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Journey for Justice Begins in Sacramento

Staff Report

California Central Valley Journey for Justice's 10 day, 300 mile journey began in Sacramento this year on April 12. The Journey will travel throughout the central valley. Stockton, Turlock, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Dinuba, Reedley and Lindsay. This years theme is "Healing our Communities", focusing on the right to health care. Health Care may prove to be a big fight over the coming years. Will the government continue to give preference to insurance, pharmaceutical, and other corporations over the will of the people? The journey is linking with the statewide One Care Now campaign, Sheila Kuehl's SB 840 and the national struggle to adopt HR 676 single-payer universal health care plan. They are also addressing the healing needed from anti-immigration, poverty, police violence, the prison industrial complex and environmental wounds.

On the first day of the journey the group went to the State Capitol where they were introduced at Assembly. They met with Sally Leibel Assembly Speaker pro Tempore and other elected officials. Their health care message was greeted with much support.

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Redefining "Homeless"

A new US bill aims to include 'couch surfers' in the official definition.

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

By Katherine Boyle
(Street Sense, USA)

Francine Triplett, 57, wishes she had a place of her own.

Triplett, a Street Sense street paper vendor, first lost her apartment in 1994. After completing a substance abuse program, she briefly had her own home again, but said she was "right in the midst of drugs and alcohol."

Now, she "couch surfs," staying with various friends in order to avoid temptation and the shelter system.

Yet, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition, Triplett is not homeless, because she has places to stay.

Reps. Julia Carson, D-Ind., and Geoff Davis, R-Ky, hope

to address Triplett's situation and change HUD's definition of homelessness. In mid-February, they introduced H.R. 840, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2007 (HEARTH).

The bill would change the current definition of "homeless" to specifically include situations where people are "couch surfing" or "doubling up." Carson said the expanded definition "will increase flexibility for agencies and organizations that serve homeless populations."

How "homeless" is defined is so important because often eligibility for certain services and for shelter is tied to whether or not one is considered homeless by HUD.

Carson feels very strongly that the narrow definition of

"homeless" is limiting the resources homeless people need and that the new definition would give them more opportunities, said spokesman Chad Chitwood.

The legal definition of homelessness provided by Congress includes the phrase, "individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence." However, HUD says the definition only includes those who literally have no place to stay and are sleeping in shelters, transitional homes or on the street.

"The more narrow interpretation of the definition (of homelessness) is intended to make sure the targeted resources get to the people who are actually homeless," said HUD spokesman Brian Sullivan.

But Laurel Weir, policy direc-

tor of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, said other government agencies, such as the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, use the same Congressional definition as HUD, yet manage to include couch surfers in the homeless populations they serve, and thus, provide funding to support these people.

"We think the statutory definition includes people who are doubled up," she said. "Many of the families who come seeking emergency shelter in the District are doubled up."

Weir added that doubling up may be even worse than living in a shelter because it often causes families to split.

"Parents give one or more

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Minorities Suffer Most in U.S. Foreclosure Surge

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

By Jason Szep

BOSTON (Reuters) - Barbara Anderson and her husband know racism. Among the first black people to move into an Ohio neighborhood 25 years ago, she watched in horror as white neighbors burned her garage nearly to the ground.

Fast-forward to 2007 and Anderson talks of a different sort of discrimination: brokers of sub prime mortgages that prey on borrowers with weak credit histories, like the Andersons, who raised eight children in Cleveland's Slavic Village district.

"These sub prime lenders target you to take you through disaster," said Anderson, 59, who filed for bankruptcy after a legal tussle with a sub prime lender a "nightmare" that she said ended four years ago when her home was nearly foreclosed.

"I was fortunate I went to another bank that decided to give me chance with a new loan. The day that happened my headache stopped, my blood pressure lowered, my sick stomach went away and it was because now I could see some daylight."

Across the United States, blacks and Hispanics are more likely to get a high-cost, sub-prime mortgage when buying a home than whites, a major factor in a wave of foreclosures in poor often black neighborhoods nationwide as a housing slowdown puts millions of "sub-prime" borrowers at risk of default.

Even more troubling, real-estate industry analysts say that an alarming proportion of blacks and Hispanics receive sub-prime loans by predatory lenders even when their credit picture was good enough to deserve a cheaper loan.

In six major U.S. cities including New York, Boston, Los Angeles and Chicago, black borrowers were 3.8 times more likely than whites to receive a higher-cost home loan, and Hispanic borrowers were 3.6 times more likely according to a study released this month by a group of fair housing agencies.

"You've got a situation where blacks and Latinos have lower incomes and less wealth, less steady employment and lower credit ratings, so a completely neutral and fair credit-rating system would still give a higher

percentage of sub-prime loans to minorities," said Jim Campen, a University of Massachusetts economist who contributed to the study.

"But the problem is exacerbated by a financial system which isn't fair," he said.

