

HOMeward

Serving the Sacramento area homeless community

Volume One, No. 3

July 1997

Effects of 'Loaves' controversy will last a long time

Guests expected to pay price for financial difficulties

By Christina Stock

The city of Sacramento and Loaves and Fishes reached a settlement recently in a seven-month legal battle, but the dispute will have a lasting effect.

The trouble began two years ago with discrepancies in the charity's special use permits and was fueled by pressure from the local business community and residents. The situation reached a climax when the city sued Loaves and Fishes for permit violations, calling it a public nuisance, with Loaves and Fishes countering for violations to their right to practice religious duties.

The political battle divided the

community at large and even supporters of Loaves and Fishes.

"Individuals who are interested and concerned about other people had to make a decision about supporting Loaves and Fishes despite the controversy," said LeRoy Chatfield, director of Loaves and Fishes.

Longtime advocates of Loaves and Fishes became even stronger, but more casual supporters grew leery. "Other people were turned off by the fact that they were confronted with having to make a decision of the rightness or the wrongness of the issue," said Chatfield.

"There come times in every person's life when you are confronted with having to make a choice," he said, noting that many people simply chose another charity.

"In short term, Loaves and Fishes has been hurt severely, financially," said Chatfield, "and I can't pretend otherwise. But in the same breath, I believe in the longer term that Loaves and Fishes is more financially secure."

"It hurts the guests," said Chatfield. "Those are the ones bearing the burden."

The controversy has taken its toll on the immediate future of Loaves and Fishes finances. Most services in Friendship Park will be closed during the month of August to avoid running into debt. Showers, drug and alcohol



Photos: Christina Stock

Most services in Friendship Park at Loaves and Fishes will be closed in August.

counseling, the library, Mustard Seed school, and Maryhouse day shelter for women are all scheduled to close.

The continual threat of losing a vital institution has united Loaves and Fishes guests in their concern. Says Chatfield, "I think the Loaves and Fishes guests, and that is a broad spectrum of people, I think it brought them together. People felt part of the process in trying to secure some justice. I can't even count the number of guests who came up to me and personally thanked me, or offered

their encouragement. There was a feeling that we were all in this together."

The noon meal will continue to be served daily next month. "The dining room will never close," says Chatfield. "That will always be there for our guests."

"Sunshine" is a homeless woman who is unable to work due to trauma, resulting from physical abuse. She depends on the noon meal. "A lot of times

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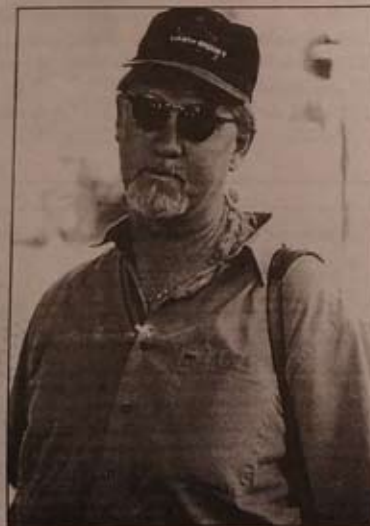


Lunch will still be served in August.

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FREE!
(for
now)



Mikey dee Jones once found himself homeless.

Coming home ... after being homeless

By Mikey dee Jones

The unbelievable shame I felt in 1980 when I became homeless has never left my thoughts. I was a truck driver and part owner of a small carnival. What happened was little more than a simple twist of fate, but that doesn't change the devastation it caused.

It was mid October. The weather in Clarksville, Indiana had settled into its usual bone chilling blustery state. I had just returned to the Clarksville truck stop that had become my home away from home, after delivering a load of perishables to Huntington, West Virginia in the old beat-up International tractor I was driving. My fifth wheel trailer, pickup, car and the new Peterbuilt with my new Ravens flatbed trailer were nowhere to be found. The old, empty UPS van with no motor I used for

storage was all I saw.

By morning, the reality of what had happened set in. While I was gone, my partner had split, and had failed to make the necessary payments on our equipment. Even the money from the delivery I had just made was absorbed by the bank as soon as I stepped out of my tractor. To make matters worse, they informed me that I owed them even more money, and then they repossessed my truck with everything in it. Everything I owned, right down to a laundry basket full of dirty clothes was gone.

Like many people faced with this kind of devastation, I took the little bit of cash I still had in my pocket and got drunk. Very, very drunk. When I came to, I was shivering. To this day, I have never felt as alone as I did at that moment. As I listened to the passing

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HOMELESS SERVICES: FOR THOSE WHO NEED HELP

Overnight shelters

Salvation Army
(30 day) 12th & North B St.
1pm bed sign up. Men/Women.
Dinner, breakfast & clothing for
residents. 442-0331

St. John's Shelter

301 12th Street (at North C
Street.) Women/Children, 14 day
max stay. 4:30 pm to 7:15 am.
Weekdays-Intakes anytime at
door or call. Weekends-Intakes
4:30 pm. Dinner provided for
guests. 448-0701

Union Gospel Mission

400 Bannon St. Men Only. 6:30
pm bed sign up.
Newcomers/Referrals have
priority. 7:30 pm Chapel Service
with meal afterward. 6 am
breakfast for residents.
Showers/Shaves 9-11 am & 1:00-
2:45 pm. 447-3268

Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center

4516 Parker Avenue. 24 hours.
Family Shelter-Families, single
adults with children. Women's
Refuge-Single women, no
children. Call for screening/space
availability. 455-2160

Day Shelters

Francis House
1214 17th St., coffee and
donuts 8-10 a.m. M-F; walk-in or
referrals provides resource
counseling, advocacy, emergency
vouchers and referrals 1-3 p.m.
weekdays. 443-2646.

