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2005 Homeless World Cup Soccer Blocked

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News Briefs

by Paula Mathieu
& Erin Anderson

Plans to hold the 2005 Homeless World Cup Soccer tournament in New York City have been scrapped by organizers due to federal government policies that would have likely barred players from entering the United States.

The annual goodwill event, which has attracted large crowds of supportive fans as well as international media coverage over the past two years, has introduced homeless people from 18 countries to soccer and international competition in a weeklong event organizers call a "sports-integration initiative for homeless people."

The past two Homeless World Cup (HWC) tournaments, held in Austria in 2003 and Sweden in 2004, were successful events that attracted worldwide media attention from outlets including ESPN and HBO.

Strong support existed in New York City for this year's event, said Bernhard Wolf, one of the organizers.

"From the New York City side, we received much support from Mayor Bloomberg's office, the New York 2012 Olympic Bid Committee, HBO and Octagon," he said. A Bloomberg aide confirmed the city's desire to host the event.

Following unsuccessful efforts to reach an agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DOHS) on the

issue of visas, however, organizers reluctantly decided to relocate the event outside the United States.

"The fact is that the current legal situation around visa availability into the U.S. means that we cannot guarantee our people would be admitted for the week," said Mel Young, president of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP), another one of the event's organizers.

"This poses an ethical problem for us, and it runs against the spirit of this tournament," Young said. "Regretfully, we will have to move the 2005 Homeless World Cup to an alternative location in Europe."

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NEWS RELEASE by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 15, 2004

Funds Provided by
Congress Would Go
Unspent

Funding shortfalls in a key federal housing program resulting from a recent change in federal policies are causing widespread reductions in housing assistance to low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, new research finds. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities have gathered information from 190 state and local housing agencies in 35 states that are being forced to

reduce the amount of rental assistance they provide and/or the number of people they help. The study (available at <http://www.cbpp.org/7-15-04hou-survey.htm>) is the first large-scale compilation of cuts in assistance that are occurring as a result of the funding shortfalls. Together, the 190 housing agencies assist roughly 30 percent of all families helped by the program nationally

More than half of the 190 agencies are cutting costs by reducing the size of the subsidies they provide to families in the program, even families with little or no income. "This will make it harder - and in some cases, impossible - for these families to afford their current apartments," said Barbara Sard, director of

housing policy at CBPP. "Some families will be forced to move into overcrowded and possibly unsafe apartments. Some may end up with no housing at all."

In addition, nearly half of the 190 agencies are cutting costs by reducing the number of families in the program. Some agencies have been forced to cut off program assistance for families that have been depending on it to help pay the rent. More agencies may have to take this extreme step over the next few months.

The program in question, known as the "Section 8" voucher program, is the nation's largest low-income housing program. It provides about 2 million households

with vouchers that pay part of the cost of renting housing in the private market. (Voucher holders pay roughly 30 percent of their income in rent, while the voucher pays the rest, up to a dollar limit set for units of a given size in the local area.) Most voucher holders are working families or are elderly or disabled.

Although Congress provided the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with sufficient funds this year to continue supporting all vouchers now in use, HUD recently adopted a new method of distributing voucher funds to housing agencies that is leaving millions of dollars in appropri-

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NORTH AMERICAN NEWSBRIEFS
WWW.STREETNEWSERVICE.ORG

Compiled by Patty Lane

A homeless street musician is set to go before a federal court over the panhandling law in Atlantic City. According to WAVE-TV, the 54-year-old saxophone player sued the city earlier this year for \$10 million challenging the law. Jack Stockwell says the 13-year-old law violates his First Amendment rights. The lawsuit stems from a confrontation between Stockwell and police who ordered him to stop playing the Star Spangled Banner on the Boardwalk in September 2003. He did not have a permit. Stockwell, who now lives in Virginia was accepting contributions from passers-by at the time. The ACLU says soliciting donations in a public forum is a constitutionally protected act, provided those doing it are not blocking entrances or being a nuisance.

Donations from Canadians to the disaster relief in South Asia is causing a drop in local donations to homeless agencies. Officials tell CFCN-TV that the post-holiday period is always difficult, but this year it's especially tough financially because of the enormous need for help half a world away. The Salvation Army collects for Calgary's homeless all year. They are also one of the key agencies raising funds for South Asia. The organization is wrapping up another record Christmas appeal in Calgary, but it says it expects to see donations drop because of the tsunami disaster. Spokesperson Major Gary Brown says they saw the same thing happen after the September 11th attacks. With frigid temperatures, every shelter in the city is filled beyond capacity. Even those banned from shelters are being let back in to ride out the cold snap.

A U.S. soldier is helping the homeless in his community even while serving in Kuwait. Sergeant Tyrone Watkins is an Army reservist called to active duty with the Richmond, Virginia based 499th Quartermaster Company. He is a logistics specialist working in a warehouse in Kuwait. "I wanted to help out locally during this season even though I couldn't be there," Watkins sent a package along with a note to Freedom House, a Richmond agency that aids the home-

less. Inside the package were used socks, t-shirts, a blanket and the note. "Like I said, I hope these help out even though I know it isn't much. Some of the socks and T-shirts I used for a short while but no longer need. They are all still in usable condition and I didn't see how throwing them out would be beneficial," Watkins wrote. He found Freedom House by doing an Internet search of the area. The Richmond Times-Dispatch says Watkins' wife Laura and daughter live in western Henrico.