In greater Boston, 71 percent of blacks earning above \$153,000 in 2005 took out mortgages with high interest rates, compared to just 9.4 percent of whites, his research showed.

About 70 percent of black and Hispanic borrowers with incomes between \$92,000 and \$152,000 received high-interest rate home loans in Boston, a ratio that slides to 17 percent for whites, according to his study.

"It's a huge disparity," he said.

High-cost mortgages usually have interest rates at least 3 percentage points above conventional mortgages.

PREDATORY LENDERS

Predatory lenders moved aggressively into the sub-prime mortgage market as a housing price boom between 2000 and 2005 cut the risk of lending to people with damaged credit ratings.

Many focused on minority neighborhoods in slick sales pitches that offered the American dream: home ownership with no money down and little worry about poor credit.

"The predatory lenders reach out to those who don't really know people with a lack of education," said Cassandra Hedges, a black 37-year-old mother of two fighting to stave off foreclosure of the home she bought three years ago in Ohio.

"One of the first things my broker asked me was 'How do you know you are ready to buy a house. Have you done any research?' We said 'No'. At that point I think he realized 'Okay I got some people that don't know what the heck they are doing'."

She and her husband Andre now face a 10.75 percent interest rate on an adjustable-rate mortgage for their \$105,000 home. When she agreed to buy it, she told the broker she could not afford to pay more than \$650 a month, including insurance.

Weeks later, when signing the

mortgage papers, the broker said the loan would be a higher \$899 a month.

"By then you are so emotionally involved in it you are not really thinking," she said. "I had already turned the phone on in the new house. I already scheduled my other services to be cut off. I told my landlord I was moving. At that point I didn't have anywhere else to go but there," she said.

Two years later, her monthly payments have hit \$1,600 and she faces the threat of foreclosure after missing a payment.

"If you're white they overlook the fact that you're credit score is a little too low or you have one extra late payment," said Barbara Rice, a community organizer at the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance, a non-profit advocacy group.

Rice, who is white, and a colleague, who is black, took part in an experiment in Massachusetts last year to test the racial bias of mortgage brokers. They both posed as prospective home buyers in separate meetings with several brokers.

Rice posed as a buyer with a worse credit rating and lower income than her black colleague but received better treatment.

"I was given more information. One broker followed up, e-mailing me and urging me to come back in. My co-worker didn't get any of that kind of follow up," she said.

Many traditional banks do not run branches in poor minority neighborhoods, creating a vacuum often filled by predatory lenders and unscrupulous brokers, said Stephen Ross, a University of Connecticut economist who studies lending.

When the property market was strong, those brokers could tell borrowers that rising prices meant they could easily re-mortgage their properties to keep up with payments. But since the market peaked in 2005, millions are struggling to repay those loans. This year, some 1.5 million homeowners will face foreclosure, research firm RealtyTrac estimates.

Courtesy of Reuters
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Redefining...

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kids to a relative, the parent stays with someone else or in a car or on the streets," she said. "Not having shelter forces the break-up of homeless families."

Jessica Schuler, a housing policy analyst at the National Coalition for the Homeless, agreed, noting that people staying with a friend or living in a motel are "at just as high or greater risk" than those at a shelter because they may not know how to get help.

"People living at shelters go to day centers and have a case manager to help them get the assistance they need," she said. "It is a problem that is drastically overlooked here in our city and throughout the country."

In addition, Schuler said, the HUD definition also needs to be expanded to include those exiting jails, prisons and juvenile justice programs.

Still, Steve Berg, the vice-president for Programs and Policy at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said although doubling up is a "big problem," changing the definition of homelessness is not the solution.

Berg pointed out that HUD already lacks the resources to serve the entire homeless population, and said that all that changing the definition will do is increase the number of homeless people HUD is not serving.

"The best you can hope for by defining people as homeless is that they are eligible to go to a homeless shelter," Berg said. "We think families are better than that."

"If you know you really can't solve the problem, maybe you should do something symbolic (like changing the definition)," he said, suggesting that approaching Congress about increasing homelessness prevention resources would be better. "It's a better idea to see if you can really solve this problem."

Judith Dobbins, executive

director of Covenant House Washington, had a different take on changing the definition. She said couch surfers are homeless regardless of how HUD defines their situation. At this shelter and service provider for young adults about a third of its 330 clients are couch surfers.

"Whether or not the definition is changed, the reality is that 'couch surfers' in most cases are sleeping on couches or floors for lack of a permanent address," Dobbins said. "They also possess all the other risk factors that must be addressed with services if they are to overcome these barriers that will keep them poor and homeless."

Carson and Davis' bill, which would make couch surfers eligible for such services, currently has approximately 30 co-sponsors, according to Weir.

These representatives held a briefing in January to educate other members of the Financial Services Committee about the legislation.

"The goal is to try and get (the bill) marked up in committee and passed by the House," Weir said. "They are still seeking more congressional cosponsors."