Consumer Self-help (south)

3031 Franklin Blvd. Drop-in
day shelter operated by Mental
Health Consumers for Mental
Health Consumers. 737-7100.

Food

Union Gospel Mission
400 Bannon St. (North B St at
12th.) 7 days, Church Service
7:30 pm (required.) Dinner
following 8:30-9:15 pm, Sunday:
Service 11 am, lunch at noon.
447-3268

Loaves & Fishes

1321 North C St. Lunch, every
day, 11:30-1:00 pm (Tickets 7 am-
12:30 pm at Friendship Park.)
Breakfast at MaryHouse for
women and children. 444-9626

Free clothing

Sacramento Food Bank
3333 3rd Avenue (at
Broadway.) 8 am-4 pm. 456-1980

Union Gospel Mission

400 Bannon St. (B St & 12th.)
Men: Mon-Sat 9-11 am, or 1:00-
2:45 pm. Women/Children:
Wednesday only. Call for
appointment to go in at 11 am,
1:00 or 1:30 pm, or attend Bible
study at 9:15 am and get free
clothing at 10 am. 447-3268

Medical

Mercy Clinic
Loaves & Fishes, 1321 North C
St. Adults, Children: General
Health Care. Mon-Fri 8 am-12
pm, 1:00 pm-4:30 pm. Sign ups
in Friendship Park, 7:30 am and
12:30 pm. 446-3345.

Capital Health Clinic

1500 C St. (at 15th.) Adults 8-5
M, W and Th. 440-5302.

Dental

Sacramento Dental Clinic
1500 C St. (at 15th.) Adults-
Emergency Dental. Call for
Appointment. Mon-Fri 7:40 am-

5:00 pm. Walk-ins screened. 552-
8300.

Mental health

Guest House
Loaves & Fishes. 1400 North C
St. Homeless Mental Health
Clinic. Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri. 8-
11:30 am. Tues 8-11:30 am only.
Mental Health Evaluation,
Medication if needed. Housing
referrals for mentally ill, GA
referrals, SSI applications,
referrals to alcohol and drug
counseling. 443-6972

TLCS Emergency Outreach

470 Bannon St. (Trailer at
North B St.) 24 hr answering
machine, adults, no
requirements. Counseling,
referrals, help w/SSI
applications, housing. Mon-Fri
9:00 am-4:00 pm. 443-2996.

Crisis intervention

WEAVE
24 hour. Battered women and
children. Victims of rape and
domestic abuse. Crisis
counseling, long term anger
counseling for men, safe houses,
children's program. 920-2952.

Sacramento Mental Health Center (County)

2150 Stockton Blvd. (at T St.)
24 hour. Will evaluate anyone for
voluntary or involuntary
psychiatric care. In-Patient Care
Facility, Drop-in, 24 hour. 732-
3637

Miscellaneous

Social Services (Welfare)
28th & R St. Mon-Fri 7:30 am-5
pm. Call for assistance and
location. 732-3156. AFDC 732-
3456. GA 732-3459. Food Stamps

732-3500.

Employment Development Department

2901 50th St. (at Broadway.)
8930 Big Horn Blvd. Mon-Fri 8
am-5 pm. Unemployment, job
services. 227-0300

Legal Services of Northern California, Inc

515 12th St. (at E St.) Mon-Fri
8:30 am-12 pm, 1 pm-5 pm.
Problems with public benefits,
landlord/tenant, divorce clinic.
Call for appt. 444-6760.

Medi-Cal

4875 Broadway, Mon-Fri 8 am-
5 pm. 732-3490.
7220 24th St. (at Florin.) Mon-
Thur 8-11 am, 1-3 pm, Fri 8-
11am. Phone application OK. ID
needed. 395-4551.

Social Security Office

8351 Folsom Blvd. Mon-Fri 9
am-4:30 pm. 381-9410. National
Line 1-800-772-1213.

Welfare Rights

1901 Alhambra Blvd. (2nd
floor) Mon-Fri 9 am-5 pm.
AFDC, Food Stamps, Work Fare
and medical representation at
hearings. 736-0616.

Alcoholics Anonymous

454-1100

Runaway Hotline

1-800-843-5200

Infoline Sacramento

Telephone Information and
referral service. 498-1000

VA Outreach

923-9787

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Welcome to Homeward No. 3

Homeward' is a
publication of the
Sacramento Homeless
Organizing Committee
(SHOC), which is a part of the
Sacramento Housing Alliance.
SHOC hopes this newspaper
will serve as a vehicle to
educate the public, both
homeless and housed, about
important issues and services
available to homeless
Sacramentans.

It hopes to alleviate
miscommunication by providing
a dialogue between disparate
communities. It also serve as a
creative outlet for homeless
people.

Our committee meets at 10
a.m. each Monday at Loaves and
Fishes to discuss the newspaper,
issues facing homeless
individuals and strategies to
end homelessness. We welcome
any participation or

contributions. Articles, poems
and other writing can be given
to Birte in the library at Loaves
and Fishes.

If you are or have ever been
homeless, or are interested in
building bridges between
disenfranchised communities,
please ask us how you can help.

We would like to thank the
Vanguard Foundation for the
grant that funds the committee,
and Loaves and Fishes for
providing us a place to meet.

For information call 442-1198.



Moon and stars shine, and wildlife flourishes on the river

This morning heading down to Loaves and Fishes, I crossed in front of the capitol building and it sure looked pretty. It was just before dawn. The moon was full and a bright planet was just hanging there with it, but it wasn't the morning star, it was in the wrong place. I didn't even notice the moon and the bright star next to it at first. It was how the cupola, on top of the bigger dome was all lit up with a white light. That old neo-classical baroque roman empire filigree copy of Washington shining there, was saying, I am the state, and I'm god too, I'm powerful, but I'm beautiful too! Everything revolves around me in California, and the moon and the stars approve. You Remember that the people of this state believe in me sure as "in god we trust," even if it looks like it's just money they believe in. You have to remember they really do believe in laissez-faire capitalism. We do try the best we can. Some are just a little bit luckier or earlier than the rest of us, and so be it.