Prosecutors in Calgary are calling for a stiffer sentence for two men accused of beating a homeless man. The men kicked, beat and urinated on the homeless man as their friends videotaped the attack. The CBC reports prosecutors recently filed papers to appeal the six-month sentences, arguing the crimes warranted harsher punishment. The two men and three friends were all high on animal tranquilizers when they found a 34-year-old homeless man passed out in an alley last July. They attacked him with bottles, a metal bar, kicked him, and urinated on him. While videotaping the attack, the other men could be heard laughing on the tape. The two men were found guilty of aggravated assault. Prosecutors are calling for a five-year sentence for each man.

"These are the forgotten people," sighed Tom Flynn, owner of a cemetery in Illinois that for 23 years has buried the dead left unclaimed at Cook County's morgue. CBS-2 reports there are around 7,000 homeless and indigent people buried in common graves at Homewood Memorial Gardens. Reta Reingruber is the most recent of them. Her body was kept at the morgue for five months before she was buried along with 22 other people whose bodies were not claimed. Reingruber, who often spent nights sleeping on Chicago buses, was 45 when she died in August of breast cancer at a hospital. Homeless advocates say more could be done to connect these forgotten with relatives or friends so they don't have to lie unclaimed for months and be given anonymous mass burials at the south suburban Chicago cemetery. "It's amazing that such cases are typical. It's a tragedy," says Ed Shirma of Chicago's Coalition for

the Homeless. He says officials are not doing enough to get the word out on the street when homeless people die so relatives or friends can be found. Last year, about 250 people went unclaimed from the

Medical Examiner's office. An official with the Chicago Department of Human Services says they do their best to identify the dead and find surviving relatives. Chicago Police often distribute photos of the deceased in neighborhoods where the person spent time.

Homeless advocates and city officials in San Diego County gathered to put together a plan to end homelessness in 10 years. Attendees heard success stories from housing officials from Atlanta and Philadelphia as well as ideas from the top official of a federal agency working on homeless issues. "I think it's pretty exciting," Escondido Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiler says of the conference. "I think it reinforces that you can solve the problem as a region." When the local group next meets, its first goal will be to develop strategies to eliminate chronic homelessness. That group of people, which officials said comprise 20 percent of the homeless population, will be the first focus of the effort because it consumes about 50 percent of the financial resources available to address the problem. Attendees said routinely chronically homeless get turned away from programs which leads to the need for emergency health services and law enforcement intervention. "I think we are missing the boat," says Hannah Cohen, a consultant with the United Way. "There has to be something wrong with this picture if existing programs are not working."

The state of Utah is getting \$5 million from the federal government to provide shelter and care for the homeless. The total disbursement is the largest from the government in history to fund a number of local projects. According to the Associated Press, about twenty agencies in Utah were awarded funding. Permanent or transitional housing and services like job training and health care will be put into place with some of the funding. In additional resources to convert buildings into homeless shelters, assist in the operation of local shelters an fund drug and alcohol treatment, child care, and homeless prevention and alcohol prevention programs will be funded.

A man picked up by police using the alias "Matthew Killing" turned out to

be a suspect in the murder of a homeless man in Florida. That according to the Orlando Sentinel, Ezra Evans was wanted for questioning in the death of a transient in Orlando. The body of John Goggin was found in an abandoned doorway. The 65-year-old homeless man was beaten to death.

Evans was arrested on charges of providing false identification, when he identified himself as "Matthew Killing," to a police officer. "You better call a detective because they are going to want to talk to me," Evans was quoted as telling the deputy driving him to the Orange County Jail. "If you call detectives and tell them you have Ezra Evans, they will beat you to jail to get to me." When asked why the 36-year-old suspect replied he was wanted for murder Evans was arrested after an acquaintance saw an article of the unsolved homicide. They told police Evans told him he recently killed a homeless man in Orlando and was wanted for another one in North Carolina, according to the report. The acquaintance said Evans told him he severely beat the victim and left the body covered with a blanket and voiced concern that his shoes would link him to the bloody scene. Police believe Goggin may have been bludgeoned with a board after refusing to give Evans \$10, following several hours of drinking with him. Evans remains in the Orange County Jail without bail on charges of first-degree murder and providing false identification.

A homeless man who hid out in an old high school in Minnesota has apologized to the school's students and their parents. Francisco Serrano told them he was simply looking for a warm place to stay during the cold. Serrano is a 21-year-old former student of Apple Valley High School in Edina, Minnesota. According to the AP, Serrano is shocked so many people were sympathetic to his situation. "I'm impressed that people who don't know me want to help me," Serrano said. "All I can say is thank you." Serrano, who is a Mexican citizen, still faces possible deportation on an immigration charge. He was free Friday on \$5-thousand bond posted by a Minneapolis developer. Serrano says he lived at the school for three weeks. Since he looks much younger than his age the 21-year-old he was able to blend into the school population. He says he spent his time in the school's gym, in study hall and even helped out in the theater. At night he watched TV. If teachers challenged him he would tell them he was a new student and even went to class twice. Serrano still faces immigration charges.