Until then, Triplett has her own advice for those who are homeless, whether on the street or on a couch.

"If you are homeless just keep praying," she said. "Go to the right, don't go to the left. Somebody's there to help you."

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Homeless Hate Crimes Bill Passes in Maryland Senate

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

By Jen Pearl

Maryland is poised to be the first state to enact hate crime legislation protecting homeless people and their property, pending passage of legislation in the Maryland House of Delegates and signing by Governor Martin O'Malley.

On March 6, Maryland's senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that expands protected classes of people to include homeless people among groups based on race, color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and nation of origin.

Senator Alex Mooney (R-District 3) introduced the bill after seeing footage of a homeless person in Florida being beaten by teenagers with baseball bats, said Michael Hough, legislative aid for Mooney.

"We did some research and saw that it was a problem in more states," Hough said. "There were even a couple cases in Maryland and Baltimore a few years ago."

Reported incidents of attacks against homeless men and women across the country have reached their highest level in years, according to a recent report by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH). The report details 142 violent crimes nationwide against homeless individuals in the past year, that is the highest number of incidents since NCH's annual study began in 1999 and represents a 65% increase from last year.

"It is NCH's position that many of these acts should be considered hate crimes," said Michael Stoops, the executive director of NCH, who is also a Street Sense board member. "Crimes against homeless people are motivated by the same intolerance as hate crimes against people of a certain religious, racial or ethnic background."

Recent violence against homeless people in Maryland included three fatal beatings in 2001 of homeless men in Baltimore, according to NCH. A group of teenagers was charged

in the string of homicides. In 2002, two Maryland police officers were indicted for beating and unleashing a dog on a homeless man. In 2004, a homeless man was fatally beaten after he made negative comments about another man's girlfriend. In 2006, a police officer in Takoma Park was indicted for assaulting a homeless man detained for questioning.

And Stoops added that there have probably been more incidents, as there is a lack of data on violence against homeless people, such violence often goes unreported.

Adam Schneider with Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. in Baltimore, said that he knows firsthand that there are many unreported violent attacks on homeless people, many of which could be motivated by hate.

"We come across individuals who have been attacked relatively frequently — far more than a typical 'medical clinic,'" Schneider said. "Life on the streets is inherently violent, and individuals who live on the streets are particularly vulnerable to attack."

"Our clients are victims of violence much more often than they are perpetrators. Due to an understandable distrust of the system, victims very likely underreport incidence of violence."

Schneider added that like NCH, Health Care for the Homeless is in favor of this legislation and has been advocating for it.

If it is enacted, those found guilty of a hate crime-based attack on a homeless person, like those convicted of other violent hate crime offenses, would be subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a fine of up to \$10,000. If a violation results in the death of a victim, the violator is subject to imprisonment for up to 20 years and/or a fine of up to \$20,000.

Other states currently considering similar hate crime bills include Massachusetts, Florida, California, and Nevada, says Michael Stoops.

According to the FBI's most recent report on hate crime statistics in 2005, law enforcement agencies reported that there were 8,804 victims of hate crimes nationwide that year. An analysis of data for victims of single-bias hate crime incidents showed that 55.7 percent of the victims were targeted because of a bias against a race. The next largest group of those victimized was for a bias against a religious belief, in 16% of cases, followed first by a bias against an ethnicity or nation of origin and then by a bias against a sexual orientation. No data are readily available on homeless individuals.

Overall, it is impossible to determine just how effective hate crime legislation has been as a deterrent to future hate attacks, according to Jack Levin, Northeastern University Professor and co-author of *Hate Crimes Revisited*.

"Actually, it is difficult to make this determination for laws in general. We know that certainty of punishment works more effectively than severity of punishment. But hate crime laws have a more symbolic importance. They direct attention of the public to offenses committed against an extremely vulnerable group of people. Hate crime laws send a message, both to would-be perpetrators and to victims — namely, that it is not 'cool' to attack helpless members of society, that Americans will not tolerate hate and violence against the vulnerable."

Levin notes that the United States leads the world in terms of passing hate crime legislation. Great Britain has patterned many of its hate laws after those of the U.S., but British legislation is focused more on the conflict between racial groups than on broader hate motivation. In Germany so-called hate laws focus more on political crimes than on hate crimes.

"On the other hand, Europeans do not have first amendment protections, so that they also tend to outlaw hate speech that does not rise to the level of crime," Levin says. "We do not."

This is the second time that Mooney has introduced this legislation in the Maryland Senate. The text of the bill introduced this year is virtually the same as that of the bill Mooney introduced at the end of the 2006 session that failed by one vote, said Michael Hough of Mooney's office. What is different this time, he said, is that they submitted the bill much earlier in the session and had much more help from lobbyists and homeless advocates. For example, through NCH, Mooney showed a group of senators a taping of a 60 Minutes piece on "Bumfights" and beatings of homeless people.

"Hopefully [this bill] will bring more attention to these issues and hopefully, people won't do this kind of crime anymore," Hough said.

