



HOMIEWARD

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SACRAMENTO, CA
A lawsuit was filed August 2, 2007 in the federal court challenging Sacramento's anti-camping ordinance and confiscation of property without prior notice or proper storage

Local Man Wins Camping Case

SACRAMENTO: Gremlin was charged with two violations of the Sacramento City Code for unlawful camping (12.52.030(A)) and one count of unlawful storage (12.52.042). Gremlin decided to fight the ticket and asked for legal representation through the Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic, insisting on a jury trial. Public Defender Lindsay Zettel defended him.

One of the issues that was highlighted is the fact that Gremlin, like many people who are homeless, has a dog named 'Boy' who has been his constant companion for over 10 years. Gremlin cannot get into any emergency shelter unless he first gives up his beloved pet.

The jury listened to both sides of the argument, and came back with a verdict of Not Guilty on both unlawful camping charges. They were a hung jury on the unlawful storage charge, and the judge promptly dismissed it.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 11 individual plaintiffs who have had their property taken by City and County work crews and/or have been cited for camping on public property. Loaves & Fishes, the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), and Francis House have joined the suit as plaintiffs. The lawsuit charges that the City and County practices are an ongoing violation of civil rights guaranteed by the 8th, 4th and 14th Amendments to the U. S. Constitution. Class action certification is being sought.

"City and County governments in Sacramento have a long history of taking basic survival equipment from

homeless people without proper notice," said Mark Merin, the principal attorney for the group. "Tents, sleeping bags and blankets are tossed into County dumpsters by Sheriff's work crews and homeless people are left to shiver in the night. Deputies then write them tickets for sleeping. It is our goal to get these practices stopped before the onset of winter."

"People think that homeless people can just go to shelters," Merin continued. "But there are not enough shelters available at any time of the year in Sacramento. People have to sleep and if they have no housing and no shelter is available, then they have to sleep out in the open. The

solution to homelessness is housing. It is not in harassing homeless people until they go away."

The lawsuit asks that the city and county provide notice to homeless people of an intended clean-up of camping sites in a reasonable period of time before a sweep and that the property taken be stored at a location reasonably proximate to the place from which it was taken to give homeless people an opportunity to reclaim their property. The city is being asked to quit citing homeless people during the night or early morning hours. Other requests are for clean, main-

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When Four Wheels Replace Four Walls

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Rosette Royale
Real Change News

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: From SODO to Queen Anne, people are living in and out of their cars. The question is how many people?

James Vlos lives out of four vehicles - a 1981 Sierra Grande, a 1989 Chevrolet Crew Cab, a 1982 Custom Deluxe van and a 1957 GMC pick up. He's scattered them throughout the city occupying spaces up on Capitol Hill, on a busy side street in Belltown known for its fancy dog salon and on Queen Anne Hill, stationed on a quiet street lined with verdant maples.

At least, that's where they were on July 5. Chances are he's moved them since then, parked them on another road

or driven them to a different neighborhood altogether. It's an automotive chess game that Vlos has to play because the city requires cars parked on the street to be moved every 72 hours. Otherwise, it means he might be facing a \$35 parking ticket slipped under the wiper. Or an abandoned vehicle citation glued to the windshield. From there, it's a tow truck. "And if you're too indigent to pay the towing charges," says Vlos, 38, "then you lose your vehicle."

The loss Vlos speaks of is rooted in experience. In the decade since he's been living out of vehicles, he estimates that he's owned a couple hundred of them. But the lion's share is gone. "Most likely turned into 'vulcanized' metal," he says.

What's left are unpaid fines, towing and storage fees, amounting to nearly \$11,000. The debt, held by a collection agency, represents the complete antithesis of what Vlos claims was his rationale for moving into that first vehicle - a 1971 Dodge pickup truck - ten years ago. "I thought I could save enough money to keep carrying on," says Vlos, who currently works for the Port of Seattle. "So living in my vehicle was the only way out."

He's not alone. All over the city, along traffic-choked streets in the SODO, in quiet neighborhoods in North Seattle, and all manner of places in between, people are living in and out of their vehicles. But exactly how many people? No one really seems to know.

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News Briefs from Street Sense

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Mandy McNally

Arizona: Health Officials to Test Homeless for TB

Arizona health officials will soon use a portable digital imaging machine in homeless shelters to help detect tuberculosis among clients. Officials say the homeless are most at risk for contracting TB because they lack regular access to health care and stay in communal living settings. The agency plans to use a \$300,000 grant from the state's Health Crisis Fund to buy the machine (Fischer East Valley Tribune, 7/15).