It made me just want to understand everybody without tripping out on my little trip of the warriors way, which is usually right there in front, and about healing and understanding and not about being mad at those engineers who



Homeless at home

By Bob Savage

cut down my little shade tree that used to sit on the top of the hill by the tracks behind Salvation Army.

Civil engineers done cut my shade tree down

Got no place to drink and smoke, no place to hang around

Good thing the city is getting in a jungle way

Ain't going to be no country if civil engineers get their way.

There have been a number of sweeps of campers in the area around the Gospel Mission. Many of those people are moving down to the river along the bikeway. There was a sizable grass fire there as well. Some of these happy campers are kind of green, but they'll learn. Across the river, Sherwood Forest is filled with old time campers. We don't get arrested over there too often, but the helicopters keep tabs on us. We are dangerous to ourselves as well. I've been attacked and would have been robbed, if I had HAD anything to steal. The deer are doing well as are the falcon, the egret and the coyotes. They seem to be getting along all right with the wild people. I'm beginning to think if I had a good bow and a few arrows, I might be able to eat some meat that isn't already part of a tamale pie (although, God bless THAT.)

Paula says Sunday a new school of Art

opened show at Caesar Chavez (Wino) Park called, "Sunday's Art in the Park." Some artwork was done and a good social time was had, followed by some good music. This is an ongoing event, and we hope to see artists and musicians bring their materials and "do their thing." This is the one we know about, but any old park will do. And if three come, can you imagine three people doing that? They might think it's a Movement!

Ernest Leroy King, a homeless man who has survived 30 strokes, has this to say to us. Go watch the Wizard of Oz. All Americans know it's a national disgrace when people are hungry and homeless. "They think they're right, but they're NOT right." And the President says he's giving power back to the States, but that ain't where it belongs. It belongs to the people. We are losing our human rights.

It's not a question of money, it's a question of survival on this planet." And this is where I remember movie land started to catch on. "You remember the Scare crow in the Wizard of Oz. You have got to have a HEART!"

Bob Savage has a camp on the American River. With his column, he hopes to reflect the feelings and experiences of homeless people.

Loaves

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I go to bed hungry, but I know I'm going to get a hot meal here. I can save part of that to eat at night, and I'm used to that.

She says, "I'm so grateful to have this, but I'm worried sick about next month."

Many have realized the threat of losing the one place where they feel accepted.

Paula, a homeless guest says, "Right here, all these people, me for one, have finally found a community."

Sunshine says, "I am trying to figure out where I can bathe, if I can't go to Maryhouse next month. When you're out here, you feel so dirty, the only way to get any relief from that shame and that horrible feeling is to take a shower. Then at least you have that."

Chatfield says, "One of the things our critics say is 'Homeless people are dirty,' but at the same time are putting us in a position where we are forced to close the showers. The city spent \$280,000 on that fence at Muir Park. If they had put that towards services for poor people..."

Chatfield hopes that the long term benefits of an August closing will outweigh the short term price.

"In the long term, the guests will benefit," he said. "It's like other things in life. If you look at just today and tomorrow, it looks pretty bleak, but if you look out a little bit, it's not as bad as it seems. I have never in my lifetime been so confident of what I just said."

Chatfield is hoping for a better Christmas donation season this year, to make up for the losses suffered during the lawsuit last season. Christmas donations will be put into an operating reserve fund to get through the slower summer season.

"Without a positive giving season, we will have to make some hard decisions about cutting back services," says Chatfield.

Homeless people are beginning to pull together in hope of protecting their last resources. One homeless man, a minister named Marvin Jensen, is laying groundwork for an organization that would allow the homeless community to organize fundraising efforts to return support to charities they depend upon.

Says Jensen: "With the downloading of more people into the poverty level, we need an insurance, a 'poverty trust,' that involves homeless people, to give them a proverbial olive branch, to support and augment our current charity system, and help provide for

the sustenance and shelter for those who are, for whatever reason, unable to manage these things for themselves."

Redevelopment plans have caused much of the spotlight on the industrial district where Loaves and Fishes is located. "The poor people have to be moved out," says Chatfield. When asked if they will move, he says, "The only way that's going to happen is over the dead body of Loaves and Fishes. We plan to improve the space that we have."

One term of the settlement calls for the formation of a task force to mediate future disagreements in helping the area's poor. "I just want to make sure that the members of this task force have the stature and prominence to make it work," says Chatfield. "It needs to have Bishops, heads of corporations, and top political leaders." He believes that a petty approach is not the answer. "Our vision of a task force is where the entire Sacramento community comes together and deals with the issues." Representing an institution which is named for growth according to need, he says, "Let's not destroy everything that tries to help, but, how can we do more?"

Christina Stock is coordinator of Homeward.

'One of the things our critics say is, 'Homeless people are dirty,' but at the same time (the critics) are putting us in a position where we are forced to close the showers.'

—LeRoy Chatfield, director of Loaves and Fishes



A woman and her child wait for lunch at Loaves and Fishes. Photo/Christina Stock

Miners' pans reveal delusions of 'golden grandeur'

By Rod Beaton

My great-grandfather used to invest in gold mining companies in the early part of the century. Many of the companies changed hands or just went out of business. My father used to joke about the worthless gold mining stocks we still have, but to some, like Richard White, who will be 51 in August, "Panning for gold is a serious fever. It took me two weeks to figure out what I was doing, but once I got my first nugget, I had the fever."

Marian Harkness, 41, has the fever, too. He left the Catskills in New York four months ago, to try panning gold for a living. So far, he thinks he's found close to an ounce of gold (approximately \$350), which amounts to about \$87 a month. He says he'll do better when he gets his dredger — a box that sucks up water, loose sand, and sediment, then rejects the undesirable material through a hose. Hopefully, as the material settles, it leaves the gold. The cost for a dredger is about

\$850, according to Frank Sullivan, who runs a Gold Mining and Scuba store on 21st and H streets.