Some members of the Maryland Senate have criticized Mooney, a conservative Republican, for introducing this hate crime legislation in order to water down existing protections based on sexual preference. Hough from Mooney's office did not comment on this criticism and said that from what he knows, Mooney introduced the legislation on the basis of the merits of the bill.

While the bill has yet to come up for a vote in the House of Delegates, both Michael Hough and Michael Stoops are hopeful about the House's decision and said that O'Malley has indicated that he will sign the bill.

Laura Thompson Osuri Contributed to this article.

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Update:

Senator Daniel Steinberg's SB 122 bill, to add homeless people as a protected group to California's hate crimes bill, is still in committee. At a meeting on 3/24/07 no action was taken and a new consideration date was set.

The bill has many supporters and only two major opponents: California Attorneys for Criminal Justice. Advocates for Improving Public Safety. The attorneys seem to think the bill is redundant, that there are adequate penalties already in place - yet is there anything to compel local district attorneys to enforce those penalties? The taxpayers object that the prisons are already overcrowded, and enhanced penalties will only make things worse, yet they don't seem to care how much local tax payers pay to 'house' the homeless in local county jails.

News Roundup from Street Sense

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Mandy McAnally

•California: Formerly Homeless Man Helps Save Shelter

A formerly homeless man recently gave \$10,000 to an emergency shelter in San Diego where he had stayed earlier this winter. Staff said the man had promised to donate the money when he received an expected inheritance. The shelter was due to close at the beginning of March but can stay open through the month and beyond, thanks to the man's gift and other donations (10News, 3/8).

•Hawaii: New Shelter Opens on Island of Hawaii

Hawaii officials recently opened a \$7 million homeless shelter on the island of Hawaii's Waianae Coast. The new Pal'olu Kaiakulu shelter, which is made up of several hut-like buildings and surrounded by a fence with security guards at the entrance, will house 300 people when it is fully operational (Shikina, Honolulu Star Bulletin, 3/2).

•Washington: Monroe Passes Encampment Ordinance

The city of Monroe just passed new legislation to regulate homeless encampment. Monroe does not have any encampment yet but the rule was prompted by a dispute over encampments in nearby King County Everett, located 15 miles away passed a similar ordinance in July

Monroe's ordinance requires the sponsor of such an encampment to get a permit from the city and to identify sex offenders. The dwellings must be built at least 20 feet from neighboring properties and have 6-foot-tall fencing (Nohara, The Herald, 3/12).

•Maryland: Shelter Demand Up Dramatically

Baltimore County shelters are seeing a sharp increase in demand, according to over 100 advocates for the homeless who recently visited the county council. Barbara Donaho, a county public health nurse who works with homeless people, said, "The numbers are heartbreaking." A county shelter in Catonsville is seeing about 90 guests a night, up from 25 a night a few years ago. A shelter at Franklin Square Hospital has some 185 guests a night, up from 40 guests a night a few years ago.

In addition, area shelters are seeing more guests with serious medical conditions and needs (Sears, Towson Jeffersonian, 3/13).

•Alaska: Anchorage Shelter Reaches Capacity

The main homeless shelter in Anchorage has seen a record number of homeless clients this winter. The nonprofit shelter, which operates on a budget based on a nightly population of 135 homeless, reached its maximum capacity of 240

recently. The shelter's program director said the cold weather seasonal job layoffs, gas prices and expensive housing have contributed to the higher number of shelter clients (AP/KTVB 11, 3/6).

•New York: City's Shelter Population Increases

The number of homeless families living in New York City shelters reached a record high of 9,287 in February up from 7,805 in February 2006, according to a report by the Coalition for the Homeless. Homelessness in the city has continued to increase despite Mayor Michael Bloomberg's (R) five-year plan, launched in 2005, to reduce homelessness by two-thirds. The report also showed that the total number of homeless New Yorkers in shelters rose from 31,472 in February 2006 to 35,252 last month (Lee, New York Times, 3/8).

•Rhode Island: Shelter Closing Leaves Some Behind

The state's largest homeless shelter is slated to close this month, making way for a new state police headquarters, but advocates say that several dozen residents still have nowhere else to go. The 100-bed Welcome Arnold House in Cranston has been preparing for this change, and state officials say alternate arrangements are now complete and all the people who used the shelter will have a place to go. But Jim Ryzek, executive director of the Rhode Island Coalition for

the Homeless, said the state is not taking into account people who recently applied for homeless services and some who have used Welcome House in the past and plan to come back.

Advocates for the homeless say Rhode Island's new "community-based" shelter system has many positive features, including better services and allowing residents to leave their belongings during the day. But, they say, the Arnold Center offered welcome help to people experiencing homelessness for the first time (AP/Turnto10 NBC TV, 3/13).