California: North County Proposes Regional Shelters

Cities in North County will contribute thousands of dollars to help nonprofit groups create a network of emergency winter shelters under a proposal before the Escondido City Council. The plan calls for five shelters in the county to serve the homeless on cold nights and help them to get better housing. The shelters would be open from December through March at a cost of about

\$555,000 (Gaona, San Diego Union-Tribune, 7/18).

Connecticut: Advocates Respond to Survey of Homeless

Organizers are calling for more housing options after a survey found more than 2,800 single adults and 430 families with nearly 800 children living in shelters, temporary housing or on the streets throughout the state. Connecticut has 3,000 units of "supportive" housing, defined as permanent, affordable and independent rental housing with support services, that have been created or are in development. The services include job assistance, life skills, budgeting and transportation to medical appointments. Organizers of the survey say the information will be also used by municipalities and advocacy groups to vie for federal grants (AP/New York Newsday, 7/19).

Georgia: Homeless Shelter Gets \$10M Renovation

Atlanta's largest homeless shelter has plans for a \$10 million renovation to turn its old facility into a thriving

"live, work, play and learn" community. City officials and local business owners are pressuring the shelter to move to a new location. However, the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, which operates the 95,000-square-foot shelter said it is going to proceed with the plan (Rubner, Atlanta Business Chronicle, 7/20).

Indiana: Homeless Shelter to Pay \$400,000 to IRS

A Southern Indiana homeless shelter is scrambling to pay \$400,000 in payroll taxes to the Internal Revenue Service to keep its doors open this year. Haven House shelter official say they might be forced to sell some property to keep the facility open. The shelter houses about 60 homeless people a day from the counties of Clark, Floyd, Harrison and other counties, as well as some from Louisville, Ky (WLKY32, 7/22).

Washington, D.C.: Unions Hiring Homeless to Picket

Some unions are hiring homeless to add to their picket lines when protesting outside of office buildings where

construction is being done without union labor. The union calls them temporary workers and pays them \$8 an hour to hold signs and chant about low wages. Unions are divided over the practice. Supporters say it's informational and legitimate while others have said it gives a negative impression of union organizing (AP/Fox News, 7/24). Street Sense first reported this story in August 2005.

Washington State: Demolition Protesters Arrested

Nine homeless advocates in King County recently were arrested for protesting the planned demolition of a local affordable housing complex. King County officials had offered to purchase the complex and preserve the 162 apartments for affordable housing. But the Port of Seattle rejected the offer to make way for the third runway at Sea-Tac. Homeless advocates argue the building is outside of the runway's safety zone (AP/KNDU News, 7/19).

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Homeless excluded from latest hate crime legislation

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.orgby Kent Mitchell
Street Sense

WASHINGTON D.C.: For the two and a half years that David Pirtle was homeless in the District of Columbia, violence was part of the daily routine.

He saw an elderly homeless man beaten senseless by police just for stepping out of a courthouse line and knows one homeless man who had his ear cut off in a shelter because he wouldn't stop talking to himself.

And he has personal stories of assault. Of being stoned on several occasions. Of being spray-painted by a group of kids.

"I was attacked once in New York City by a kid with an aluminum bat, or at least I believed it to be a bat," Pirtle said. "I was too busy trying to shield my face from the blows to get a good look."

Pirtle's experience of being attacked just for being homeless isn't unique. The National Coalition for the Homeless collects information on such crimes and reports 142 incidents in 2006, 20 of which were murders.

Despite these statistics, which are widely acknowledged to be

an underestimate because they include only reported incidents, the U.S. Congress is preparing to expand the definition and enforcement of hate crimes - a special class of crimes which are motivated by race, religion and other factors - without including crimes motivated by homeless status.

The proposed revision, passed by the House of Representatives in May, would expand the persons covered by federal hate crimes law and include crimes motivated by sexual orientation and disability.

Statistics on hate crimes are voluntarily reported by state and local jurisdictions to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and in the most recent year (2005), 14% of the more than 7,000 incidents cataloged were motivated by sexual orientation and less than 1% by disability.

A lack of official statistics has hampered efforts of homeless advocates to protect homeless victims of violence. State and local jurisdictions do not collect that data, and a government study commissioned by members of Congress to assess the scope of the problem was never performed. Federal statis-

tics do provide clues to the extent of the problem, noting that more than 18% of 2005 hate crimes occurred in highways, roads, alleys or streets.

"More homeless people are being killed than any other protected class," said Tulin Ozdeger, a staff attorney with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. "This is not an insignificant problem."