Mentally Ill Behind Bars on the Rise; D.C. Tackles A Trend

Street News Service • www.streetnewsservice.org

by Carolyn Cosmos

More mentally ill adults are living on D.C. streets than ever before, and this rising number includes people like Lawrence, 50, a college graduate who suffers from bipolar disorder, which is often called manic depression. Even on medication, he can become suicidal, he said. He's homeless, recovering from substance abuse, and getting medical treatment from Dr. Ronald Koshes at So Others Might Eat (SOME).

Unfortunately, according to advocates, mental health experts, and local statistics, more and more mentally ill people like Lawrence are winding up in the clink, arrested for misdemeanors.

Help, however, may be at hand. Marti Knisley, director of the D.C. Department of Mental Health (DMH), said that in January the department would launch a pilot program to divert homeless mentally ill people arrested for minor matters from jail and into treatment.

Still under development, the program has not yet been publicly announced until now. But the diversion program will come too late for Lawrence — whose situation is typical of what can happen on the street. Arrested for loitering at a bookstore, he said, he missed a court date and spent six months in the D.C. Jail where — minus his medical records — he could not get the psychotropic medicines he needs for more than a month. A visitor he calls "Brother Lou" helped him get his meds: "He used to come to my cell."

"There is no mercy in the whole system," said soup kitchen cook Lou Schwartz. A volunteer minister at the D.C. Jail, Schwartz spends a day a week in the "lockdown unit" there. Last year he helped Lawrence get the medications he takes for his bipolar disorder, a brain disease that leads to extreme mood swings.

Schwartz remembered Lawrence. "He's very intelligent," Schwartz commented. "It was quite obvious. He was always asking me to bring him books."

Schwartz said he sees many homeless people who struggle with mental illness. "They come out of jail. They're in the shelters. They're on the street. They die or they come back into jail. Some of them break into cars or commit other crimes to get back in so they can get food, a warm place

to sleep, treatment. They don't get the help they need on the outside."

The problem is longstanding, according to experts. And it's getting worse, said Phil Fomici, executive director of the Prisoners Legal Services Project. Data provided by the D.C. and Montgomery County jails back him up.

A member of a D.C. Jail Diversion Task Force on the issue, Fomici said his group hasn't been able to "get the interest of high-level people in the D.C. government. We've been banging our heads against a wall."

The D.C. Diversion Plan

Knisley's DMH diversion pilot is called "Universal Screening." In the plan, she plans to train, through her department, all Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers in the next year and to eventually have them screen "every person arrested" by briefly checking each person for mental health problems using a screening questionnaire.

She hopes that this will keep many mentally ill homeless people out of jail. Knisley plans to offer those arrested and needing help a variety of follow-up mental health services. She also plans to track what happens to them to learn which approaches work best. MPD officer training has already begun, Knisley said, but training for screenings done by those who are not police officers will start in January.

The program will also screen those who are already on the inside; all juvenile offenders will be first in line, and it will be "about a year" before the screening will reach all arrested adults. Knisley is working with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, a District-federal collaboration that is developing the questionnaire.

Critic's Concern

Some experts are skeptical. Fomici said, "It's a positive development, but I'm not optimistic about the outcome because there are so few [treatment] resources."

E. Fuller Torrey, MD, said that the Knisley plan is "like motherhood — a good thing, you can hardly be against it, but how good it is in the long run depends on how you go about implementing." Torrey is a nationally known advocate for the mentally ill homeless and president of The Treatment

Advocacy Center in Virginia.

"If Dr. Knisley uses the District law that allows outpatient commitment, there's some hope of success. Otherwise it's not going to do anything," Torrey added.

D.C. City Council's Kathy Patterson (Ward 3) commented, "Marti Knisley is one of the really creative voices within the Williams administration," and she is showing leadership that "I simply have not seen in the four years I have chaired the Judiciary Committee."

Corrections Department Director Odie Washington, who is in charge of the D.C. Jail, said that the DMH pilot represents a "bold vision" and a way to create a better alignment between mental health providers and the criminal justice system. "We'll cooperate in every way," he said.

How Big is The Problem?

"The largest provider of mental health services in Montgomery County is the Montgomery County Jail," bluntly stated Esther Kaleko-Kravitz, director of Montgomery County's branch of the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill.

Arthur Wallenstein, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, said that his correctional system has 1,000 prisoners in two jails and a community facility and that "on a daily basis, between 17% and 20% have a documented mental illness."

Wallenstein said that while the closing of the state mental hospitals hit the county hard, it was not what led to the upsurge in the homeless mentally ill. Instead, he said, "it was our failure to build a good community mental health system and to realize that mental illness is a health problem. We attach stigma to people who are mentally ill. We isolate them and incarcerate them, and it all leads to homelessness."

A look at local figures shows the impact. At the D.C. Jail, over the last five years, said LaVerna Simms, Assistant Director of Mental Health Services there, the number of incoming prisoners with mental health problems has gone up: "There's been a steady increase."