I met Richard and Marian at the Salvation Army — more commonly known to the homeless as the Overflow. Marian had just gotten back from a gold mining expedition and was flashing his gold. I saw a metal detector sticking out of his backpack. He said he used it to look for gold. I asked him if he'd be interested in going again. He suggested Tuesday, April 1 — April Fool's Day! Was this a sign of things to come?

Richard said he would join us.

By 1:30 p.m. we were on the road in my '87 Camaro. Richard sat in the back with the wind in his face.

Maybe we'd strike it rich! Be on the news! Show off our gold! Get the envy of every woman! We might even have to buy a bank to vault our gold — mint our own gold coins — stamp our heads on them — hell, buy a country! Well, to say the least, I had dreams or delusions of grandeur.

Maybe we'd strike it rich! Be on the news! Show off our gold!

We got up there and the boys started to scan rocks. Marian found two rocks that sounded alarms of "grandeur." Richard laughed, and said they were probably just "hot rocks from the ice age." Marian was convinced that something other than iron was in the two rocks, so the rocks came back with us. We tried, and tried in vain to crack one of the rocks with a rock hammer. But all we got was frustration. Richard insisted it wasn't gold. But Marian was convinced. His "gold master" metal detector beeped loudly, suggesting something was in the rocks. The indicator didn't indicate "Iron," so it had to be gold — that's what we were looking for. End of trip. Right?



The author Rod Beaton, right, with Richard White.

Wrong...

It was about 5 p.m. when we found a spot overlooking the river, a half-mile away from the campgrounds. Richard and I got water from the river, while Marian set up the campsite in a secluded area in the woods. I needed water for my car radiator and Richard got water for the campsite. Coffee and

cooking. He was the cook on the trip. I was the driver.

I saw a woman leaving the river area with her panning equipment when we arrived. I asked her if she found anything, but she seemed very closed-mouthed about it.

Marian said, "Miners never say anything to people. They fear

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Home

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traffic on the nearby interstate I wondered what would happen next. My saving grace that night was the warmth of the truck stop locker room, where I tried to eat nap between drivers coming and going.

I survived that winter on a bowl of bean soup and a slice of corn bread a day. The kitchen manager allowed me that in return for taking out the trash at night. Occasionally, a moving van driver would hire me to load or unload furniture. I never made much, but it allowed me to flee the reality of my situation by escaping into a bottle. One day when the thermometer was hovering around zero, a maid who I had befriended from the adjacent hotel, was afraid I would freeze to death, and brought me an old electric heater. In order to get power for the heater I had to risk electrocuting myself by splicing a frayed old extension cord into the hot lines feeding the truck stop sign near my old van. That little heater wasn't much good in fending off the cold, but it kept me from freezing to death, and I managed to survive that winter.

Whenever I could, I tried to find work, but people just nodded and smiled a few times before they told me they couldn't hire me without an address. By mid-January, things were to the point where I was almost too weak to hitch hike or walk to Louisville to look for work. One extremely cold February evening

someone tapped me on the shoulder as I walked through the truck stop. It was a young lady who I had hired on the carnival the previous summer. I was so humiliated by my dirty unkempt appearance, I just turned and walked away. I didn't even speak to her.

Undaunted, she followed me, refusing to be ignored. She finally got me to talk with an offer of dinner and drinks.

For two days I stayed in her motel room. All it seems I did was eat, drink and sleep. The third day, she brought me a clean change of clothes from Goodwill, and drove me to one interview after another. The next day, I landed a job at a drum recycling factory for minimum wage. I was elated. We celebrated that night in the shabby tenement apartment she rented in Louisville. The next morning, she was gone. All I found was a note on the kitchen table saying the rent was paid for a week, and there were beans, potatoes, greens and some chicken in the fridge. She never said goodbye, and I never saw her again, but I will spend the rest of my life being grateful for her kindness.

I managed to pull myself out of poverty and self-defeating thinking that being homeless had immersed me in, and built a good life in Louisville, but I will never forget what it was like to feel totally worthless. Even tonight as I sit on my deck here in Sacramento, sipping a snifter of Merlot, listening to sweet sounds if Carlos Nakai's Native American flute and smoking a cigar, the sound of traffic on the freeway just beyond the apartment complex I live in

... most who find themselves homeless are without choice and simply victims of the economy or suffering from mental disorders or disabilities....

brings back those old demons.

Some people choose to be homeless. They see themselves as free spirits, while most who find themselves homeless are without choice and simply victims of the economy or suffering from mental disorders or disabilities, but that doesn't make them any less human.

In 1991, I again faced poverty and homelessness. An accident that should have taken my life, didn't. It left me disabled, penniless, and facing the cold hard realities I had tried so hard to forget. This time, I did something totally out of character for me, I asked for help. And I asked, and I asked until someone listened.

Nothing is for sure, especially in today's fast paced, high tech world, but at least I can see a light at the end of the tunnel. I still live with the of fear of losing it all and ending up out on the street again. Anyone who has

experienced being homeless lives with that reality. Ironically, it is that reality that has driven me to get an education, and to work with the disabled and homeless.

I've learned life is about living. It's about holding up your head while holding out your hand to help others. And it's about giving whatever it takes to make a difference. I don't have money to donate, but even if I did, I would still volunteer my time to help the disabled, disenfranchised, disempowered and homeless.

Like other disabled people, I am forced to live very carefully because I have very little money. Still, I invest my spare time and energy helping others. As a result, I have been found by a kind of peace I never thought existed. Being homeless takes more out of people than they have to give, yet when given a chance, most will find their way back into the real world. Life has tested them and they have survived. All people need is a hand extended in friendship. The rest will just happen.

I think the young lady who took time out of her busy life back in Clarksville to give me food and shelter as I struggled to get on my feet, would be proud. Because of her, I am able to be who I am today. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Mickey Jones is a nationally accredited honor student, and founded the Backdoor Institute of Disability Enabling and Resources, Inc. to empower disabled and disenfranchised individuals.