A source close to proceedings in the Senate, where legislation has been introduced by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D Mass.) notes that including homeless provisions faces not only a proof of burden hurdle, but strong legal opposition from opponents.

Jessica Schuler, a policy analyst with the National Coalition for the Homeless, has heard the legal arguments. "Homelessness is something that can change and is not a permanent quality like race," she said. "Some are worried that if we include homelessness it opens the door to other factors like age."

She maintains that the homeless should receive special protections. "The crimes committed against them are committed out of the same bias, ignorance and

hate that other hate crimes result from," she said.

A source in Congress notes that the best opportunity to negotiate homeless language into the bill may be in the Senate, where there are more opportunities to amend legislation.

Advocates, in particular, note the importance of asking state and local jurisdictions to collect data that sets the stage for more expansive action in Congress in the future.

The hate crimes legislation currently faces an uncertain future, as President Bush has indicated he would veto the legislation passed by the House.

In addition to its federal lobbying efforts, the National Law Center is working with state legislators to pass hate crimes legislation that addresses homelessness. Seven states considered legislation this year, including Maryland, where a bill passed the state Senate but later stalled.

Like most jurisdictions, the District does not catalog whether reported hate crimes are motivated by homeless status. District statistics from 2005

report 48 hate-crime incidents, with 30 motivated by sexual orientation.

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) has taken the lead in Congress in efforts to include homeless provisions in the larger hate crimes legislation. She recently introduced two bills, one which would expand enforcement and one which would allow for the collection of better statistics.

"Understanding the nature of such crimes and administering appropriate punishment for them are critical to stopping violence against the homeless," Rep. Johnson said. "We want to ensure all Americans feel safe in their communities, because no one should be subjected to violence and injury motivated by the narrow biases of others."

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California Senator Steinberg's SB 122, to add homeless people as a protected group to California's hate crimes bill, is still held in committee "without recommendation" - HW

Rally Protests Board of Supervisors' "Back Room Deal" With Builders

SACRAMENTO, CA: On August 8 there was a rally at the County Building where the Sacramento Board of Supervisors had scheduled a hearing concerning the deal they were proposing with the Building Industry Association to modify the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. About 200 outraged community members filed into the Board of Supervisors chambers and presented the Supervisors with an open letter protesting changes to the ordinance without a full and public process. The signatures of over 1000 individuals and organizations were on the letters.

Assemblymember Dave Jones have signed the letter

To name just a few of the organizations that have signed: Californians for Disability Rights, Environment Council of Sacramento, League of Women Voters, Loaves & Fishes, Sierra Club, Paratransit, Physicians for Social Responsibility, SHOC, Sacramento Area Congregations Together, Mustard Seed School, St. Marks United Methodist Church, St. Francis Church Social Justice Group, NAACP, Turning Point Community Services, and Wellspring Women's Center.

People from all walks of life, including poor people and community leaders, homeowners and business owners, ministers and elected officials such as State Senator Darrel Steinberg and

Individuals and groups may still sign the letter on-line at Sacramento Housing Alliance's website: www.sachousingalliance.org



Canadian Shelter System Not For Families

(much the same as American shelter systems)

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Linda Dumont
Edmonton Street News

EDMONTON, CANADA: Bissell Centre was forced to play "hot potato" and remove homeless people camped in the parking lot behind Bissell Centre East on June 14 in response to orders from Capital Health. For most of the campers, this is just one more move among many, and unless there is some change, it will not be the last move.

Bissell's executive Director Shelley Williams said, "I've shed tears today. The situation is these people have been bumped from Mary Burle Park to the lot behind the Bissell Centre, then to behind Bissell East. We let them stay there for the past few weeks because the city was to have an emergency response. We gave them 24 hours notice and we closed the Bissell early so staff could help them move. We're hoping this will precipitate some action. We need services right now."

"Passing campers around the city with all their belongings is simply denying their humanity. We have no suggestions for where they can go! All of the campers are asking and are scared they are just going to keep getting bumped. This has got to stop and an alternative must be put forth immediately for the short-term. Longer term permanent housing can be put into place within the next 4 months. We are a can-do province and a can-do city. Hopefully, something good will come of this tragedy."

On June 8, Capital Health gave notice to the Bissell that unless they provided porta-potties, water and waste disposal for gray water a

sheriff and police would be sent in to remove the campers. Williams said providing these services is not an option since Bissell, as a non-profit agency, is already stretched to the limit financially. She said permanent housing is the solution, not parking lots, river valleys, or shelters, but moving people into their own homes along with appropriate supports when needed.

Bissell staff helped people load their possessions into shopping carts, take down tents, and then move to the lot just west of the Bissell Centre.

