Bumfights: Cause for Concern" and two years after pleading guilty to misdemeanor charges and receiving a sentence of community service, "Bumfights" producers Ryan McPherson and Zachary Bubeck are finally heading to jail to serve a six-month sentence.

Regular readers of this paper may remember that we spearheaded a campaign in 2003 to urge Newbury Comics to stop selling "Bumhunts" and "Bumhunter" videos in their local stores. The videos were made by coercing homeless individuals - including two Vietnam veterans - to perform violent acts, such as pulling out one's own teeth or breaking another's leg, in exchange for food or small amounts of cash. While the producers claimed that the participants all consented to the actions on the videos, this claim essen-

tially equated consent with exploitation. If someone is desperate - with no place to stay, possibly traumatized, addicted or ill, or needing a few bucks, a meal or friendship - is this ever a fair trade?

Luckily, prosecutors saw through the producers' defense and filed seven felony charges against them in 2002. The next year, McPherson, Bubeck and two other producers of the videos - Michael Slyman and Daniel Tanner - struck a deal and pled guilty to a lesser charge of conspiracy to incite violence. They were sentenced to 280 hours of community service at a homeless shelter. All four were young men in search of profits. Estimates are that the video has sold more than 300,000 copies over the Internet, garnering the producers millions of dollars.

That plea bargain might have been the end of that story - a bit of community service and a whole heap of profits for young men who exploited poor men and women. But this time someone - perhaps it was Deputy District Attorney Curtis Ross or Superior Court Judge Charles Ervin - kept an eye on this case.

Last month, McPherson and Bubeck asked the court to release them from their probation because they claimed they had completed the community service. Ervin denied the request after shelter officials said they had no record of the two men completing the required work. While the pair blamed the shelter for poor record keeping, the judge sentenced them to six months in jail and put them on probation for an additional two and a half years.

For the next two years, the idea becoming beaten or humiliated for the pleasure of others may become a more personal issue for McPherson and Bubeck. We hope this time behind bars will teach them that hurting and exploiting vulnerable people is no laughing matter. And perhaps other steely-eyed opportunists out there will think twice before seeking to use a homeless person for profit.

Reprinted from Spare Change News, Boston, MA, March 2005.  
©Street News Service: www.streetpapers.org

## A Note to our Readers

For several years now this paper's membership in the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) has given us access to national stories about poverty through the Street News Service. Recently, NASNA members decided that it would be advantageous to adopt a more global perspective, and in 2006 will become a part of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP). Meanwhile, INSP member papers have begun releasing stories through the Street News Service for NASNA use (and vice-versa).

The content of this issue reflects these on-going changes. In particular, the *BIG Issue* of Australia has been generous with their stories, some of which we've reprinted here. We hope our readers will realize how similar these stories are to those from this area of the world. This is the point we wish to make — that the politics of poverty is a systemic problem of an industrial technological economy based on maximizing profits, and local "solutions" designed to penalize or drive away the impoverished will not solve anything.



## Are more homeless people falling victim to crime on the streets?

Released by Street News Service • [www.streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org)  
**Scapegoating the indigent in the land down-under**

by Alana Rosenbaum  
*Big Issue, Australia*

More and more homeless people are falling victim to hate crimes. Is mainstream society getting away with murder?

In more than a decade on the streets, Clint Riseley was stabbed, shot, doused with petrol, set alight, and repeatedly beaten. He parts his hair to reveal 10 stitches in his head, the scars of his most recent altercation, when three teenagers confronted him in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy.

"They asked me for money, then the next thing I knew, they were getting into me with golf clubs and knives."

When he came to, hours later, he was loathe to call the police. The last time he had approached authorities for help he'd ended up in a cell with a broken wrist. He began legal proceedings against the Victoria Police but charges were later dropped.

"I seem to be a magnet for violence," he says.

Riseley left home aged 12 to escape a violent stepfather. He lived a transient existence in Tasmania before moving to Melbourne four years ago, sleeping rough in the bayside suburb of St Kilda. But the days of living on the streets

are long gone. Now 24, Riseley rents a flat and is studying cabinetmaking. His voice fades to a whisper when he recounts the violence and uncertainty of life on the streets, and his most recent stay in hospital. "It's going to sleep that's the scariest thing, you don't know what's going to happen," he recalls.

Sleeping rough has always been perilous, but a rise in the number of bloody incidents over the past few years has made life even tougher for Australia's homeless. Last month, a homeless man was fatally stabbed outside McDonald's in the Melbourne suburb of Flemington. In July, a Sydney man was found in a storm-water drain in Centennial Park, having been struck fatally over the head.

In November last year three teenagers set fire to a 66-year-old man as he slept in a humpy in northwest Victoria. The previous month in Sydney a man was bludgeoned to death while he slept in an inner-city park, the crime recalling a spate of unsolved homeless murders in Sydney between 1998 and 1999. Many more violent crimes against the homeless go unreported.

Often portrayed as a threat to mainstream society, it is the homeless themselves who must live under the constant risk of assault, rape, and

physical injury. A recently published study of homeless youth in Australia revealed that almost two thirds had been physically assaulted in the previous 12 months. Needless to say, the vast majority of these crimes went unreported.

"People who are transient or rough sleepers are particularly vulnerable," says Phil Lynch, a lawyer at the PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic. "They're often perceived as soft targets — targets against which crimes can be perpetrated with little likelihood of ramifications."