'Survivable' wage a key to ending homelessness

By Brett Tells

Unless one considers the option of getting a second job to support a first job, it would be logical to expect a person's regular/full-time employment to provide a survivable wage. Indeed, this expectation would be strongly in line with the work ethic, 'A fair day's pay for a fair day's work.'

The term 'survivable wage' as used here, means a wage which will provide for all of an individual's minimum

needs.

This article assumes that the employer will provide full medical, dental, and eye-care insurance coverage. If not, then the cost of purchasing such coverage should be computed and added in when computing a survivable wage—or, if you're willing, simply ignore it, and cross your fingers.

This article considers minimum needs to consist of the following:

Rent: \$380 (The difference from a low of \$330 for a studio apartment and a

high of \$425 for a one-bedroom apartment.) Source: Renter's Digest, No 707, April 3-30, 1997, 'Affordable Communities'

Household: \$40 (cleaning supplies, paper products, light bulbs, vacuum cleaner bags/belts, kitchenware, bedding, TV repair, furniture, etc.)

Utilities: \$50 (electric, gas, water, garbage)

Phone: \$15 (base rate plus a couple of calls)

Food: \$175 (monthly, plus one lunch out a week)

Clothing: \$70 (replacement of worn clothing/shoes, dry cleaning, washer/dryer—\$2 per load, three loads per week, detergent, bleach, fabric softener, stain remover, etc.)

Personal: \$20 (toothpaste, soap, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, razors, make-up, over-the-counter medication, vitamins, writing paper, envelopes, stamps, etc.)

Transportation: \$45 (Cost of one month bus/light rail pass)

Total: \$795

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Program helps moms deal with prison stay

By Peter LaRue

Incarceration is a sad and miserable experience. If the degradation and humiliation of arraignment and sentencing doesn't get you, then the separation from friends, society, and family will surely do the job. Some inmates come with the luxuries of money on the books, visits, mail, and phone calls, making jail is somewhat bearable. For those without such things, jail can be unadulterated hell.

It can be even more excruciating for women—especially mothers. Mothers miss their children horribly, and lack of news about what's going on with their children is nothing less than torture. While the problem of mothers in jail is a pressing concern for many, only Loaves and Fishes' jail program comes close to dealing with the specific concerns of mothers in jail.

Sister Maria Fitzgerald heads the jail visitation program. She is an intensely warm, attractive, middle-aged blonde with a giving, warm and bubbly spirit. Hailing from County Cork, Ireland, she came to America with a religious congregation, to work at a Catholic school in Globe, Arizona. She lived at the Holy Angel's Convent. In love with the perpetual sunshine, as well as the Hispanics and the Apache Indians from the surrounding desert community, and enchanting Indian reservation, she stayed there for roughly six years, ministering to the locals in the parish before returning to Dublin for four years to finish her studies. After four years of study and two years of teaching, she returned to Globe. Equipped with a strong sense of love and loyalty to God, she volunteered at

Loaves and Fishes, in time accepting the opportunity to lead the jail visitation program.

Let's talk about that special group of people who have dedicated their lives, not only to Christ, but to those who are less fortunate. To truly know the power of God, to take part in his glory, one is instructed to feed the poor and help free the oppressed. To accomplish this task requires far more than lip service. It takes an honest rapport with, and deep empathy for those worse off than yourself. This empathy can come only from God himself. Instead of confronting, accusing and blaming, we should instead learn the lost art of being sympathetic, loving and compassionate. What harm could there possibly be in this?

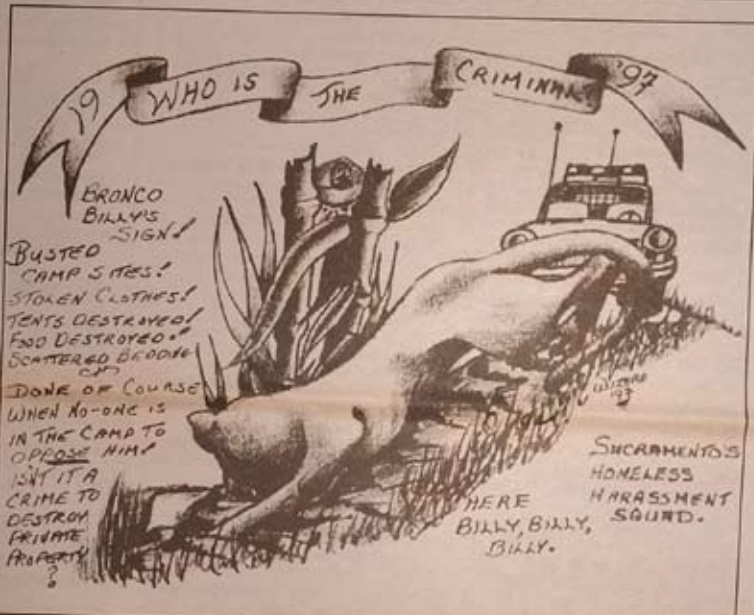
Sister Maria not only exemplifies these qualities, she lives them out daily. She makes her clients feel not only important, but loved, understood and accepted as well.

The predecessor to her program was "Delaney's," created long ago to serve inmates at Folsom Prison. Maria's program is similar but is dedicated to the needs of female inmates, who have more special and diverse needs as a mother.

Sister Maria and her volunteers attend to the needs of the vulnerable and emotionally worn mother. The Loaves and Fishes program offers mothers in jail an avenue to keep connected not only to their families, but to their children.

There are seven principles that the Holy Sisters all over the world are taught to live by. The principles are these:

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty



Editorial cartoon/Wizard

3. Clothe the naked
4. Visit the sick
5. Visit the imprisoned
6. Bury the dead
7. Shelter the homeless

These matters are of great importance, and Christ has asked us to do these things always. To do anything less is going against God. They are not done in a manner to make us look good, but to satisfy Christ's needs as our savior and protector. With the hearts of many growing increasingly cold in all sectors, crime rises, and those who view crime overreact in such a manner as to make it increase. There is such a feeling of powerlessness attached to the whole question of crime and punishment. Compassion and forgiveness has become almost non-existent in the arena of justice.