Camper Leonard Swayne sat in an armchair, his crutches beside him waiting for help with the move. He said, "They just came here this morning and said 'you have to leave.' We're moving over west of the Bissell Centre, and we'll be able to stay there for a few days. A lot of us are alcoholics and drug addicts so we can't work. I used to have a \$12,000 a month job and now I can't even buy a room at the Salvation Army."

Swayne estimated that with the people sleeping in about 15 tents, and others who came in at night with their blankets, about 170 people were sleeping in the parking lot.

Some of them moved to a lot a block north, but were removed by police later the same day. As of June 23, there were 33 tents along the fence lines of the lot west of the Bissell Centre. Capital Regional Health brought four Johnny-on-the-spots to the lot Saturday June 23, which also provide a place for the campers to wash up. Bissell is distributing donations from the food bank to help meet the needs of the campers - women's

care packages, water and sports drinks. The campers have been policing themselves and keeping the site clean.

The mayor's chief of staff, Patricia Misutka, said the city has been in contact with all the social agencies and is putting together a report to the province and will be meeting with the minister of municipal affairs and housing.

"The province did give some money for transitional housing like shelters, but only to build structures," she said, "In the short term we've convinced them to pay for opening the 200 beds in the shelters for the next couple of months. They are open all winter anyway, but obviously we need a lot more. We are still working on an emergency response, but putting up porta-potties just attracts a tent city, which is not an option."

Misutka also added that the shelters are not always filled to capacity because some people prefer to sleep outside. That is because people want to have homes, not shelter beds. Edmonton Street News spoke with people camping in tents and sleeping outside, and was told by couples and families that they want to be able to stay together which is not possible within the existing shelter system, and they want to be able to keep their belongings. One family with two children has been camping by the river for more than a month and getting up early in the morning to make sure the children are in school. If they were to go into shelters, the parents would be separated and the children would be placed in foster care.

Reprinted from Edmonton Street News. Originally titled "Homeless Campers Need Homes."
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Fewer Low-Income Homeowners in DC

Street News Service
www.streetnewsservice.org

by Mia Boyd
Street Sense

WASHINGTON, DC: Fewer and fewer people with low incomes own homes in Washington, D.C., according to a recent study by the Urban Institute. Low-income home buyers accounted for 17% of all home-purchase mortgages in 1997. In 2005, they accounted for only 4%.

The District's strong economy attracts a lot of people close to the city creating high demand and pushing housing prices up, explained Peter Tatan, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute Center on Metropolitan Housing and Communities. "The prices increase faster than wages so people are pushed out," he said. "Some are going further out in the region of Maryland and Virginia. Some have to rent instead of owning. The number of commuters into the city continues to increase," he said.

While housing prices have fallen in some parts of the city in the last year other District neighborhoods continue to see price increases. Harriet Tregoning, director of the D.C. Office of Planning, said the high demand can be a double-edged sword. "While the percentage increase in middle- to high-income buyers bodes well for the District fiscally, it suggests that the District faces a continuing affordability challenge for lower-income households," she said.

Tatan said the city needs to accept that housing costs are moving beyond the reach of many people. "We need good rental options. Otherwise, if we allow the market to dictate everything, then we lose some diversity," Tatan said.

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Dignity Village Update

by Paula

PORTLAND, OR: Dignity Village began in 2000 as a tent city by a small group of homeless individuals. They were scooted around, ended up under a bridge and finally were located permanently on a piece of city property on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. The Village started as a tent city, but is converting into housing by the residents. They are located right next door to a prison and are on pavement that used to be the City's composting facility. The city rents the land to them. The community is run and governed by the residents, a maximum of 60 individuals.

At the recent NASNA conference everyone was going to tour Dignity Village on Sunday afternoon, but my plane back to Sacramento was to leave early Sunday morning. So I made the trip out there alone by bus on Saturday after the last workshop and before the conference's farewell formal dinner. I wondered if I could make it to Dignity Village on the outskirts of the city and get back before the last event, but I had to try. I at least had to pay homage to the Dignitaries that reside in the Village even if I didn't get to take a tour.

Several years ago SHOC had organized to have a tent city in Sacramento and Dignity Village folks offered every help and support they could via internet. We learned a great deal about their history and struggle. Our tent city never materialized (google "A Tale of Two Tent Cities" by Jason MacCannell for an analysis of why Sacramento doesn't and Portland does have a tent city).

When I got there by the long bus ride by the nicest bus driver Betty, she said she had a 14 minute layover up ahead and would wait by Dignity Village for me instead. Some villagers were having a yard sale near the entrance and I asked them if Tim was around. He had been one of my email contacts. He was in the main house performing security duty. He asked someone to take over for him while he gave me a tour.