"For some people, crimes against homeless people are opportunistic. They're potentially an easy source of small amounts of cash. The crimes are, to the public at least, victimless. Homeless people are often disenfranchised or disempowered, so they are unlikely to bring a complaint or seek to prosecute the offender."

Although violence against the homeless in Australia has not reached levels seen in the US, the incidence of such crimes has increased significantly in Australia since 2001, according to Lynch.

In the US, at least some of the most recent violence has been blamed on Bumfight, a direct-order video in which homeless people are paid

paltry amounts to commit real acts of brutality against one another. In one of the episodes, a man rips out his own front tooth with a pair of pliers. In another, a man sets his own head alight. In yet another, people ram their heads into steel doors.

Two of the participants — both with the word 'bumfight' tattooed in red ink across their foreheads — have since tried to sue, claiming the producers took advantage of their alcoholism.

Anna Radonic, principal lawyer at Victoria's community legal centre Youthlaw, has dealt with many young clients who see people on the streets as easy targets for crime.

"They [the perpetrators] consider themselves to be victims and they feel that if they can bash someone more pathetic than themselves that it will make them feel better," she says.

"I wouldn't compare it to sexual assault, but there is power involved in any assault. People who bash others feel they are in a powerful position and get a buzz out of it, it's an adrenaline rush."

For Lynch, the blame lies partly with the police. "Protection afforded to homeless people by law-enforcement agencies tends to be

inadequate," he says. "In fact, a recent survey of homeless people across Victoria indicated that many homeless people believe they are targeted and harassed by police. Police need to be better educated, equipped and resourced to deal sensitively and appropriately with people experiencing financial or social disadvantage."

He also makes the point that vilification of the homeless makes them more vulnerable to attack. "There is a prevailing view, and it's certainly a view that is pushed by government, that homelessness is most often a consequence of some form of individual dysfunction — basically, that it's their fault. There is very little social or political recognition that the underlying causes of homelessness are in fact systemic, structural and socioeconomic; they relate to issues of unemployment, the inadequacy of social security payments, lack of access to appropriate health care and the lack of adequate, affordable low-cost housing."

Riseley, for his part, is well aware of why he spent year on the streets. As for the latest unprovoked act that put him in hospital, he has an explanation that is as simple as it is shocking.

"I think they were just bored," he says.

## 'Too Close to Home'

Released by Street News Service • www.streetnewservice.org

### Australia has housing problems as well

by Rivkah Nissim

Many nations see housing as a basic human right. Why doesn't Australia?

It's 11 o'clock on a Tuesday morning and I'm sitting in a community centre in Ringwood, in outer-eastern Melbourne. The dozen people with me are passing around the Family Assorteds and chatting comfortably. Gwen, sitting across from me in a bright yellow sweater and tight perm, has been talking about her new grandchild, Cathy, next to her, is bemoaning the lack of public transport around the outer rim of Melbourne. None of these people have met before. But they have all, at some stage, lost their homes. They're here in response to a flyer for a project looking at housing as a human right, with the promise of \$20 and some biscuits in return.

I'm the one responsible for the flyer. I've spent the last few months talking to people who have experienced housing crises. Some have found themselves on the streets or in short-term crisis-accommodation services. Others are living in 'housing stress'—meaning that the amount they spend on housing means they can't meet their basic needs. Others are living in temporary accommodation in caravan parks or rooming houses, in private rental that's unsafe, unsound, or unavailable, or sitting on the ever-lengthening waiting list for public housing.

I've been telling these people that under international law, they have the right to safe, secure, affordable and accessible housing, and asking what needs to change for them to feel like they have this right.

Translating such rights to suit people's everyday experiences isn't easy. And the current political climate doesn't make it any easier. The Federal Government remains unmoved by the fact that almost 100,000 Australians are homeless every night (with the majority denied basic services due to lack of funding), thus ignoring its obligations to ensure all Australians have adequate housing, under the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In much the same way, it blithely ignores international condemnation over its mandatory detention of asylum-seekers.

It doesn't help that human rights tend to get bad press in this country. Activists are regularly portrayed as somehow elitist, unnecessary or airy-fairy, or as do-gooders interfering in how we run our country. Those campaigning for housing rights get barely any press at all, despite the fact that Australia has no laws that say we have a right to adequate housing.

In South Africa, the right to housing is protected under the Constitution, while under the human rights codes of some Canadian provinces it is illegal to refuse to rent a house to someone because they are receiving social security or because they have children. Scotland's recent Homelessness Act has helped put in place a plan for everyone in Scotland to have a home within the next 10 years. Even India's Constitution allows its citizens to take legal action against their government if it doesn't provide for them when they are homeless.

Since human rights treaties don't take effect in a country until they're incorporated into law, it's the Federal Government's responsibility to sign onto them and make treaties meaningful in Australia. The states and territories, however, can still articulate their commitment to human rights and develop plans to put them into practice. The ACT has led the way by developing its Human Rights Act, but it doesn't include the right to adequate housing.

Of course, putting housing rights in writing wouldn't solve Australia's growing housing inequity, but it could help change how we think about housing. With our apparent obsession with glossy renovation shows and 'reality' auctions, it's easy to see shelter as just another thing to swap or score, rather than a basic human need. As I was told by one young woman in a focus group, "It's really wrong that you can be turned away from crisis centres. That's the most basic human right — you should never have to spend even one night on the street."

Back in Ringwood, I ask about housing affordability. It's the question that always prompts the most passionate responses. Gwen is the first to answer. Gone is the cheerful chatting grandmother, her voice is now subdued, and so soft I have to strain to hear it.