•California: County Matches Funds for Housing Mentally Ill

Santa Clara County is the first county in California to match Mental Health Services Act funds to house mentally ill homeless people as part of its 10-year plan to curb homelessness. The county awarded \$2.45 million from its Housing Plus Fund to four projects that will provide 49 housing units for individuals who are mentally ill and chronically homeless.

The \$4 million Housing Plus Fund was created by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in January 2006 to fund homeless housing projects (Palo Alto Daily News, 3/1).

David S. Hammond contributed to this piece. Reprinted from 'Street Sense'

! Cultural Spam?



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By Fiona Scott-Norman
(The Big Issue Australia)

Dada dearest, We have a problem

True confessions by one who has (gasp!) learned to love spam.

No one likes spam, right? The way it clogs your inbox daily like a particularly repulsive ball of soap suds and human hair. The fact that precious time and energy that would be better spent on, say, giving your boss value for money, making love to your sweet baboo or even, heaven knows, arranging your belly button lint according to color and texture, has to be funneled into pruning your inbox of irrelevant filth or within a week it will resemble the wall of brambles that Prince Thingo had to hack through to snog Sleeping Beauty

Offering scams so patently transparent that Arthur Daley wouldn't touch them with a dead dog's ten foot pole, badly spelt, insanely punctuated, offering

services no half-way functional human could ever a) want, b) believe in or c) want to believe in, the only redeeming feature of spam has been the opportunity it gives us to revel in a glowing sense of superiority over the life-sucking bottom-feeders who create it and laugh at the occasional tosser who sends their bank-account details to Nigeria in order to increase the penis size of their hot, underage, Russian Labrador.

Until, I have to say, now.

Perhaps realizing that they've nearly exhausted their stocks of credulous white trash with access to the internet, spammers have, like John Howard faced with an electorate that believes in climate change, adjusted their approach. The new spam is abstract and intellectual, kooky and puzzling, filled with random extracts from novels, textbooks and equipment manuals. They are sent out by folk such as Marion G Clement, Gilbert Vega and Dora Synder, who all sound

like minor poets who fluttered at the periphery of the Algonquin round table or tried to bot fags off Jean-Paul Sartre

Far from being offensive and insulting, the new spam is intriguing. It reminds me of the Enid Blyton romps I read as a child, where mysterious instructions turned up in the child's letter box and led, through a series of twists and turns, to the arrest of someone dusky and common down at the docks. I just can't work out what's in it for the spammers. There's a blurry exhortation to buy some stocks in Chinese oranges or medical supplies which are "about to go crazy," but they're written in color upon color, hard to read and buried in a mountain of clear text that reads like James Joyce is alive, well and Googling. A discussion on blogger ethics bleeds into an absurdist poem on the war in Iraq ("Holy city go seven, months freedom quit"). In the next email, a woman called Mary is having an existential crisis and wants to "discover what the

church can teach her about what happens to the soul after death," before the text lurches into Afrikaans and then a section on some unidentified industrial machinery.

The thing that scares me is I'm utterly hooked. I'm not hitting the stock exchange and buying up large in citrus fruit, but I'm as excited as a teenage boy at the release of the next generation Nintendo Wii whenever I find a Dada poem in the subject header of my incoming mail. The last four spams have been doozies: "Harlot dosage. Hazard cat. The world has been shattered into tiny pieces, and travelling in one direction does not always take you to the same place. Don't be scared of the Canadian winter" If I sent that into Quadrant I'd be hailed as a genius.

So I'm not deleting them. I can't. The randomness is too compelling. I'm storing them away like a squirrel, although I'm beginning to suspect that it's me who's nuts. Or, worse, that the

spam scam doesn't lie in the half-hearted stock advice. Lets face it, who would buy stocks recommended by an unsolicited email? Especially if you check them out on NASDAQ which takes five minutes and shows a) Yes, I have too much spare time (thanks for pointing that out), and b) the stocks in question have all the buoyancy of a lifeboat made of lead. I have a suspicion that while I'm neglecting the day's Sudoku to open Mooney Moses's 'Raven Iota' about Canadian mineral shares, power fetal alcohol disorder and federal reserve banking, those Dada spammers are beavering away behind the scenes, harnessing my computer as a workhorse in their quest to dismantle civilization and bring chaos to the establishment.

It makes as much sense as their emails.

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Journey for Justice

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Then they came to Loaves & Fishes' Friendship Park where they met with SHOC members for lunch. They went through the same routine hundreds of homeless people in Sacramento go through everyday when they have lunch at Loaves. After lunch they had a tour of the Loaves & Fishes complex. Then they set up a video camera outside the park and documented the stories of

many people that are homeless in Sacramento. The Loaves & Fishes visit was concluded with a circle prayer blessing the wonderful first day and the long journey ahead.

Organizers said that "The original idea for the California Central Valley Journey for Justice was to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the United Farm Workers march

on Sacramento. However, unlike the 1965 march, our purpose is to demonstrate the different face of poverty today as growing numbers of previously comfortable workers are falling into poverty for the first time.