The village is amazing. The grounds are very clean. There are few tents left, so you really can't call it a tent city anymore. The homeless people keep building cottages. At the NASNA conference we learned from Commissioner Sten that the city relaxed building codes specifically for Dignity Village. The houses they are erecting are well built, with good frames. Some use conventional materials. Others use "bastard cob" which I'm not sure what that consists of but its like cob or adobe. The first house they built,



Above and Below: Dignity's home built housing, conventional and "cob"



the community house, was made from strawbales. The few remaining tents are on platforms and are very sturdy looking like cottages. The platforms protect them from the winter rains that tend to flood the pavement under the whole village. There is no plumbing in the houses. They have two community showers and 2 portapotties. They have raised bed vegetable gardens. Damn, I forgot to ask where they cook.

Tim was a great tour guide. At the end of the tour I bought a pair of shoes at the yard sale, expressed my gratitude for the tour and for their great work, said goodbye and made it to the bus in time for my ride back to the University on time to change into my fancy dress for dinner.

The moral of the story: What do you get when you let homeless people stay in one place? Answer: Housing!



Tim in front of Dignity's Community House, the first structure they built, a strawbale house.



Tents set up on platforms for the winter

2007 North American Street Newspaper Association Conference

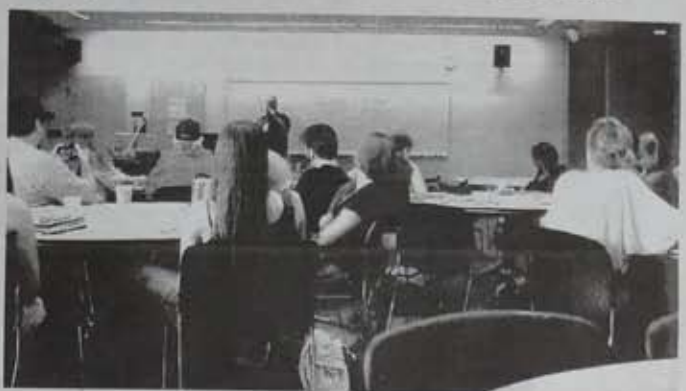
PORTLAND, OR: The North American Street Newspaper Association held a three-day conference this July in Portland, Oregon, hosted by Street Roots. Homework Street Journal sent a representative to meet with representatives from across the United States and Canada, plus a European representative from the INSP (International Network of Street Papers). These annual conferences are a chance for those involved in the street newspaper movement to share experiences, knowledge and technical support.

This year's theme was "Changing the World One Newspaper at a Time". Most member papers have an advocacy side to them promoting affordable housing, adequate shelter and civil rights for homeless people. Content varies, from homelessness and housing articles to current events and entertainment. All papers include a vendor program, where homeless people are able to sell the papers to earn money.

Thursday evening was registration and then everyone met downtown at a pub for refreshments, ordourves and getting to know or reacquainted with each other.

Most of the conference activities took place on the Portland State University, where conference members stayed in student dorms upstairs from the conference rooms and classrooms. Friday morning everyone met for more formal introductions and welcoming from the Street Roots director, Israel Bayer, City Commissioner, Erik Steen, and NASNA President, Laura Thompson Osun.

There were many workshops throughout the conference with such interesting titles as: Street Newspaper Roundtable, Creating and Implementing Breakthrough Strategy, Fair and Biased - walking the line between objectivity and advocacy, Fundraising 101, Street Newspaper Innovations Panel, Building and maintaining individual donors, Effective



partnerships and coalitions; Stuck small - expand your capacity for greater impact; Guerilla Journalism; Street News Service; Vendors! Vendors! Vendors!

Most meals were served at the student cafeteria but there were special meals and special events for the conference goers. One lunchtime we spent at the Farmers Market to give us a taste of Portland. One evening there was a barbeque at a nearby park where many of Street Roots vendors attended, one vendor entertaining us with his guitar playing and songs.

Regional Advocacy Project. He said the social justice movement is the core of the street newspaper movement. Street newspapers have put \$5 million in the pockets of homeless people, without judgment or finger-pointing. The newspapers are an unfiltered vehicle to get the story out and provides a voice for the poor. With the network that is NASNA there is more power in printing a common message.