"We had a house," she says, looking at the table. "When my husband got ill, I was still working and paying the mortgage, looking after him. I was lucky in that, when the bank repossessed our house, my eldest son took us in. Otherwise we'd have been out on the street."

Suddenly her face crumples and she starts to cry. "And then the house was sold for \$128,000," she says through sobs. "The person who bought it resold it six months later and got \$240,000 for it. And now I feel I was robbed."

Listening to her, it hits me how personal a house is to each of us, and how much it represents. I remember Debbie, a young mum in a group

the week before, half-laughing as she spoke of her 'dream'. "That we would all be given our own home and you would pay whatever you could afford to pay—and you're not going to hurt it, because it's your own little piece of heaven."

It also makes me think that promoting human rights is like trying to sell insurance. Most of us don't even think about our rights unless we find ourselves in a situation where they aren't met. To me this is the core of the Federal Government's obligations on housing: to make sure we have it and that it meets our needs, and to help us keep it if we become vulnerable to losing it.

There was a man, Doug, in a group in regional Victoria whose situation was similar to Gwen's. "We had to sell the house when my business went down, and then we couldn't afford a mortgage," he said. "And I went to Centrelink and I said, 'Can I get rent assistance?' and they said, 'No, because you're buying a house.' Now I wouldn't have had to move out of that house and sell it if I'd have got assistance, and we wouldn't have had to access these other services we have to now if we could've stayed in the house."

To Doug, getting help with his mortgage made perfect sense. Not only would he have not become homeless, but it also would have cost the Government less in the long run. These are the kinds of practical ideas suggested by people I interviewed when asked what could be done to look after their rights to housing: mortgage relief to help people in financial stress, as well as incentives for developers to build low-cost housing, not just shiny new waterfront apartments. People also said they wanted the State Governments to put in place minimum standards for rental housing—around things like structure, health and safety—and create an independent housing ombudsman, just as there are ombudsmen for other essential services.

When I ask Gwen what she would like to see change, her response is about something less concrete, but no less important. "One of the big things we've got to do is change attitudes," she says. "The attitude is, 'It's your own bloody fault, you're a bludger living off the system.' We've got to start caring about these people who are sometimes worse off than ourselves."

For more information about the Housing is a Human Right Project, a copy of the report 'Little Piece of Heaven', or the Charter of Housing Rights for Victoria, visit [www.vhoss.org.au](http://www.vhoss.org.au). For general information Australia-wide, visit the Australian Federation of Homelessness at [www.afho.org.au](http://www.afho.org.au)

## Homelessness Hits Forks

Released by Street News Service  
[www.streetnewservice.org](http://www.streetnewservice.org)

by Israel Bayer  
March 21, 2005

American Northwest:

Last month volunteers counted more than 1,050 individuals experiencing homelessness in Clallam County. 322 were living on the West End of the peninsula. Nearly one in four counted where children.

"Homelessness is a problem in our community," said Jackie Windle, a case manager with West End Outreach Services, an organization of fering mental health, chemical dependency, and employment services. The organization also has 3 shelter locations in Forks. More than 20 people are currently on the waiting list. "I'm not sure everyone understands what a big problem it is."

Homelessness in rural areas has seen a dramatic increase over the past decade with the loss of employment, the outsourcing of jobs, the cost of housing, and the lack of a living wage.

"It's not like the big city," said Ruth King with West End Outreach Services. "People go into the woods and camp."

188 individuals in the Forks area and 77 in La Push were identified as being homeless - families and veterans were the most at risk population. The state of Washington considers anyone who is living in sub-standard housing, shelters, or sleeping outside to be homeless.

Substandard housing would include not having cooking facilities, a working bathroom, running water or heat.

Domestic violence, drug addiction and mental illness have also been attributed to the surge in homelessness throughout the county.

King said many people are falling through the cracks that have bad credit, a felony or are unemployed. "There are no jobs in the community right now - it's hard out there for many people, especially families. We are seeing single mothers with young children who have no place left to go."

King went on to say that many of the individuals are from out of town. "We had one woman with a child from Arkansas who had looked up Forks on the Internet. She was in a bad situation, so she came to town hoping to find work because she thought the cost of living was lower here. The problem is there are no places to rent, no jobs and still people are coming to town looking for opportunities."

"We have a lot of people stealing from Peter to pay Paul," said Sharon Ryan, the workforce specialist for the state in Forks. "Even people who are working can't afford everything."

"It's all interrelated," said Audrey Grafstrom, Executive Director of the Quileute Housing Authority. "Families are losing their jobs and homes, which is leading to drug and alcohol abuse, and then the vicious cycle begins." Grafstrom went on to say that most of the individuals and families in La Push were not sleeping in the woods, but living with other family members.

Hope is on the horizon in La Push though, according to Grafstrom, who said that the tribe is shifting its focus to economic development and building a stronger, healthier community to create more jobs.

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Washington is unknown. In Seattle, more than 8,000 are experiencing homelessness. 3.5 million

see Forks page 4

# Forks

cont. from page 3

# WATCH THIS SPACE

Released by Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

## "War on Terror" Eroding Liberty Down-under

people are estimated to be on the streets nationwide, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington D.C. More than 500,000 of those individuals are U.S. veterans, many from the Vietnam era.

"Some say Clallam County has the best services, and that's why people are coming," said Mike McEvoy, a veteran outreach worker in Portland Angeles. "But there are more services in other counties, so who knows."