The Journey for Justice demands:

• **Quality health care for all.** There are more than 46 million uninsured

Americans, including 7 million in California alone.

• **Stop the insurance companies from setting policy** as to who does and who does not receive quality health care.

• **Stop blaming the uninsured and undocumented people** for the increase of health care costs.

• **Support single-payer, universal health care that**

is publicly financed which provides coverage for all medically necessary services and controls costs for all, including prisoners & undocumented and unemployed.

• **Support proposals to set a standard for health benefits on the job** just like the minimum wage for pay.



Co-sponsors of the Journey are: Centro Bellas Artes, Fresno; Comite No Nos Vamos, Fresno; Fresno County Peace and Freedom Party; National Network in Action, Fresno; Merced Labor Party; CHAM Deliverance Ministry San Jose; California Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign; Direct Action Anti-Authoritarian Alliance, Modesto; Fresno Center for Non-violence; Community Alliance, Fresno. To follow the journey visit their website: www.journeyforjustice.net

THE RICH ACT DIFFERENT

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

Staff Writer

(Real Change News, USA)

Everyone has their own way of relating how rich Bill Gates is. Bill Gates is so rich, he has half the money in Seattle. Bill Gates is so rich, that he sleeps in a different room of his house every night of every decade. Bill Gates is so rich, when he wants something from the grocery store, he has it delivered. I mean, the store Bill Gates is so rich he could buy most countries.

Bill Gates is so rich he won't buy a used country, preferring a new custom country built from scratch, somewhere between Lake Washington and Lanai. And, finally, Bill Gates is so rich that just his money alone would be all you'd need to end homelessness in America for what's left of the 10 years before the great US Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is finished and solves everything.

What would it look like if Bill Gates actually did use his wealth to relieve some homelessness around here,

just in Seattle? We have fewer than 10,000 homeless people. Gates could get 10,000 cheap prefab homes. At wholesale prices they'd all, put together, cost him less than a billion. Another billion to buy the land to put them on, and Bill's ranking among the world's billionaires wouldn't slip by more than 1.

But all that assumes Bill would go about relieving homelessness the way ordinary humans would. It doesn't take into account the fact that, like all billionaires, Bill Gates is an alien from the Horsehead Nebula. To understand how Bill would try to relieve Seattle's homelessness, consider another billionaire, Genshiro Kawamoto, who is trying to relieve homelessness in Oahu.

Kawamoto, like Gates, likes to spend a lot of time in the Hawaiian Islands. In the '60s Kawamoto mixed business with pleasure and bought up a lot of property in Hawaii as investments, including a lot of mansions. Recently he got bit by the altruism bug and announced he was going to rent eight of his pricey Kahala Avenue

luxury homes to poor struggling Hawaiian native families, preferably homeless families, for \$150 to \$200 per month, utilities paid, for up to 10 years.

Now that he's moving people in, he's saying he won't charge some of them rent at all. He's partially furnishing the places. To help you visualize the deal, we're talking about homes in the \$2,000,000 to \$10,000,000 range that either sit directly on a gorgeous tropical ocean beach or are at most a couple of hundred feet removed.

One of the recipients is a woman with five children who has been staying in a homeless shelter for the last four or five months. Her new home for the next 10 years is worth \$5,000,000. We can expect that altogether approximately 50 homeless or on-the-edge-of-homeless people will get luxury digs from Kawamoto, most of them children of single mothers. That's the bright side.

The dark side is that the sort of real estate speculation that made Genshiro Kawamoto rich enough to

do all this lies precisely at the root of nearly all the homelessness Hawaiians and the rest of America has to bear. Kawamoto is infamous in Hawaii for evicting renters at short notice to make a quick profit, as well as buying properties and neglecting to rent them at all. In short, he's a slumlord to the rich. He may not create homelessness in the demographic he serves, but his practices reduce their housing options, which reduces the options of the next lower class, and the next. It's the real trickle-down. The end result is homelessness for a lot more than 50 people.

So, thank you Genshiro, for being a prime example of how the rich and powerful screw us all and then do some token rescues to make up for it. Just like the government and the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, which is really only a plan to reduce a fraction of it.

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High Gravity From Black Holes

by Chongo

The science article in the last issue of Homeward (entitled "Black Holes in Outer Space") explained how science uses a body of ideas (in scientific terms, a mathematical model) for accurately describing nature. This body of ideas is termed 'theoretical physics', or 'physical theory' for short. The article explained further how real and genuine science chooses to use this body of ideas for explaining and when applicable, for manipulating nature, because of the very simple reason that physical theory works every time it is ever used, error free (though the application of our interpretations of it certainly do not).

To date, this body of ideas we call physical theory is absolutely failure free. This is why, among countless other applications, it - AND NO OTHER BODY OF IDEAS - is used for designing television sets, microwave ovens, radar computers, and oh yes, for launching space craft into precise orbit and keeping them there for decade after decade. Theoretical physics makes these achievements possible and every one of these achievements would be flatly impossible without the tool of theoretical physics.