The last evening was a dinner on the 30th floor of a downtown building with windows overlooking the whole city. The keynote speaker was Paul Boden, Director of the Western



Civil Rights Lawsuit

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tained portable toilets, sinks and garbage dumpsters located near where homeless people sleep. Also, storage spaces for their possessions would be requested. These measures would allow homeless people to help alleviate many burdens placed on the general community. Further real solutions to homelessness will be asked for, such as funding for additional shelters, homeless services and permanent housing. Individuals plaintiffs should also be compensated for lost property and a small amount per incident.

The criminalization of homelessness has been the policy of Sacramento for many years in response to a growing homeless population. City and County policy makers have been educated from

more recent national studies and practices that prove that the criminal justice system not only is not a solution to homelessness, criminalization can put further obstructions in a homeless person's ability to better their residential situation. It has been found that providing housing and services to homeless people is less expensive to a community than if the person is left homeless. This is because a person that is homeless makes more emergency hospital visits, uses more mental health services, shelter stays, jail and booking fees, court costs, etc. When a person is stable in housing these costs to the community are minimized and a formerly homeless person will be more likely to seek help and take steps towards their independence.



Attorneys for Lawsuit at August 2nd press conference: (left to right) Mark Merrin, Cathleen Williams, Kelly Tanalepy, Gary Gallery, Ron Blubaugh

WHY THEORY IS STRONGER THAN FACT

by the residentially challenged science writer, Chongo

Science is the pursuit of truth. This means that science is the process of identifying explanations consistent with reality and distinguishing them from those that are not. We call those explanations that are consistent with reality, truth. Distinguishing these explanations, the true ones, from any others that are not, leads to understanding how what is true must be, and thus ultimately to understanding why everything is the way it is, or more fundamentally to understanding the reason that anything even 'is' at all - which is precisely what science does: explain what's true in nature and what isn't (all the while, completely irrespective of what we or anyone else might wish or dream or conjecture being true, or for that matter, completely irrespective of what might even be determinable or what might altogether never be at all).

At the heart of science are its foundations. Genuine science - that which is genuinely the pursuit of nature's truths - has its foundations in a body of ideas called "theoretical physics." And, anything that purports to be science positively **MUST** be consistent with this body of ideas (again, theoretical physics), because if it is not, then it is instead, something else, but, unquestionably, not real, genuine science.

Now, since we are faced with the reality that we must address the subject of theoretical physics if we are to describe and explain nature more accurately, we are compelled to ask, how in the world can an understanding of nature's truths enrich one's life experience? What exactly are the benefits that an understanding of quantum mechanics, based upon an understanding of relativity yields that can be applied in every day practice? How can the contemplation of the motion of subatomic particles, particles that are far too small to ever be seen and whose existence can only be inferred, improve our participation in the big motions occurring around us and in us? Why learn such a seemingly abstract subject? Inescapably to truly even begin to approach understanding nature's truths, one **MUST** grasp its most fundamental foundations, which is what theoretical physics is.

Theoretical physics and its eloquent explanations, physical theory for short, describe nature in as accurate and hence, in as truthful a way as it has ever been described ever. This is to say, that physical theory's description of nature is absolutely the very best mirroring of reality - meaning all reality every last bit of it there is - that has ever existed, far surpassing in accuracy any others that anyone has ever proposed. As

a matter of fact, after nearly a century of repeated testing, this theoretical model has never failed to mirror reality better than any other description ever conceived - not once, it always works - every single time, regardless of how many times it is put to the test, and irrespective of how rigorous the test might be. In short, theoretical physics is completely failure free (although it should be mentioned that the application of our interpretations of it certainly are not). And, oh yes, absolutely anyone who can read, count, and imagine a concept called "perpendicular" can eventually come to understand this failure-free body of ideas that describes nature better than any others that there have ever been. To be perfectly clear, anyone at all can grasp theoretical physics conceptually - provided they have the desire and opportunity to do so (the web site www.chongonaton.com is dedicated to providing the opportunity to learn physical theory - both inside and outside of the classroom).

Again, anyone who can read, count, and imagine the simple concept of perpendicular can learn and eventually come to understand the fundamental set of ideas that underlie the foundations of theoretical physics, that is, provided they want badly enough to do so, and more importantly, provided that they are fully willing to ignore everything that they might think is true about reality - absolutely every last thing - in order to do so. In actual fact, the better one can ignore their presumptions about what is true in nature, the more easily and rapidly physical theory can be understood. This point - ignoring ones presumptions - is absolutely critical to understanding and cannot be over emphasized. If the reader is unwilling to abandon the presumptions inherent to their conventional thinking - all of them - then they will simply hinder the ease with which these new ideas can be learned. Ignoring the firm patterns of our conventional thinking is the key to learning the subject of theoretical physics. To be clear, the more that can be ignored, the more easily and quickly nature's ways are grasped. If we can manage to forget old ideas, then indeed we are in a position to replace them with new, true, and much, much richer ones, which are the very kind of ideas that the study of theoretical physics provides in such overwhelming abundance.