With the advent of the three-strike rule, many of our young

people are going away to prison for life, and most can't comprehend why. In jails, there is an eerie air of indifference and unforgiveness. Stuck in this evil morass, most inmates only learn to become better and heartless criminals.

A majority of prisoners are destitute, lacking resources inside or outside of prison walls. When they hit the bricks, they have no cash, no friends, no house, and all they receive on kick-out usually, is not much more than a paper suit.

This is where Sister Maria and her volunteers come in. They give inmates a sympathetic ear and a much needed link to the outside. They provide an inmate with a sense of worth and a feeling of hope and help promote confidence in individuals to help them recover and, it is hoped, become a productive member of society.

People matter—in jail, or not. There is a basic goodness and love instilled by God in the core of every human being, and tending to that need is exactly what jail visitation is all about.

People don't want things done for them, because eventually they come to resent this. What they respond to is support and understanding. It helps to meet people on their level, and not your own. This gives them confidence and lets them have the chance of attaining a little hope and faith.

It's the small things that really matter, like calling on the kids and relatives of a locked up mother, and telling them how much she misses and loves them. Women worry about and love their kids. They suffer the most in jail, and thank God Maria and her friends are there for our suffering brothers and sisters.

Poet's Corner

Friends

Many friends, I've
had this stay.
Then I had
To go away.

And on this day
I did return.
I look for them.
I have concern.

Most are here,
Trying still.
Not overcome
By others' will.

They live their life
A simple way.
Not for tomorrow,
Just for today.

Success to them
Is all they own.
The way of life
Is never shown.

To these I would
Not ever change.
Their happiness
Would ever stay.

— Ken Jones

Din Din Time

In the morning we assemble
Together one more time
To share a cup of coffee
and have a place to dine

We go and get our ticket
and make a crooked line
We'll set at oblong tables
And share our din-din time.

All of us have paid our price
Lost loves, Lost hopes or wishes
All we had is gone now
Thank God for Loaves & Fishes

Like the Flotsam and the Jetsam
On the seas of life we're tossed
So here we are together now
The lonely and the lost

Assembled now in brotherhood
The broken and the thrown-away
The sad and the insane
A few are all alone now
Not Dad or even Mother
The days and nights are oh so long
Thank God we've got each other

But each day we'll start anew
Together one more time
We'll help each other plan and scheme
And try life one more time

We'll hear each other's stories
And gladly add our own
For when the day is over
It's back to all alone

Unkept and sometimes dirty
But stronger than the vice
I'd never trade a single thing
For these friends of mine

It's almost time to go now
To walk our trails of sorrow
But it's ok, we'll be back
We've always got tomorrow

And tomorrow we'll assemble
Together one more time
We'll have a cup of coffee
And share our din-din time

— Timothy D. Donovan Sr.

Dual diagnosis: A singular event

He takes a drink
to rid himself
of phantoms
that whirl about his
eyes.

15 shots
hide dragon teeth
beneath layers of his mind
where they wait in semi-sleep
for a blood streaked dawn
to scream them
awake.

then sinking their madness
into his exposed neck,
heart,
soul.

Pain shoots across his day,
there is no blood
or wound
to place before
disbelieving medicals
who diagnose

dirty drunk
crazy bum
weak-kneed giver upper.

The paper files
are filled with his name,
City Clinic,
Crisis Center,
Mission Gospel,
County Jail,
Center Food

Closet,
8th hand clothing
for the naked fashion

unconscious
Last Stop Emergency
Medical Center
Where Silent Hearts
Cease Singing
Their Confusion,

Poormans Cemetery
for the broken
unnamed
misdiagnosed

dust
that was more
than duality.

— Phil Goldvarg

My Camp

I'd like to tell you
somethin' 'bout my camp
pay attention 'cause
I am the tramp
This is my home, though

The Invisible Man

I'd like to tell you a story...
About the invisible man. Not the one from the movies.
We've all seen him, he creeps down the alley, early in the
morning, picking aluminum cans from the dumpsters
for two or three dollars a day.

About the man in the leaky tent, with a moldy sleeping
bag, crying in the rain, 'GOD, I don't want to do this
anymore!'

About the man in the tent writing himself a note, 'You
are only HOMELESS, not hopeless or helpless'
...and knowing it was a lie.

About the man coming out of his tent in the afternoon
and climbing the levee for the only regular contact he had
with his family. Watching his 12 year old daughter run
around the track at 6th period.

About the man talking to his daughter a month later
telling her where he lived, how he got his money,
about standing in a line to pick up sandwiches.
She says, 'Oh, Dad, you mean you're a bum?'
'Yes, Sandra. Your dad's a bum,' he replies
and heads back to his tent, back to his bottle,
back to his needle.

About the closing down of options, the loneliness,
the despair. About willing to do anything at all to stop the pain.

About a plan to fill a backpack with rocks and go swimming.

But you see, it's no story. It's the truth. It's my truth.
I am the invisible man.