Physical theory has two sides. One side is a description of the space and time of nature. This is the theory of gravity (the subject of this article), which is the Theory of Relativity. Relativity describes how space and time 'tilt' (special relativity) and 'bend' (general relativity) as a consequence of motion and mass (effectively, 'weight'), which introduces the other physical theory which describes, among other things, things with mass (again, 'weight'). This theory is the theory of energy, the Theory of Quantum Mechanics, which, to say the least, makes some remarkable (to the point of being counterintuitive) statements about nature. But, this article deals with gravity which is the realm of relativity, not quantum mechanics, so we will have to wait to examine this other theory (for energy) in subsequent editions of Homeward and deal strictly with gravity for the moment.

The description of how (among other effects still yet to be mentioned) the pace of time slows, compared to how someone experiencing less gravity measures that same pace (of time), as a consequence of the effects of gravity - the greater the gravity the more pronounced the slowing of time - is a direct outcome of equations and fundamental assumptions (called axioms) of relativity (the Lorentz transformations and derivations thereof). We explored this effect of time slowing with gravity at its most

extreme limit by exploring the effects of gravity at the surface of what are the bodies in the universe where the effects of gravity are greatest on black holes.

Black holes are so called because a black hole's weight (meaning its mass) and the density of that weight (of that mass) is so great that a black hole's gravity prevents it from emitting any light at all, directly. In short, a black hole is a "dark star" - a star that emits no light (again, directly). In short, a black hole is a super dense and 'heavy' (massive) apparently former star that is darker than the darkest night. It is called a "hole" instead of a star though, because this kind of dark object is like a one-way 'exit' from the universe around it (hence the term, 'hole').

A black hole seems as though it is formed as the result of an enormous star "burning up" (that is, exhausting) all the nuclear fuel that is constantly 'holding it up', keeping it big and thus preventing its material from collapsing upon itself and concentrating into a smaller volume.

The energy of the star and its capacity to resist collapse against gravity are finite, which is to say that they are limited. This energy lasts for only so long. Eventually, this energy will become depleted to the point that the force of gravity will overcome the energy of the star to resist it. Without sufficient energy being released to counterbalance the immense gravity that is the outcome of the black hole's immense weight (immense mass), gravity overcomes energy and the star collapses inwardly, shrinking into a smaller volume.

Upon, collapsing, if a star is heavy (i.e. massive) enough, then it collapses into a black hole, in this way placing its contents in the closest proximity physically possible, concentrating matter to the absolute limit that it can be

concentrated in our universe. As a consequence, black holes literally "sink" into space and time, thus "separating" from the rest of the universe, leaving behind afterward, only a one-way, gravity-powered "exit" from the universe as we know it, like the drain at the bottom of an infinitely deep (bottomless) sink.

What is left after a star collapses into a black hole is a body that is so heavy (massive) and its enormous weight (enormous mass) so concentrated that it exerts at its surface more gravitational force than any other kind of body in the universe - in fact, as much force as gravity is capable of exerting. Now, returning again to the fact that time slows as the force of gravity increases, and the force of gravity at a black hole's surface being as great as it can physically ever be in the universe means that time slows there, as much as it can ever slow in the universe - again, according to relativity's failure free description of nature: infinitely, which means time slowing to the point of 'stopping' altogether.

As a consequence of time at a black hole's surface slowing infinitely to the point of stopping altogether, a black hole's surface is always 'locked' into a single moment, a moment that 'never' has enough time to pass, and that is, from the perspective of anyone removed from the black hole's surface, a 'frozen' moment that is seemingly eternal in duration. On the other hand, if you are 'there' at the surface, where, according to the fundamental assumption of relativity the pace of time never changes, except according to the perspective of another subject to different gravity (though different motion accomplishes a different perspective), time would be passing no differently at the surface from how it would be passing anywhere else, even if a moment requires, again, according to a perspective outside, an eternity for any single moment to pass.

So, it would appear that, although it might take an eternity to approach a

black hole's surface with the laws of physics remaining the same all the while, it would seem possible to make a journey toward such a surface, at least in principle - except for a single yet extremely significant detail. Entering feet first, at some point your toes would begin falling (accelerating) toward the surface faster than your ankles, which would be falling faster than your calves, which would be falling faster than your knees, and so on up your body. Each individual part of the body falling faster than that attached above it would tear one's body limb from limb, from the bottom up, one atomic particle at a time, starting at your toes and ending at your head, just as would be the case for any craft that you might be a passenger aboard at the time, no matter how well made the it might be. No material exists (or could ever be fabricated if there exists a physical limit) would be able to resist the force.