For example, in 2003, of the several thousand incoming inmates processed by the jail each month, the number referred for mental health help was "consistently in the 500s."

However, this year, from July through October, the number of inmate intakes needing mental health help ranged from 683 to 697 a month. This past October 30, of them were severely ill and sent to acute care, Simms said, and 274 were getting mental health help for the first time.

At the D.C. Jail each month, on the average, said D.C. Director of Corrections Odie Washington, "55% of the inmates in all sectors will ask for or need some type of mental health services. We have 33% on psychotropic medication." The D.C. Jail complex houses an average of 2,300 prisoners in its main facility and an average of 1,200 prisoners in the privately run "Correctional Treatment Facility" that now functions as a jail annex.

The Jail has on its premises 77 acute-care beds in a "mental health unit" for men who are severely mentally ill and 20 such beds for women. The unit employs specially trained staff, Washington explained. There is also a separate John Howard "forensic unit" on the grounds of St. Elizabeth's, D.C.'s public psychiatric hospital.

"We provide them will all kinds of services," Simms said of the mentally ill inmates, "but it's discouraging. Even if we work real hard and get a person stable, if they're not treated when they get out, I know I'm going to see them back."

Although the problem is big, D.C. government programs addressing it have so far been small. The Department of Mental Health runs a pretrial mental health "Options" program that works with the Public Defender office. It provides housing, medical assistance, and court advocacy for a small number of people — 35 — although the D.C. Jail is processing hundreds of mentally ill people each month.

There is also a new "Pathways to Housing" program, Knisley explains. It provides homes and support for people on the streets who have both substance abuse and mental health issues. However, it is limited to 75 people, and it is already "fully subscribed" — all its slots are taken.

A National Dilemma

"I have seen it all over the United States," Torrey, of the Treatment Advocacy Center, said.

A 1999 Department of Justice report

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World Cup

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The problem, according to Wolf, is that U.S. immigration policy raises red flags about anyone deemed to have "insufficient ties to [his or her] mother country." Visitors can be denied a visa if they do not have a residence or source of income in their native country.

Visa Application Form 1 56 also states that "a visa may be not be issued to persons who are within specific categories defined by law as inadmissible to the United States," including anyone who has suffered from a mental disorder, been arrested for any offense, abused drugs or engaged in prostitution.

Many homeless people would fall into these categories, said Wolf. While organizers are accustomed to dealing with difficult cases involving international travel, Wolf said the obstacles were higher in coming to the United States.

"We are used to facing some problems of bringing teams into a country," he said. "What was different in the U.S. is that all participants, even from non-visa countries, would need to be screened at JFK airport for a temporary tourist visa, and all players could be asked about their background."

"If a HWC player would answer, 'I'm homeless, living in shelter, playing in HWC,' this would typically be grounds for refusal of entry to the US," Wolf added.

According to Jeff Grunberg, executive director and editor of BIGnews, the New York City street paper acting as local organizer of the event, a waiver procedure is available within U.S. law known as Humanitarian Parole, which might have allowed the international players to enter the country.

The procedure allows for exceptions to the stated immigration policy, according to published statements by DOHS. Wolf said such exceptions have been used, for example, to allow Fidel Castro to visit the United States or for other sports teams and humanitarian causes.

Organizers were looking for assurances that Humanitarian Parole procedures might be applied in this case. According to Wolf, however, negotiations with the DOHS did not assure them.

"We talked first with Mayor Bloomberg's office, and in Washington talking to [DOHS] Secretary [Tom] Ridge's assistant in D.C.," he said.

"We were told by our lawyers that we had reached the highest possible level of lobbying for the HWC. The result was only good will, but no essential steps in making the visa procedure easier for teams."

According to Wolf, the event's organizers ultimately felt that this exception would not be applied to the HWC. "We got no indication from the U.S. authorities that a parole procedure would have shown any predictable success, and we were sent back to the usual procedure," he said.

HWC organizers estimated that, between visa refusals and immigration screenings at JFK airport, more than 50 percent of the players would have been denied entrance to the United States, according to Wolf.

After saying she needed to get more information in response to an inquiry from Spare Change News, DOHS spokesperson Suzanne Lubar did not respond to further telephone calls requesting comment for this story.

Organizers expressed regret on having to move the event outside the United States. "This event would have been good for the HWC and for the U.S.," Wolf said. "So much work had been put in by organizers and individual teams."

"The changing of venues says a lot about the atmosphere of fear in the United States," he added.

Organizers, however, are committed to holding the event this summer.

"What's happened is really sad but we had to make a decision, and so regretfully we had to pull out from the U.S.," said Young. "I personally wanted this event to take place in New York, but we are responsible to the participating teams and so the 2005 event will take place somewhere in Europe."

In New York, Grunberg still hopes the HWC can return to the United States in the future. "We are going to host a U.S. tournament in August to determine the team that BIGnews will send to represent the U.S. in the following year's HWC," he said.

"Depending on the success of the BIGnews tournament, growth of sports programs around the country, and indication from our sponsors and supporters that there is renewed excitement for the event, we would consider bidding for the event again," Grunberg added.