Now, ignoring every last thing we think is true about reality leaves us asking: how can we ignore "everything" that we think is true about reality when it is this very knowledge that has brought us to the point of even being capable of understanding and hence explaining nature in a new

true, and richer way using physical theory in the first place? We can ignore all the knowledge leading us here by recognizing that it is this very knowledge itself that brought us (humankind) to this point of even seeking deeper explanations and that, to that end, now compels us to ignore what has served us so well as to bring us to the point of recognizing that this very knowledge that brought us here can now only impede us from the very understanding that we seek.

Though we must ignore the notions that ultimately allow us to ask why we likewise should admire them for having brought us to the point of doing so, despite their shortcomings. Different knowledge may have never brought us to the point of recognizing its shortcomings and hence could instead have achieved either a great deal less or much, much worse than the knowledge that was our fortune. At least it finally saw what was true, just as we will begin to do by learning the basic ideas that underlie a magnificent human achievement called the Theory of Relativity.

Learning the 'relativity' of space and time measures with respect to motion is the first step toward recognizing just how far our knowledge has taken us, and the depth of the questions that it has answered and is yet capable of answering still. Most remarkably, reality is, in actual fact, even more rich, complex, and amazing - indeed it is infinitely richer - than any conventional description of it could ever be. We will take the first steps toward exploring both, in the articles that follow in subsequent issues of this publication (six per year).

We have answered why we must learn theoretical physics in order to understand, explain, and accurately identify nature's truths. This however does not answer why we should, individually, choose for ourselves to embark upon the effort needed to gain such an understanding of nature as physical theory provides. So, what are the practical rewards?

The most practical and tangible reward that an accurate conceptual understanding of theoretical physics renders is that it makes understanding everything that 'is' reality much easier too, than does a lack of such an understanding. Having it, we can consider nature's phenomena using altogether new ways of thinking and using ideas that we very likely (unless we already possess them) may have NEVER imagined before. Remarkably, by having this understanding, we can even shape our very wants, by understanding 'why' it is that we even 'want' at all. That is to

say, a genuine understanding of physical science renders completely new ways of dealing with the world, ways that can provide the mind with completely new ideas and wholly new concepts upon which to base its (i.e. our) decisions, ideas and concepts that would simply never exist in our old ways of thinking (unless these old ways incorporate a valid theoretical model).

In understanding the pursuit of truth - which is what, again, genuine science is - we gain intellectual tools that we may have imagined only others - ever being capable of possessing - not us. But we', meaning anyone, can possess these tools too! Armed with them, we (anyone) can begin to see nature's founding design - it is a mystery only to the uninformed and unfortunate. Beyond this illusion of mystery lies the elegant, abstract beauty that nature's design encompasses.

From the point of view of those individuals who have invested the effort necessary and thus acquired an understanding of physical theory, gaining it is as worthwhile an endeavor as one could ever pursue. According to this view achieving an understanding of the founding principles, upon which nature - indeed, upon which existence - is based, matches the thrill of living the most exciting adventure, the satisfaction that comes from solving the most elusive puzzle, or the fulfillment of gratifying the deepest passion. Indeed, such an understanding of the physical world can be bliss itself.

And, don't worry, theoretical physics is as true as any fact. Its just as factually true as lasers, cell phones, televisions, computers, satellites, and microwave ovens are, because the theoretical physics is precisely the very reason why such 'practical' tools even exist - an irrefutable fact. See, that's why a scientific theory is stronger than fact. A theory describes all facts, even future ones. And, it takes only a single contradicting fact to make a scientific theory something weaker. So far, no contradicting facts have yet to be identified. For about a century now, when physical theory was finally refined to the impeccable point that it is now physical theory has been stronger than any facts yet presented by anyone.

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(To see all the books that Chongo has written, go to chongonaton.com. Chongonaton provides books that describe theoretical physics in lay terms, without any math.)

Four Wheels continued from page 1

"There are a lot," says Sgt. Paul Gracy of the Seattle Police Department (SPD). He says he's aware of people sleeping in and living out of vehicles parked under Spokane St., but there's no clear way to determine their numbers. As long as a vehicle is moved every 72 hours, no law is broken by someone living in it, as there's no city ordinance making the act illegal. "We prefer that people would rather live in a house - if at all possible," he says. "But we don't go out seeking people in vehicles."