— Anonymous

It's a little damp
So open your mind
Come visit my camp

From top the mountain
You can see my camp
When we cross the field
Climb over the ramp

Now hike up the tree
Whew! We're at my camp
Hey! It's gettin' dark
I'll cut on the lamp

Do you like the view
The river, the camps
It's just like my Dad
It's just like my Gramps

I'm a homeless man
so I make a camp
So - c - e - t - y
Say I am a scamp

There's plenty of space
So you won't be cramped
Go tell Pete Wilson
This is where you camped

It's the fireplace
I am sure to tamp
I'm safe cause I'm not
Burnin' down my camp

Because mine is clean
toilet 'n a lamp
Bedroom 'n a hot tub

all in my camp

Now as you can see I'm
not the only one campin'
We can hear the noise
So the door I'm clampin'
Now you see the life
'n you see the camp
Let's call it a day
'n turn off the lamp

— Eddie Harris

Love Shot

Reacting to the provocation
of those television's eyes
looking to the nightbird
sing from perchtops
whose limbs reach out
to the star filled skies

Keeping watch over the members
of an emerging situation
calls of love surround as
in a twinkling of temptation
small signs appear like
flags amidst the terrain

Yet we cultivate our egos
and complain about surprise
institutions will come and go
but it's people that matter
as they enter into the flow

— Peter LaRue

Essays

Gastaway in a sea of misunderstanding

Exhausted and confused, I stand in a wasteland. Before me lies the ruins of my hopes and dreams, reduced to ashes. A life in disgrace. What the hell happened to me?

My thoughts turn to a time, a time I remember a very different world. They called me Chef and adorned my ears with compliments and praise of the delights I prepared for their enjoyment. Yes, only the very finest of fare was presented, only the finest.

It all seems so long ago. Where did I go wrong? Why am I here? There is nothing left of the life I once led. To find myself among these lost and forgotten people, where despair and frustration fills the air like a gray mist.

I see the others walk by. They look over, but say nothing, only shaking their heads. I am reminded of my own guilt of overlooking someone's need for a kind word or a helping hand. Only thinking, I have no time for this. Besides, I don't know them. Who cares anyway? Someone else will help them.

And now I wonder if oh God, was that me I walked by that day?

—Gary D. Gould

Trash

Often while riding our city light rail train between Alkali and Globe stations, I have felt shame, anger, frustration, and outrage at what I see. As we ride up and over the river and bike trail park area, I see myriads of clothes, household goods, car and bicycle parts, and even furniture indiscriminately cast about. All to view from RT for the city council, my brothers and sisters and me.

I'm confused by those who exhibit such behavior. This action shows an apparently unanimous and blatant ingratitude for services provided; services which already seem misused, but now are also cast away in disregard of an appropriate disposal of refuse.

Yes, That tent donation that you decided not to keep, after receiving it in good faith, if later you feel it's not good enough, remove it as simple courtesy.

This evidence of homeless people living in a squalor of possessions, serves to support the conclusion that further aid to such people only appears to be approval of further similar behavior. I myself, am a runaway of some

renown, and hold a long list of priors for an unorthodox, heartless existence by my fire. I recognize the fault in judging all homeless people by this display actuated by only a percentage of those living in this unsettled state.

Many people can exist in a normal lifestyle amid the same signs of dissipation, existing among some homeless frequented areas. People who are filthy in their own homes don't have to be seen, so it doesn't offend us.

I don't judge all home living people as worthless, degenerate, lazy ungrateful slobs because of the few I'm familiar with in my experience of getting paid to do what this homeless person considers everyday basic responsibility.

Much of this appearance of sloth is perpetrated by 'regular' occupants of the neighborhood.

This supports the powers of societal influence in their desire to remove difficulties regarding plans for areas of Sacramento—areas which have formerly been Regional Park areas, where people have 'camped' for centuries.

To anyone living a homeless lifestyle, long or short term, my wish is that more of us would realize how our behavior reflects on all homeless, those of us who need aid from places like Leaves and Fishes and St. Francis House. I also hope for more understanding by the more 'normal' members of the community, in regards to all homeless people. I hope you will not judge all (homeless people) as unworthy of assistance because of a few bad examples.

—Ricochet Rabbit

Situation

This is the first of four parts looking into the world of the homeless, with an eye toward long-term solutions to the many faceted problems of the individuals who suffer in this drab state of existence.

For the sake of time and space I will attempt to point out but a few of the very general causes of this dejected state of affairs, as I (from experience) have seen them to exist. The one undercurrent that is constant is despair, which is the result of a compound of discouraging experiences in one's life.

For instance, at all levels of our society there is a strong tendency to put people down. I.e. Down their efforts, belittle their efforts, which has an overall

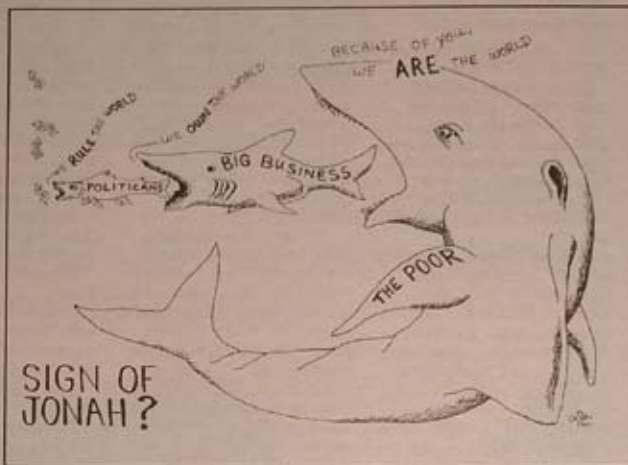


Illustration Lee Parks

dispiriting effect. Another instance is, how many times can one lose all they have worked for, until they have no desire to undergo the pain of that experience again? The causes to this end include a wide range of variables, though the end result is invariably the same. Up to this point the needs of these victims of our social order have not been fairly met. A majority of the programs we have are little more than stop gap, temporary 'band aid' type fixes to what is imagined by those self deluded individuals who have been in charge of such affairs.

Homelessness is not a new or temporary problem. It has existed since the dawn of civilization. Yet we prefer to think of it as something that has just recently become a problem. Therefore, any organization that would, (with good intention) attempt to assist these 'walking wounded' must first address these realities. Holding in mind the facts.

One of the most important factors in any type of healing is rest. Which brings us to the largest and most grievous lack in the life of the Homeless person. A place to lay one's head, to get a night's sleep, safe from the vagaries of weather, police, or the deranged.

To quote the Chinese leadership of recent time, 'the first right of the people is to EAT!'