More information about the Homeless World Cup can be found at www.street.soccer.org.

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Mentally Ill Behind Bars

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found that at least 16% of people in United States prisons and jails have a serious mental illness, an estimate many experts feel is low. Even so, this is more than four times the number in state mental hospitals, the Treatment Advocacy Center in Virginia pointed out on its website. It also noted that "Since 1960, more than 90% of state psychiatric hospital beds have been eliminated."

passed the bipartisan "Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act of 2004" (S1194). Introduced by Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), it is supposed to fund jail diversion projects and improve mental health care in prisons and jails. President Bush signed it into law on October 30, but funds to fuel it are awaiting appropriation action.

"From my perspective," Corrections Department director Washington said, "the problem is part of the national scene and what's been happening all across the country over the past 30 years . . . Prisons and jails became the de facto mental health providers."

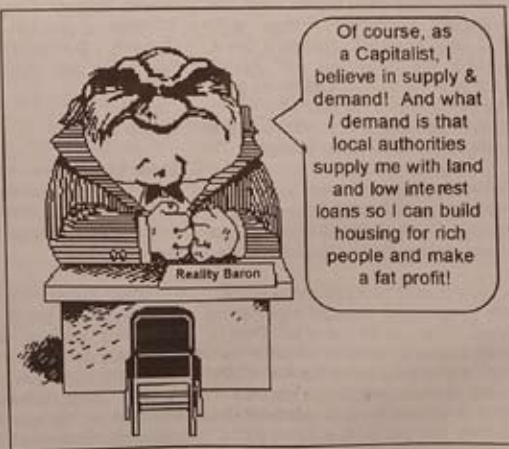
It's an extremely expensive way to treat the mentally ill, observes Robert Keisling, MD, the Associate Medical Director for Mental Health at Unity Health Care and a member of the D.C. Jail Diversion Task Force. For example, he said, a study done at the University in Rochester in New York showed that it cost nearly \$74,000 a year to take care of a mentally ill person in jail but only \$14,500 a year to take care of that same person in an aggressive treatment program on the outside.

And in the meantime, Lawrence is still homeless, bipolar, and unemployed. He has applied for Social Security disability status as well as the District's local equivalent, "but I'd rather work," he said, observing that the only jobs he can get are low-level ones that offer no hope of moving up. "I'm better," he explained, getting medical treatment at SOME and practical help at the Father McKenna Center on North Capitol Street.

Lawrence warns that Americans are fooling themselves by blaming homelessness on alcohol or drug abuse or for not getting work. "They are ignoring a need in America — the need to solve the problem of homelessness and its link to mental illness," he observes.

Reprinted from Street Sense, Washington D.C.

The United States Congress has taken notice. Recently it



Max's View

by Max Biddle

In the 1950's and 60's America was paranoid and gripped with fear that the Chinese Communist Government would dominate and spread its influence throughout Southeast Asia. Therefore, we entered into a war in Vietnam to resist the spread of this influence. American lives lost was more than 30,000. Injured and maimed was in the thousands. Hundreds of thousands of civilians lives were lost as well. The advisors to President Kennedy, many who had no military experience, urged on this military adventure against the advice of military experts, who warned against the hazards of a ground war in the Southeast Asian jungles. We were told the threat coming from China would be the eventual downfall of America. So we went to war.

Fast forward to today and what do we have? China is still Communist, and it is one of our biggest trading partners. China has taken millions of American jobs, it holds millions of

dollars in American Treasury Notes, and it continues to spread its influence throughout Southeast Asia. And China is one of the countries that services our debt. Vietnam is fast becoming another trading partner and it, too, is still a Communist Country. The leaders and capitalists who urged us to war in Vietnam are now making huge profits from the enemies we were told we had to resist.

We now know that Ho Chi Minh, the Communist leader of Vietnam, approached the United States as far back as the Woodrow Wilson Administration for help against French colonial occupation. Again after World War II we missed the opportunity to influence the events in Southeast Asia peacefully, when again Ho Chi Minh came to the west for help.

That brings us to Iraq. We now know the Neoconservatives were advocating a military excursion into the Middle East long before Saddam Hussein came to power. Like

Vietnam's war advocates, most of these advisors had no first hand military experience. They thought that military might would be decisive and the conflict would end easily. And even though the recent elections seem to have gone well in Iraq, we will in all likelihood end up with a government not to our liking. American influence will be less and not more in the area. We could have waited for Hussein to die or be overthrown. It would have happened sooner or later. It was up to the Iraqi people to rid themselves of this dictator. He had all ready lost control of much of the country and literally had to change locations nightly to avoid assassination.

The real reason for creating a military presence in the Middle East was the oil and fear that the Islamic religious fundamentalists would do business with the United States. But, just like in Vietnam and China, America will be doing business with the countries of the Middle East regardless of what type of government they have. And our push for democracy, like in Vietnam, will fade from memory as long as the oil flows. After all, these countries must sell their oil to survive and America will still be one of their biggest customers.