Cars left unmoved for more than 72 hours are considered abandoned. Citizens noting such vehicles can call the abandoned vehicle hotline, or log on to the SPD website to submit a report. From there, parking enforcement ventures out to conduct an inspection. If verified, an enforcement official will adhere an orange citation - which Vlos calls a "move-it-or-lose-it" sticker - to the front windshield, notifying the owner the vehicle will be towed if not moved in 72 hours.

Gloria Tate, parking enforcement supervisor, says that when parking officials encounter someone in an abandoned vehicle, they inform the individual that an official will return in three days to ensure the vehicle is no

longer there. In her 30 years in the department, she says the number of people encountered by parking officials in "abandoned cars" has grown. "It's been kind of gradual," she says. "[but we] notice more that people are living in cars."

Even so, Tate can't come up with hard figures as to how many people officials have encountered living in cited vehicles. "No one's tracking how many people or inputting it into any sort of system," she says.

But some data does exist. During this year's One Night Count, conducted by Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH), an overnight tally of homeless people in areas of King County identified 654 people living in cars or trucks. SKCCH executive director Alison Eisinger says counters were instructed, upon seeing a vehicle that looked to have been lived in, to assume two people were in the vehicle. Thus, she says, the figure obtained is a conservative estimate.

Vlos, who says he knows what to look for, proposes a quick tour of SODO to see if car campers can be found.

Down on Sixth Ave. S., Vlos eyes a camper. "Pull over right here," he says. Vlos says he's

pretty sure someone's living out of it, as he used to live out of a vehicle he'd parked close by that's since been towed. Vlos knocks. No answer. He goes around to the back. An abandoned vehicle citation, apparently scraped off the windshield and tossed near a rear tire, says the vehicle should have been moved the week before.

Through the rear door, unmade beds are visible. He points to the license plate: expired tags. Next to the door is a message, scrawled in pencil: "To contact owner..." with a local phone number. A call produces a woman's voice who says, promptly "I'm not interested."

Vlos suggests traveling down to Spokane St. There, under the overpass, is a line of close to thirty vehicles, including vans, cars, trucks, Winnebagos, even a school bus. Walking from one to the next, Vlos indicates clothes strewn inside, mattresses crowded on van floors, and more dead tags. "If we came back at night, we'd find some people," he says. In a nearby van, a man stands hunched over, putting on a shirt. Vlos knocks, saying, "I'm not the cops." The side door opens.

Out steps Robert, maneuvering past a two-burner hot plate inside. He says parking officials, who had just come to check on the vehicle, had awoken him. For three years, he's been living out of vehicles, he says, moving the van and a blue four-door parked next to it every three or four days. It's a lifestyle he says he enjoys.

"I don't like the idea of paying rent," he says, as he hurries off to get lunch.

While Vlos agrees that "Nobody wants to pay rent," he confesses that if he could afford it, he'd rather not live in one of his four vehicles.

"I don't live out of vehicles because I enjoy it," he says. "I mean, I'd prefer to have property, land, a place to stay. I live out of vehicles hoping I [can] somehow work my way out of debt. But it never seems to ever happen."

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Interim Care Program Gives Homeless People Place to Recuperate

Sacramento, CA: In the past, when a homeless person was released from a hospital stay, they had to recuperate on the streets, out in the elements. Their conditions did not improve like it would have if they recuperated in a bed in a house. Often their conditions worsened and they were soon re-admitted to the hospital.

30 months ago an Interim Care program was established at Salvation Army's B Street location. This program is a collaboration of four hospitals, the County of Sacramento, Salvation Army and The Effort. Before, hospitals had 2 choices - to release the patient out on the streets or to keep the patient in the hospital for an extended period of time, which was extremely more expensive than an investment in the interim program.

The four hospitals, Sutter Kaiser, Mercy and UC Davis contribute \$65,000 each and

the County contributes \$120,000. Salvation Army provides the space and beds and The Effort also staffs the program. Sometimes the hospital will have to keep a patient a bit longer until a bed opens up at Salvation Army.

300 people have been helped in the 30 months Salvation Army's Interim Care Program has been in existence. There are 18 beds available and patients are allowed to stay for 6 weeks. Nurses visit daily on weekdays, and are on call on weekends. They are served breakfast, lunch and dinner

Their stay in the program also affords time to help them find transitional or permanent housing, which is one of the program's mission. Another important outcome is a partnership model that can be duplicated elsewhere and between different types of institutions.

Obituary

Patricia Lynn Shay
d. 4/10/07 Age 49
cause pending

Ernest Ridley
d. 7/28/07 Age 42
light-rail accident

Robert Abel
d. 7/31/07 Age 50
of cancer