"We are seeing a lot of people who are dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and mental illness," said McEvoy. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a term used for psychotic stress caused by an event. Earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, airplane crashes, and shock during battle are common events causing what is otherwise known as "shell-shock."

"It's hard - we have vets living in cars, living in the forest, and people in shelters," said McEvoy. "The forgotten vets are the Vietnam vets. We need to make sure none of our vets are forgotten, and treated with respect, even those who are homeless."

And while the community is struggling with the current surge in homelessness, there is another kind of homelessness effecting Forks as well - caused by domestic violence.

"We see people who are stressed out by their life circumstance," said Nancy Rohde, a legal advocate with Forks Abuse, an agency in town of fering shelter, advocacy, and legal advice for people affected by domestic violence.

"They have no safety net," Rohde said referring to people coming through the shelter. "They don't have family or a place to go. Most of the homelessness we see are men and women who have to flee home because of safety, and they are homeless because they don't feel safe at home. It's a transition."

"We are really a giving community," said Ryan. "We are going to have to figure something out. I think we can do it though."

Reprinted from Street Roots, Portland, OR, March 2005. ©Street News Service: www.street-papers.org

by Adam Ferguson  
The Big Issue, Australia

Technology is keeping track of us like never before — and it's all in the name of anti-terrorism.

It's more than half a century since George Orwell published his vision of a round-the-clock surveillance society. Back then it was a work of fiction. Now, as our communications are intercepted, stored and analysed on a massive scale, much of that fiction has become fact. Like it or not, we're being tracked like never before.

The steady increase in surveillance has been made possible through huge advances in technology such as computer systems, cameras, global positioning and other gadgetry. The thousands of electronic footprints we leave in our day-to-day lives — through phone-calls, emails, purchases and banking — mean our activities can be tracked in great detail just by chasing up our data trails, a process known as 'dataveillance'.

It's estimated that the details of every economically active adult in the developed world now appear on around 700 separate databases. And in Britain, the average person is clocked by a video camera about 300 times per day.

The influential American Civil Liberties Union warns that such advances have created a world in which "there are no longer any technical barriers to the Big Brother regime portrayed by George Orwell".

Since September 11, 2001, the spectre of terrorism has boosted what were already extensive monitoring systems of citizens by government agencies throughout the world. And Australia is certainly keeping up. A 2003 report released by the civil liberties group Privacy International criticised Australia's privacy protection record, and adjudged it to be among the more aggressive proponents of DNA database technology and video surveillance.

In the last financial year Australia racked up 3050 phone taps — an increase of 41 per cent on the previous two years — out-snooping even the US on a per-capita basis.

According to Nigel Waters of the Australian Privacy Foundation (APF), the threat of terrorism is being overplayed to justify increasing incursions on our privacy. "There's no doubt that

this general climate of fear — which we [the APF] think is largely a beat-up — is making these things far worse," he says.

Since 2001, a flurry of legislation has been passed to increase ASIO and police powers — including increased ability to detain without evidence of wrongdoing — but there is certainly more, and potentially worse, to come if trends in the US are anything to go by.

Australia's Surveillance Devices bill, set to widen the circumstances in which data, optical, listening and tracking devices can be used, has caused concern among some groups, but it is a proposed amendment to the Telecommunications (Interception) Act — which now seems sure to pass — that really has privacy campaigners like the APF grinding their teeth. The amendment, ostensibly an anti-terrorism measure, will allow law enforcement agencies access to stored communications such as emails, voice mail messages and text messages, without the need for a judicial interception warrant.

"This is very serious — potentially the biggest loss of privacy in a decade," says Waters. The interception warrant it is seeking to circumvent "has all sorts of thresholds and safeguards attached to it," he says. "But these amendments will basically mean that, in the case of stored communications, the police and other authorities will be able to access this by means of other powers without the same sort of safeguards."

If the amendment is passed, only a search warrant — which is far easier to obtain and requires less documentation than an intercept warrant — will be needed to obtain stored communications. And as many agencies can issue their own search warrants, even this may provide little protection from abuse.

Irene Graham, executive director of Electronic Frontiers Australia, a civil rights organisation focusing on internet privacy, also sees the proposed amendment as especially sinister. "From our view it's basically covert surveillance which is far more dangerous than, say, normal search warrants on individuals' homes." It is highly unlikely that people will be told when their messages have been intercepted, for example. "If you believe you've been improperly investigated you've got no chance of getting anything done about it," she says.

Like Waters, Graham is sceptical

of claims that the amendment is all about terrorism. "The time it takes to get an interception warrant now is only 20 minutes. That's how much time they'll be saving," she says, adding that the amendment is about avoiding accountability, and widening the powers of the Australian Taxation Office and Department of Immigration, which were previously barred from this kind of surveillance.

The ALP's decision is based more on looking tough on security than anything else, according to Waters. "It's part of a general package of what we see as over-reaction to the law-and-order and terrorism hype, and how this is being used to advance other agendas," he says.

Other schemes have been dusted off and hauled before the public on the grounds that the security situation gives them new relevance. In October, Australian Federal Police chief Mick Keely urged the Howard Government to introduce a national identity card to be carried by all citizens, possibly linked up to databases of personal information. Australians faced a similar proposal back in the 1960s, which was roundly shouted down by the public, but it has now reappeared in the guise of a weapon in the 'war on terror'.