The tragedy of all this is we fought another war that was totally unnecessary. American foreign policy

caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands over the last half of the last century, and in the end we did not get the results our policies were supposed to bring about. Another tragic consequence is the seemingly constant failure of American leaders to read the course of history and understand the dynamics, cultures and differences of other nations. We blunder through one foreign policy mistake after another, seemingly never learning from our own past history. We arrogantly refuse to learn from the experiences of the rest of the world as well.

We should have learned that the world is more than willing to do business with us as long as we stop meddling in their affairs. Economics will be the dynamics that will change the course of history. Democracy will win more converts when people are more economically stable. It requires patience. The use of military force has proven to be too costly a price for our young people to pay for the theories of ivory tower speculators. It is so easy for these so-called neo-conservatives to plan wars. Let them pick up the guns and lead from the front lines and see how fast their thinking would change. Diplomacy would become far more appealing if those planning wars would look first hand on all the destruction they cause, while living in their safe havens.

Northern/Central Valley Homeless Roundtables

Staff Report

The Northern/Central Valley Homeless Roundtable was formed by leaders in homeless continuums of care within the California Northern and Central Valley. The Roundtable's create regular opportunities for homeless continua participants to foster an exchange of information and to build community between continuum communities. They are held 4 times a year in different locations and have been well attended by many from agencies and organizations that serve the homeless community from Shasta to Fresno County.

The first Roundtable was held in Roseville in April of 2004 and was hosted by the Placer Consortium on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. Darren Noy facilitated and was the keynote speaker, presenting an overview of his report, "Homelessness in San

Francisco: Understanding a common vision that will build a homeless policy that works."

The second Roundtable was hosted by the Yolo County Homeless Coalition and held in Woodland. The Housing First model was outlined by Karen Gruneisen, Managing Attorney for HomeBase in San Francisco.

Sacramento County & Cities Board on Homelessness hosted the 3rd quarterly Roundtable. Tim Brown and Ryan Loofbourrow outlined Sacramento's continuum of care (at each Roundtable the host outlines their community's continuum of care). A panel illustrated local discharge planning processes and best practices of discharge planning services such as the Respite Care Program and Project Redirection.

Discharge planning became

the main topic at the Fourth Northern/Central Valley Homeless Roundtable, held in Sacramento in February of 2005. This Roundtable was hosted by HUD Sacramento, the California Dept. of Housing and Community Development's Homeless Programs and HomeBase. It has been a major concern for all participants in the many communities when people are released from prison or hospitals directly into homelessness. For many years communities' and correctional facilities considered incarceration as a method for punishment and retribution. This model has proven highly ineffective in that most people released from prison soon return to the correctional system. These attitudes are slowly but surely changing toward viewing the correctional system potentially as a place to help improve a person's ability to reenter society as productive members by giving them

some tools they can take with them to become more easily employed and adapted towards a more legal lifestyle. Many communities are formulating plans to include the correctional and probation system in their local continuum of care, in hopes that incarcerated people will receive adequate counseling and referrals well before release date to insure they are not released into homelessness.

The February Roundtable provided information on other topics, also. The California Department of Housing and Community Development Homeless Programs, HUD Sacramento and HomeBase presented funding opportunities for local communities' homeless services and housing. The recent homeless street counts that each jurisdiction performed recently were discussed and resulted in beginning a narrative comparison report for

each participating continua. Proposition 63 Mental Health Funds were discussed and the funds' prospective use toward ending homelessness. Advocacy at the state level on issues relevant to ending homelessness and an upcoming state-wide housing conference was presented by a representative from Housing CA.

It seemed that there was much progress made since the first Roundtable as a result of the Roundtables, especially in regards to discharge planning and getting the correctional system more involved in and at the table. Best practices have been shared and emulated. Working together, not only within our communities, but also within our region, is starting to become a more reachable goal and should ultimately better serve the people in our region experiencing homelessness.

HUD FUNDING CHANGE

Continued from Page 1

ated funds unspent - and many agencies without the funds they need to maintain their programs.

New HUD Funding System Shortchanging Many Agencies

Traditionally, HUD has provided state and local housing agencies with sufficient funds to cover the actual cost of the vouchers they distribute. In April, however, HUD announced that it was adopting a new funding system for fiscal year 2004 in which each agency's voucher funding is based on its voucher costs during the spring and summer of 2003, adjusted for a regional inflation factor computed by HUD.

As a result of this change, many agencies are receiving insufficient funds to pay landlords for all vouchers now in use. One reason for the shortfalls is that actual rents in many communities have risen faster than the rent inflation formula that HUD has adopted. Another is that HUD's new funding system does not take into account the fact that stagnant or falling incomes drive up voucher costs just as rising rents do. A voucher makes up the difference between the rent of a modest apartment and about 30 percent of a family's income, so voucher costs go up not only when rents rise, but also when incomes fall, as has happened in many areas hit hard by the slow economy.

Agencies that experience funding shortfalls have no choice but to cut back their voucher programs. While HUD has said it will allow some agencies to ask for additional funds, it plans to provide such funds only under limited circumstances. Moreover, it appears likely that HUD will not notify agencies of any funding adjustments until around the end of August; in the meantime, many agencies have to make cuts.