Black holes are a nice thing to know about; they demonstrate the most extreme expression of (i.e. a limit condition for) relativity. Black holes are interesting because they capture our imagination with phenomena that (ordinarily) we can only barely imagine (unless we practice imagining, as physicists do). But, interesting as it might be, a black hole is no place that you would ever want to even try to visit. Besides, the nearest one is trillions upon trillions of miles away and a lifetime would not be long enough to make a dent in the journey - but you never know because Black Holes emit no light, were one approaching our solar system, we could never 'see' it coming, though you might notice your neighbor's clock running a little slower upon getting near however, we would feel its gravity, which would spell doom for us, the very 'discoverers' of black hole phenomena.

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(From *Infinity and the Mango Tree* by Chongo. To see all the books that Chongo has written on physical theory, go to chongonation.com, which is a web site dedicated to educating those who have least opportunity for learning the scientific foundations for describing nature. Chongonation provides books that describe theoretical physics in lay terms, without any math. Simply go to the chongonation.com home page and click on either 'Nature' or 'Products & Prices' to see just how many books are available.)



Letter from a Distributor

I am a single father of a 5-year-old girl and we have been homeless here in Sacramento for 3 Years. I thank God Almighty every day for this paper because it has truly been the only true "real" help we have received.

A family shelter in Oak Park is full of s-t! There is a woman I helped move in and one night she called me to inform me that she was helping someone move out and that I should call. I did and I was told: "I will record that you checked in but there is no space right now." I responded by saying are you sure no one is moving right now I was told no. I called my friend back, she said to me they're lying to you come see, I said to her: "I'm parked out front watching you now I see it with my own eyes!" From that point on I stopped calling to hear the same old lie I've been listening to already for a year prior to this situation. And believe it or not, my friend called me the next day to say "there's another space opened, call back they have two spaces now!", but I refuse to be lied to a second time, I'd rather sell the paper and get a motel room.

To everyone who has patronized me at Walmart on Florin, and to all the staff and employees, and also to Jule, Thank You. Lillian and I really do love you and appreciate your help, it truly comes from the heart and it reveals God in you!

Many of you so-called Christians and Muslims need to reevaluate your walk with God. He says: *When you see your brother in need, help - not pray, help*

Kwame

Herein lies the tragedy of the age:
 Not that men are poor -
 all men know something of poverty
 Not that men are wicked -
 who is good?
 Not that men are ignorant -
 what is truth?
 Nay, but that men know so little of
 men.

"The Souls of Black Folks"
 W. E. B. DuBois 1903

**Putting the "Fun" in
 "Dysfunctional"**

Street News Service
www.streetnewsservice.org

Staff Writer (Real Change News, USA)

How 'bout that Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness?

We're all one big, happy family at the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness! Why wouldn't we be? We're ending homelessness! In 10 years! We've said so!

Turns out that's a bit like promising to honor and obey until death do us part. After about two or three years a promise like that has a way of morphing into, "You expect me to do what? You want to die?" Which, if you think about it, is the same thing.

Some of you might recall that back in January I had fun laughing about a thing, in the planning of the 10 year's planning, called the Ten Year Plan dashboard. That was a document, or maybe it was a "device," which was not finished, which WHEN finished would tell the big shots at the top of the planning process when the planning car was in need of oil or gas or a tune-up, so they could order their underlings to take care of that.

It turns out that it was totally dysfunctional of me to - using the day's primary analogy source - snicker at Daddy that way. You're not supposed to snicker at Daddy when Daddy is busy telling you how things are going to happen around here in the future. You're supposed to hold your tongue until Daddy has made a new rule, and then, when you are spoken to, you may say what you think of the new rule, provided you speak respectfully.

It was especially dysfunctional of me because such things as governing dashboards are common in organizations. Even Real Change has been working on one. So I had snickered at daddy for doing some thing all Daddies do. Next thing you know I'll be laughing at Daddy for breaking wind.

In a slightly different vein, last week our director Timothy "My Cage Is Too Dirty" Harris smelled something bad coming our way from the Seattle weekly named so. A writer at that weekly was asking questions of Real Change folks that made it seem like either a bogus "exposé" was being manufactured, or that someone had a bean and cheese burrito for breakfast.

We've seen these things elsewhere. A local 'investigation' reveals that some vendors at a street paper make so much money they can afford apartments, and they aren't fired for it. Some vendors meet the conditions of incentive programs to get guaranteed turf and other vendors don't. Vendors are caught drinking alcohol in their time off, as if they were ordinary people, and the director does nothing to stop them!

So Tim did a dysfunctional thing. He had the audacity to use his blog, Apesma's Lament, to object in advance of anything actually happening. The writer hasn't even written a story yet!

What have we learned today? 1) Never giggle at your Beters. 2) You're not supposed to scream before your Beters hit you.

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Obituary

Felicitas Martinez
 d. 2/21/07
 aged 79

Neil Sparks
 d. 3/17/07
 aged 58

Leslie S. Brannum
 d. 3/22/07
 aged 60

Martha Richmond
 d. 3/31/07

Paula Byrd
 d. 4/13/07
 aged 40