Of course, surveillance is not just a tool of government. In the private sector, gleaning data on consumers for commercial purposes — 'customer relations management' as it is sometimes known — is on the rise, while accountability is not. "The private sector basically wants to know as much about us as possible so they can target us for goods and services," says Waters. "And a lot of the ways in which they collect that sort of information is not transparent. They're getting information through all kinds of channels: the internet, through registration of warranties for goods and services, phone calls, etcetera."

But a new era in consumer profiling is dawning, led by Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. These are microchips placed inside products, which allow items to be tracked over vast distances. Unlike bar coding, this system can assign a unique number to every item that rolls off the production line. Companies in the US and Britain have already begun using RFIDs, ostensibly for tracking and stopping theft. But there are fears that the tags will be used for other purposes, even tracking

customers once they leave the stores. In Britain last year, a Tesco supermarket was picketed by privacy groups after it was revealed that customers were being photographed as they left the supermarket with RFID tagged products.

It seems that between government and the private sector, there is little that goes unnoticed. So what happens when the two combine forces?

Such a scenario, dubbed the 'Surveillance-Industrial Complex' by the American Civil Liberties Union, is already becoming a reality. "The government is telling the private sector that they've got to keep more and more information because it might be useful for law enforcement," explains Waters.

In Australia, the 1988 Financial Transactions Reports Act, administered by the financial intelligence unit Austrac, requires banks and other financial institutions to keep records of financial transactions (for longer than is useful for the company) so that the Australian Federal Police and state police services can use that information for their own purposes. The government now plans to place similar demands on real-estate agents, accountants, lawyers and other commercial concerns.

The overhaul, according to a press release from the Department of Justice and Customs, is "aimed at cracking down on money laundering and terrorist financing". But in the meantime, Waters warns, "the private sector is free to use that information for its own commercial purposes".

Meanwhile in the US, anti-terror laws have been used to crack down on anti-war protesters. In August, the New York Times reported that federal agents trailed a number of people in the state of Missouri for days before finally subpoenaing them — their 'crime' was apparently planning to protest at the upcoming Republican Convention in Washington. Dozens of others were visited by the FBI and questioned about planned protest activities in the same period.

To what end will all this knowledge be put? Are such developments in our best interest? In the best Orwellian tradition, such questions are irrelevant. As the government slogan in Orwell's novel 1984 goes: "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength."

# MAN MOUNTAIN MIKE

by Lillian

Man Mountain Mike was a big fellow, tall and stout, with a big belly. He always had his favorite hat on. A big floppy, black felt western hat with a bright feather or two. During the hot Sacramento summers he liked to wear his shorts, thongs and sunglasses. He was inclined to be a jovial man, always laughing, and he loved to brag about himself and his accomplishments. The more beer he had, the more he laughed and bragged. Born and raised in Auburn, California, he was well acquainted with the Sacramento Valley and had chosen the park on 22nd & C Sts as his home when he found himself in the position of being unable to work due to his alcoholism. He had once been a famous wrestler by the name of Man Mountain Mike and he had wrestling magazines with his pictures in them which he enjoyed showing, thus proving his claim to fame and thus remembering his more illustrious days.

Now in his twilight years, he had taken on the challenging task of educating some of the young men who found themselves in the streets of Sacramento, looking for friendship and looking for a beer. "Learning them" he called it. One of his favorite expressions was "tomorrow morning, we have to take care of business." This was the night before the first of the month and everyone knew that he expected everyone to pay his bills. When Craig first met him, he would make a big pot of food most every night in the park to feed

the others. The police in those days, allowed him to do this, in fact, at times, the police would engage the help of this little group of alcoholics. (Be on the look-out for such and such, and let us know if you see this person.) During the bitter cold winters, he had his gigantic tarp in which all would be wrapped at night in order to sleep. No one really had a tent.

One cold dismal autumn day, when everyone was broke and in sore need of a drink, a man drove up to the park in a nice car and looked around at everyone. A sad looking bunch, for sure. He went up to Man Mountain Mike and asked him if he would like to be in a film, a documentary about the homeless on the streets of Sacramento. Mike said "no." The man went to the car, thought a while and went back to Mike, offering a gallon of wine if Mike would be the star in the documentary. Mike's eyes lit up at the sound of a gallon of wine and quickly agreed. As so it was, that the next day, the man returned with a camera and filmed Mike being interviewed. After it was all over, everyone had a good party with that gallon of wine. The film was named "Red Heart" and is shown occasionally on channel 6.

Mike succumbed to cirrhosis of the liver due to alcoholism. He is buried at the cemetery of the city of Auburn. He is etched memorably in the minds of many of the people whose lives he touched.

## Clinic

continued from page 1

I looked around and found a likely candidate to interview. An acquaintance that I thought might have an interesting story. Mike said, "I've been going to court for 8 years." He had gotten citations for camping, being in the park after hours, dog off leash. Yesterday he got a ticket for unlawful storage of personal property. Unlawful possession of alcohol where not allowed. There's the glass bottle possession crime. Once he was ticketed for "dog off leash", when his dog yanked off the leash after the police arrived. He said, "its against civil and constitutional rights, all our rights."

Seth Curtis, a public defender, was there helping out at the clinic for his second time. He had already seen 5 people that day and will probably handle their files personally in court. He said he likes doing the work. "There's a little bit of everything, makes it interesting" he said.