Low-Income Families Face Tighter Budgets, Risk Loss of Housing

To determine the effects of the funding shortfalls the new HUD funding system has caused, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities have compiled information from 190 housing agencies across the country that have reported shortfalls. The cost-cutting

steps these agencies are taking in response include:

- Raising rents charged to needy families, by reducing the amount of rent that a voucher can cover and/or by imposing minimum monthly rental charges on families with little or no income. These rent increases will force families to divert scarce resources from basic needs such as food, clothing, or transportation to pay the rent.

Low-income elderly and disabled people on fixed incomes may find rent increases especially difficult to bear. Some voucher holders will no longer be able to afford their current apartments and could be forced to relocate to overcrowded or substandard housing. Some could end up in homeless shelters or on the street.

"Many elderly Americans simply won't be able to afford living on their own without vouchers," said Timothy Gearan, senior legislative representative at AARP. "By weakening the voucher program, HUD's new policy risks forcing these people out of their homes."

- "Shelving" vouchers that become available when families leave the voucher program, rather than giving them to families on voucher waiting lists. This reduces the overall number of low-income families assisted and could cause an increase in homelessness.

In addition, some housing agencies have withdrawn newly issued vouchers from families that are still looking for an apartment. Many such families languished for years on a waiting list before receiving a voucher, only to have it taken away now, before they can use it.

"Vouchers are one of the best tools our community has to move homeless people into homes," said Peter White, executive director of Christopher Community, an affiliate of Catholic Charities of Syracuse. "Already there aren't nearly enough vouchers for all the families in shelters and on the streets who need them. Under HUD's policy, the waiting lists will grow longer. Furthermore, vouchers are vital to single moms working low-wage jobs who need help to live close to their jobs and in good school districts for their kids."

- Cutting off assistance to some families currently relying on a voucher to help pay the rent. Some housing agencies have ended voucher assistance to some families.

"We're trying very hard to avoid cutting families off," said Peter Ansara, executive director of the Tacoma (WA) Housing Authority and a member of the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities. "The loss of their vouchers would cause these families extreme hardship and mean a loss of income for their landlords as well. We are not receiving enough funds from HUD. We have filed an appeal and are hopeful that we will be made whole. We've borrowed money from the city of Tacoma to put off terminations for a few more months, but without more funds from HUD, the potential to terminate vouchers is great. Several thousand families are depending on them."

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HUD Has the Power to Halt the Cutbacks

HUD claims it was forced to revise the voucher funding system because of changes Congress imposed when it funded the voucher program this year.

That view, however, is not shared by key members of Congress who helped draft the appropriations legislation. Senator Christopher Bond (R-Missouri), the chair of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that oversees HUD, stated in an April 29 letter to HUD Secretary Jackson that HUD has the authority to take the steps needed to prevent voucher funding shortfalls this year.

Moreover, HUD admits that its new policy will leave unspent about \$190 million in funds that Congress provided the voucher program for this year. (Part of these funds may be

provided to housing agencies as part of the appeals process.) CBPP estimates that the unspent amount could be substantially higher.

Administration Calling for Much Deeper Cuts in 2005 and Beyond

While the ongoing cutbacks in voucher assistance are the biggest in the program's history, they are much smaller than the cuts that would occur over the next five years if the voucher funding reductions in the Administration's 2005 budget are enacted.

Under the Administration's proposals, voucher funding for 2005 would be set about \$1.6 billion below the level needed to continue today's level of services. Even larger cuts would come in later years: by 2009, the shortfall would be \$4.6 billion. In addition, the Administration is seeking to convert the voucher program to a block grant and sweep away federal rules that protect voucher holders, such as the rule that limits the share of its income that a family can be required to pay in rent.

If the proposed cuts are enacted and housing agencies dealt with them by helping fewer families, they would have to cut approximately 250,000 families from the program next year and 600,000 families - nearly a third of all participants - by 2009. Alternatively, if agencies dealt with the proposed cuts by raising rents, voucher holders would have to pay an average of \$850 more per year in 2005 and \$2,000 more in 2009. (Estimates of the effects of the cuts on individual agencies are available at <http://www.cbpp.org/3-17-04housing-states.htm>.)

"The harsh cuts we're seeing now pale in comparison to what we'd see in the future under the Administration's proposal," said Sheila Crowley, president of the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization and policy institute that conducts research and analysis on a range of government policies and programs. It is supported primarily by foundation grants.

Phillip Flathead • four-track mind • CD review

By Paula

I never before considered writing a CD review, and I don't think Homeward Street Journal has ever featured one. I don't even have a CD player; also, I could never figure out how the heck anyone can describe what someone's music sounds like. But Robert Doctor (AKA Phillip Flathead) has just released a wonderful CD titled "four-track mind". And I must write a review. Here's why:

First, because he is my most favorite local singer/songwriter.

Second, he has nurtured this CD's creation like it was his baby (he even had his baby boy, Jonah Avery, in on its creation, who plays superb, slammin' door in "Descending").

Third, Robert is a real friend, not just mine, I suspect to everyone. I first met him when I was thoroughly homeless and homeless looking, and



social/class barriers seemed to be refreshingly absent in Robert.