It is inconceivable that an enlightened society, or a society of any kind, would make laws against people sleeping outdoors, or laws

against people doing what they could legally do if they had an indoor abode. Especially with current rents being unaffordable even to full-time wage workers. Until our lawmakers wake up to some kind of sanity, at least we have some compassionate help from the Legal Clinic at Loaves & Fishes.

### Legal Clinic Hours

Angie's office is in Friendship Park, 1321 North C Street, up on the deck and is open Tuesday through Friday. Community Service can be arranged 9am to noon.

If you'd like to see an attorney at the monthly clinic you must sign up at the Legal Clinic office two weeks in advance.

For more information call 446-0368

## Hasseling Harmless Acts; Missing Harmful Acts an opinion based on experience

by Teresa

Camp (Kamp) [k-mp] 1. a place where temporary tents, huts, barracks, etc., are put up, as for soldiers. 2. a group of people who support or advance a common opinion, cause, etc. 3. a tent, cabin, etc., or a group of these, used for temporary lodging. 4. A recreational place in the country for vacationers, esp. children. 5. The people living in a camp. [definition abbreviated - I[W ed.]

Thus defines "camp" in Webster's New World Dictionary. Please take note that this definition says nothing about homelessness, people who are homeless, or any other activity that the City of Sacramento has deemed unlawful.

Between 10 AM and 11 AM on the morning of January 13, 2005, twelve people were ticketed for unlawful camping. We were attempting to stay out of a very cold wind under a structure that is supposed to be permanent. There were no tents (make-shift or otherwise), no huts, no etc.

The only conclusion that I can come up with is that the police officers writing the tickets were enforcing a law which effectively creates a minimum income requirement to legally live in the City of Sacramento.

During the ticket writing spree, these same officers

completely ignored a motorist hurtling himself west on Garden Highway at approximately 65 mph behind the wheel of a deadly object.

A couple of days previous to this incident, about a dozen of us eye-witnessed CalTrans personnel dumping 1-5 trash into a creek at the same location. Mere yards away, this creek empties out into the Sacramento River. Luckily, this creek is usually dry, but after all the rain these last couple of months, who knows?

There have been very few times in our country's 229 year history that we have been so divided. It takes months of recounts, and who won an election is still in doubt. The wealthy pad their off-shore bank accounts, while the marginalized become homeless non-citizens.

Before you come up with the excuse that the homeless are still allowed to vote, allow me to interject this point: Voting is not the only citizenship right in this country. To name just one more, we also have the right to a representative form of government. I'd sure love to know when I as a homeless person was ever represented by the "Powers That Be" in this country. If I were truly represented, the real criminals would be prosecuted, and I would be allowed to just be.

## Brutal Truth

by Martin Hughes  
INSP

Hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness is a global problem and everyone working within the International Network of Street Papers (INSP) has horror stories to report about the mindless victimization of the people they work with.

Usually police don't even bother investigating crimes against homeless people in a city like Sao Paulo, where violence is common and there are some 10,000 homeless people and a settled population of 18 million. But when someone tries to take out

10 of them in one night — clinically, with single blows to the head — the community takes notice.

The local media began to report violent attacks against the homeless elsewhere in Brazil — reporting that 22 were killed over a period of three weeks — and speculated about the existence of a national hate campaign. When two police officers and a third suspect were arrested for the Sao Paulo killings, it became disturbingly clear that there was nothing unusual about so many homeless people being killed; the only new development was that their deaths were being noticed.

# PRIMATE ENTERPRISE

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

by Rochelle Siemienowicz  
April 18, 2005

One man's battle to save Orangutans from extinction has become a crusade to mend the world's wicked environmental ways.

It's a sad truth that we humans find some endangered species much more lovable than others. With their old-man eyes, crazy henna-coloured hair and long, huggy arms, Orangutans must be among the cutest of causes. And yet according to Dr Willie Smits, world-renowned forest ecologist and founder of the Borneo Orangutan Survival foundation (BOS), their time is almost up. "If we don't save them in the next three years there will be no areas of forest left that are big enough to sustain an Orangutan population," he says.

It's no wonder Smits is a man in a hurry, or that he drinks coffee after cup of sweet black coffee. He's jetlagged from circling the globe three times in the last month in a desperate attempt to raise awareness – and funds – to save his beautiful primates. As he talks to *The Big Issue* in the conference room of the Melbourne Zoo, Smits turns on his laptop to show a series of photographs. But the machine is slow to load up. "Come on, come on," he urges in his strong Dutch accent. "Nothing goes fast enough...except the destruction here?"

The images on the screen are beautiful at first. Like a father showing off family snaps, Smits shares a picture of a handsome young male Orangutan. "This is the son of the first Orangutan I ever saved, and now he's living independently in the wild," he says with obvious joy. But the pictures get bleaker by the minute, with shots of burnt and beaten animals and ravaged skulls. Smits explains that Orangutans are often maimed in forest fires. "Then the local villagers cut off their heads with knives. People sell those skulls. They carve them, dye them, make them look like antiques and sell them to stupid, stupid tourists. Those are freshly hunted skulls. They put them in septic tanks to make them look brown and old – they're even sold on eBay!" Even after 20 years spent confronting such harsh realities, Smits is visibly upset.

Now 47, Smits left the Netherlands as a young graduate, to do field work in Indonesia. "I wanted a challenge," he recalls. "I wanted to really know what nature was, and I spent six

months in the forest and learnt a lot from the indigenous people who live there, the Dyaks. So much of that knowledge is being lost so quickly!" Smits's expertise was quickly seized upon by the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, which invited him to oversee projects of hardwood reforestation and the training of more than 1000 Indonesian foresters.