Fourth, he's socially conscious and his insights to the problems and solutions visit much of his music to enlighten us, particularly in "Love and Medicine" ("Instead of reaching for each other we go reaching out for gold") and in "The Ballad

to Timothy Leary" ("tune in, turn on, and question authority" and "You are the captain of your own existence").

Fifth - His style is his. I can't say it sounds like so and so or that any so and so could possibly sound like him.

Sixth - Versatile, from folksy, rocky, weird and eerie (as in "Sergio", a more darker piece than the others, which I can't review too objectively because the violin part was played by **ME!**), jazzy, blue-grassy, combinations of different genres to hard to define.

Seventh - I told him I would. And Eighth - I'd like everyone to buy his CD so that Robert can make lots of money and because having his CD would be a joy to play over and over again.

Okay, now that I've told you the reasons why I'm writing a review of Phillip Flathead's "four-track mind", I guess I needn't say more.

SPANISH CREEK

by Lillian

Craig liked to drink beer and one of his drinking partners was Evelyn. Evelyn was really tiny, she weighed maybe 90 pounds soaking wet and she had big beautiful blue eyes and was pretty as a picture. She was also really feisty and usually the "life of the party". Her standard reply to criticism was "You can kiss my white German ass if you don't like that!" as she would lean over and stick it out as far as she could manage. Evelyn loved her beer and she loved to party and no one could out party her or out talk her or out think her either, not even her beloved companion, John. So when she and John found themselves in Sacramento in between jobs living near the river, they

commenced to make the best of it by making the best of their "homelessness" and partying all they could and sharing their philosophy with whosoever by the open and friendly atmosphere of their camp. John and Evelyn were also good campers, they always had their hole in the woods dug with spade and they generally managed to have a nice hot supper in the evenings which they would share with all. There was never any trash in their camp. And no matter how abundantly the beer might flow, there would be food in their camp with plenty of laughter and loud voices and on really good nights, Evelyn could even be inspired to entertain us all with her music and dancing and occasional "pearls of wisdom."

And so it was that Craig could often find himself drinking his beer with Evelyn.

John decided that he wanted to show the little family that he and Evelyn had formed a better way of life than that of living near the river in Sacramento. He realized that for he and Evelyn their days of "homelessness" were counted but not so for the others who could not fend for themselves as well as they could and so he started taking them on camping trips to Spanish Creek, a lovely little river very near the town of Quincy, high in the Sierra Nevadas. There he and Evelyn would cook their hot breakfast's and dinners. John would take plenty of fishing gear and the guys would go fishing. He would take his equipment to find gold as well and there would be John, standing hours in the water and lo and behold he would have gold to show for it, which he would keep in a glass jar. They decided that Craig needed to broaden his horizons and so they took Craig to Spanish Creek with the others, assuring him that there would be plenty of beer. After all, they were at the outskirts of Quincy which had plenty of stores.

The ride to Quincy was incredibly beautiful. The road was steep, the trees tall and dense at times. On the way up to Spanish Creek John would stop off at a sulfur spring which had been a health spa in the 1800's. The concrete bins were still there and the locals who knew about it would go and soak in that healthy sulfur water. Nearby there was a restaurant that served really good food. The trips were always a lot of fun.

John and Evelyn had a really large dog named Huey and one night Craig decided that he was lonely and he wanted Huey to keep him company in his tent. Craig had never really owned a dog and so he fed Huey a pot of beans that had overcooked. Then, during the night when Huey was pawing and pawing to be let out, Craig ignored Huey. He was fast asleep and didn't want to be bothered. Well, in the morning when he woke up, he discovered that Huey had gone to the bathroom all over the tent. The big pot of beans was plastered from one end of the tent to the other. Craig spent all morning washing out the tent and that night he slept alone. He never went back to Spanish Creek either.

What does a fellow need to do to get some sleep around here?

Will the three policemen who came to our camp on a Sunday night, the 19th of February at 10:30 in the evening please let us know why they had nothing better to do than to wake us up and keep us awake for an hour and a half? They asked who was on probation or parole and found five men who were and these five were

checked out on their police car radios.

The rest of us were not checked out for warrants but nevertheless were made to sit on the dirt with our hands out in plain sight with absolutely no explanation given to us for an hour and a half.

Billy

Untitled

by Sarah

The ocean's roll, the waves break
Vast upon the jetty; rollaway O'mighty waters.
That's the way my life has wandered
Like the waves upon the move.

Some long stretches, some quite brief
Some harsh, some peaceful
Gleaned from strolls along the beaches
Many baubles; forever pure in heaven

Precious memories, perfect beyond compare
Emerald greens, royal blue, dazzling yellows, flashing whites.
Even in the depths of darkness....beauty bright.
Hear the rolling thunder, feel the earth breathe
See and hear the wonder of a life lived in God's good grace
swtn 03/03/05

Untitled

I feel like a clown
Stuck in a zoo
No where to go
And nothing to do

by Elizabeth Gigala
aka Chica

Obituary

David Holkan
d. 1/28/05
aged 42
cause pending

Doug Horn
d. 1/29/05
cause pending