The moment that changed Smits's life forever took place not among the trees, but in a marketplace in the city of Balikpapan, where baby Orangutans are regularly, and illegally, sold as pets, lab animals or tourist attractions. "I came across a dying Orangutan baby," he recalls. "Once I'd looked in her eyes I just fell in love and wanted to give her back her freedom. And that one dying baby changed my life. I managed to save her, and then I was given more Orangutans, and I soon realised that it was only going to work if I had a forest to put them in." It was at this point, in 1991, that Smits founded BOS, whose motto is 'Primates Helping Primates'.

In the last 20 years, Borneo – one of the world's largest islands – has lost 80 per cent of its rainforests to fire, agricultural clearing and (mostly illegal) logging. Within these disappearing forests are the low-lying tropical peat swamps in which the Orangutan lives. For Smits, the destruction of these swamps is a problem not just for the local people or the primates, but for every person on the planet, and especially Australians. "Even though Australia has not signed the Kyoto Protocol, in terms of climate change preserving those peat swamps is tremendously important for Australia," Smits says. "You are already experiencing the consequences of ever-more-frequent and intensive El Niños, which are affecting not only your plant and animal species but also your agriculture."

Devastating statistics come thick and fast as Smits explains the connections between sludgy swampland, great apes and global warming. "You need to realise that 50 per cent of the world's tropical peat swamps are in Indonesia," he says. "And the world's tropical peat swamps contain some 30 per cent of all terrestrial carbon. Now if those swamps – which have been growing at 2mm a year for 8000 years – are destroyed at the current rate it will lead to the doubling of global [carbon] emissions, global emissions, within 30 years. So you are looking at a problem that is much bigger than a few Orangutans!"

Fifty billion tones bigger, in fact – that's the estimated amount of carbon dioxide contained in Borneo's peat swamps. And according to climatologists, the recent increase in global carbon-dioxide levels is due in no small part to the burning of those swamps. In 1997, 2002 and 2004, Indonesia's infamous forest fires blanketed much of Southeast Asia in poisonous smog. Smits shows a series of coloured maps of the destruction. "The fires come originally from humans," he explains, "and they become ever-more intensive because of climate change, which dries out the forest and makes it easily combustible. And then you have the subterranean coal fires. Such fires can smoulder underground for 10, even 20, years and the moment there is a dry period, the soil cracks...and you have new fires all over."

Smits knows firsthand what it's like to fight these fires, and to live with their aftermath, as he and his forestry and wildlife workers have battled alongside the local people to control the flames.

In a bid to help save the Orangutan's habitat, and in turn help protect the environment, BOS has overseen a scheme to market voluntary carbon credits. Under the scheme, Borneo's peat swamplands are defined as carbon dioxide sinks (ie, like oceans and forests, they absorb and process carbon dioxide). So as long as they stay healthy, they represent valuable credit points when calculating emission levels. Thus BOS has also helped Indonesia erase around US\$100 million in debts to the Dutch and German government, in exchange for carbon credits under the Kyoto Protocol.

BOS now manages large tracts of Borneo rainforest, working to quarantine and re-introduce Orangutans into the wild (over 1000 have been released, with about 550 more still in rehabilitation); but also with the intention of protecting the forests from illegal logging, animal poaching, bad farming practices and fires. The Foundation has been given official law-enforcement powers to do so, and with the help of radar technology it has developed an important tool that enables them to see exactly what is happening to every tree in the region.

Smits gets very excited when he talks about this technology. "Normal satellite imagery is not good enough if you want to protect your forests," he says. "Now it turns out that this radar technology can also be used to predict

the risk of fire, and to check whether the right trees are being cut down, or whether an oil-palm plantation is being established in the right area." This breakthrough also enables BOS to monitor the effects of its other grassroots initiatives, including programs to teach local people farming methods that don't involve destroying or burning forests, and provide higher sustainable incomes.

In its attempts to mend the torn web of nature, BOS has become a world leader through its far-sighted initiatives, and you can't help thinking that if the biosphere is to be saved, it's going to take soft-hearted, hard-headed characters such as Smits to do it. And you have to agree with him when he says, with a sad shake of his head, "If only humans would be a little bit more like Orangutans, peaceful and caring, then this would be a better world."

#### Did You Know...

- Orangutans are the world's largest tree-dwelling mammals and share 97 per cent of human DNA. Sophisticated tool users, they have an advanced brain, with the ability to understand language and experience emotion.
- Orangutans have the slowest reproduction rate of any primate, with females reaching full sexual maturity at about 15 years of age. Babies are dependent on their mothers for the first eight years of life. In a 40-year lifespan, a female may only produce two to three surviving offspring.
- Orangutans are found only on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, and numbers have diminished by as much as 50 per cent in the past decade due to destructive human activity. The total population is currently estimated at less than 48,000.
- The Orangutan is a keystone species: its fruit-eating and seed-dispersing behaviour helps preserve tropical rainforests.
- It is estimated that more than 6000 Orangutans are killed each year.
- A sustainable Orangutan population would comprise 1000 individuals, which would require more than 30,000 hectares of pristine forest.
- The Boxing Day tsunami has had little direct effect on the regions inhabited by Orangutans, but timber requirements for rebuilding could have a major impact on their habitat.

For more information visit [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au). Reprinted from *The Big Issue Australia*, April 2005. ©Street News Service: [www.streetpapers.org](http://www.streetpapers.org)

# People of Faith, People of Conscience

Released by Street News Service  
www.streetnewsservice.org

by Anitra Freeman  
April 18, 2005

## A Book Review

**Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism**  
by Susan Jacoby  
Metropolitan Books, 2004  
Hardcover, 432 pages, \$27.50

**God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get it**  
by Jim Wallis  
Harper/San Francisco, 2005  
Hardcover, 416 pages, \$24.95

Jim Wallis, leader of the national church-based effort to address poverty, speaks often of the importance of being "people of faith." But comparing these two books, I think a more accurate term for what he is describing is "people of conscience." If faith is a commitment to values that you stand by come what may, then non-theists have faith as much and as often as theists do.

Both Susan Jacoby and Wallis describe an America that has barely begun to live out the commitment to human rights expressed in our founding documents, and has been over the past 30 to 40 years eroding what advances we had made. Both call for a recommitment to "liberty and justice for all," and illustrate in their equal passion, and the passion of those they describe and admire, that such a commitment transcends boundaries of theism and non-theism.

Jacoby shows how religious evangelicals allied with free-thinkers and deists to ratify a Constitution with no mention of God or any appeal to Divine Authority. Instead of secularizing the nation, Jacoby explains, the secularized Constitution put the just-sprouting Protestant denominations on equal footing with established religions, which "has probably enabled religion to flourish throughout the 20th century in this country in ways that it doesn't in other developed nations."

Jim Wallis describes the coalition of evangelical as well as liberal Protestants, Catholics, and Jews who are now allying to speak out against the theology of American Triumphalism that passes for Christianity on the Right, and refocus the message on social justice. In particular, the related issues of poverty, racism, and the environment.

While Jacoby's book celebrates the respect for reason and rejection of "truth by decree" that is

essential to carrying out such a commitment, Wallis illustrates how emotional faith is not necessarily in conflict with free reason and the criticism of tradition. In an article on racism as "America's Original Sin," he writes that the nation "was established as a white society, founded upon the near-genocide of another race and then the enslavement of yet another."

Jacoby acknowledges the work of progressive Christians in working for the advance of democracy and civil rights, while providing a much-needed corrective to American's historical amnesia by publicizing the leadership of secularists, including agnostics and atheists, in those advances. While Wallis advances a very progressive agenda, he rarely acknowledges the contributions of atheists and agnostics, or even of those religious outside of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim family of faiths, in advancing the principles of conscience he proclaims for a new "spiritual" politics.

Yet both Jacoby and Wallis — and all of the people they praise and identify with — are committed to the same principles of human rights and common good, of Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's vision of "The Beloved Community."

These principles seem to Jacoby to be rooted in secular values, to Wallis they seem rooted in the values of the God of the Bible, proclaimed by the prophets of the Bible — prophetic voices still lifted up today. Both regard the effort to incorporate these values into social life as an ongoing countercultural revolution. The revolution to establish liberty and justice for all may have begun in 1776, but it has never ended, and has a long way yet to go. Engaging in that effort is a profound moral commitment.

Both Jacoby and Wallis say that we need a revitalized commitment to those values to even regain what we once had, and to build on it. That both books are bestsellers today demonstrates that this message transcends theism or secularism.

Reprinted from Real Change News, April 2005.  
©Street News Service  
www.street-papers.org

## I Can

by Laughing Tree  
4/24/05

I can forge  
For an orange.  
I can scramble  
Through the brambles.  
I can hide from you  
And make you rue  
Your attitude against me.

I can hunt for cans and plastic  
Even though it makes you spas tic.  
I can pitch my tent,  
And pay no rent.  
I can cope,  
And I can hope.

You cannot kill my dreams

## A Mother's Love

On this earth there is nothing stronger than  
A Mother's Love  
From this special someone God gives me  
A Mother's Love  
I long for the depth and passion of  
A Mother's Love  
Intense Immaculate, infallible immovable is  
A Mother's Love  
Men women children even the beasts of the  
field need  
A Mother's Love  
God give me the warmth and security of  
A Mother's Love  
In my darkest hour Lord, give me  
A Mother's Love  
Through my storms and through my trials  
give me  
A Mother's Love  
You hold the power Lord given through  
A Mother's Love  
Brighten my days Lord! with...  
A Mother's Love  
Steady my course Lord! with...  
A Mother's Love  
The first thing you get in life is...  
A Mother's Love  
The last thing you lose from your parents is  
A Mother's Love  
God grant me the patience of  
A Mother's Love  
The closest Love to Your Love Lord is  
A Mother's Love  
Heaven sent from God above is  
A Mother's Love  
There is nothing sweeter in this word... than  
A Mother's Love...

GBY  
mce...

## Obituary

**David Hoglan**

"Vodka Dave"

d. 1/28/05  
outside, of alcoholism  
aged 48 yrs.

**Rex Lewis**

d. 3/7/05  
outside, cause pending  
aged 44 yrs

**Donald Chin**

d. 3/7/05  
in motel, cause pending  
aged 53 yrs.

**Amos Kimber**

d. 4/16/05  
inside, cause pending  
aged 41 yrs.

**Bobby Williams**

d. 4/20/05  
outside, cause pending  
aged 60 yrs.

**Carol Wright**

d. 2/10/05  
inside, of cancer  
Carol was a long-time  
volunteer at the L&F  
library

**Betty Lewis**

d. 3/13/05  
in hospital, of natural  
causes  
aged. 69 yrs