With that statement, I fully agree. It

seems to me that our second right should be SHELTER.

Although in our society there lurks yet another social disgrace to wit: transference of guilt, or transference of responsibility.

It would raise one's hopes that at long last something is at least going to be talked about. In hopes that something of a more enduring nature may be accomplished. Since to date, there has been, 'little too nothing' done of more than that quick fix treatment of what is historically a chronic problem.

There must come forth, from 'we the people,' a means whereby the basic needs of our very poor may be met. A network of interactive facilities which would become by and large self supporting, even earn a profit, thus generating funding which would be applied to the support of a primary shelter program.

In light of the money the government has spent in the last 10 years, which has accomplished little, consider how much could have been done.

Thank God that there might yet be enough intellect and compassion remaining in the human race that we may take interest in and care of those who are at the low end of the ladder. Would you, could you give a hand to help someone else up?

—Rev. M. Jensen

'Yes, Virginia, many homeless people do work'

I'm writing this paper as a way to inform the so called, 'up standing working citizen' that homeless people do work.

Not all homeless people stand around waiting for handouts, but try and make a living through day labor and other odd jobs.

There are homeless people who don't get SSI, SSD, GA, Food stamps or any other government relief, but try and pay their own way.

Many day or spot labor employers are honest about what work there is to be done, and how much the job is going to

Letter to Homeward

pay (usually \$5/hour,) and that's fine if both parties are in agreement.

It's the other kind of employer I want to write about. The 'Joe upstanding working citizen' who exploits the working homeless. This kind of employer is the kind of employer who takes extreme advantage of a homeless worker's situation — Takes him on a job, works him like a dog, and then rips him off.

This kind of employer expects the

homeless worker to build his house, landscape his yard and tune up his car, all in one afternoon, for \$5 an hour. Now that case scenario is an extreme exaggeration, but the point is, there are employers out there who because of their own greed, help keep the homeless worker a 'Homeless worker'.

So, the next time you hire a homeless worker, please think about what I just said. Pay a person what he deserves.

And yes, Virginia, this homeless person works.

Ted

Articles printed in Homeward represent the view of the author, and are not necessarily the views of SHOC or SHA members.

Joining SHA
Annual Membership dues:
Individuals:
\$35 Standard
\$15 Low Income
Organizations:
\$50 Non-Profit
\$100 For-Profit
Send donations to:
Sacramento Housing Alliance
2125 19th St.
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 442-1198

Gold

Continued from page 4

you might try to mine their area or claim." So I let it go at that.

Richard cooked up some steaks that we got from the supermarket. Marlan and I tried to keep the campfire going with twigs and wood gathered from the area. Richard joked, "These steaks might even interest the lions and bears in the area."

I was more afraid of becoming an X-file. I could see it now: Scully and Mulder — FBI agents on the X-files — get called in to investigate three missing homeless people, who went panning for gold in the mountains in a sports car...Did they get abducted by aliens? Fall into a gold mine? Were they members of a secret society waiting for comet Halebob? Were they killed? Would anyone care? That's what I worried about. Marlan feared Bigfoot. He swears Bigfoot exists. Richard assured him, "Bigfoot never comes this far south."

At 6:30 I was up. Marlan finally woke up and despite a

slow leak in my right front tire, we managed to move forward with our plans to strike it rich. Marlan wanted to go where he found gold before, about 25 miles away along Highway 49. Richard and Marlan used the proper panning equipment, while I used a pan I got for 50 cents at an antique store. It was a baking pan, small, and not shaped very well for panning gold. To say the least I didn't find any gold with it.

Richard and Marlan had different techniques for using the same pan. Both found gold in the river, which was icy cold.

Richard said, "You have to dig around tree roots and under rocks — trees are notorious for catching gold."

Marlan said, "You have to get down to the black sand. Using water, you remove all the other material in a circular motion, breaking up the unwanted material with your hands. The lighter material will float to the top and leave with the water, while the black sand and gold fall to the bottom of the pan."

I didn't have much luck panning. I didn't even know what I was looking for in the

pan. Richard said, "You look for that color, and you'll know it once you find it."

In retrospect, on April 7th — our hopes of fame and fortune dashed, I took the two love stones to a gold mining store on H and 21st street. I showed one of the stones to Frank Sullivan, the owner of the store, who has been prospecting for 40 years, since he was 12 years old.

The biggest nugget he's ever found was half an ounce. He found it the same day he found 2-1/2 ounces along the Feather River.

He looked at the rock and said, "That's not gold, that's just a granite rock. There's no gold in it. Now if that rock was quartz, it might be a different story."

Bummer, I thought...as my last hope of fame dashed. Then a light popped on — I could write about this experience, and maybe I'll find gold in my writing.

Maybe.

Rod Beaton is a homeless person who was living in his car until it was recently repossessed.



Illustration/Wizard

Wage

Continued from page 5

Now, we should ask ourselves, "Is the minimum wage a survivable wage?" In order to answer this question, we perform the following computations:

Minimum wage: \$5.25 per hour
Gross wages/monthly: \$840 (\$5.25 multiplied by eight hours per day, five days per week, for four weeks)

State/federal taxes: \$176.40 (21 percent of \$840)

Net wages/month: \$663.60

Minimum needs per month: \$795

The answer is, "No." The minimum wage is NOT a survivable wage! So, using the above figures, a wage of \$6.30 per hour can be proven necessary for an

individual to meet all of his/her minimum needs, after taxes. We prove this with the following computations:

Gross wages/month: \$1,008 (\$6.30 p/hr times eight hours times five days times four weeks):

Taxes: \$211.68 (21 percent of \$840)

Net wages/month: \$796.32

All the above data, taken together, indicates a wage of less than \$6.30 is simply self-defeating.

The data included in this article is considered to be based on realistic minimums, and any unusual financial expenses suffered by an individual would result in unpredictable and disastrous circumstances. This suggests that a wage of \$7 or more per hour might be a more realistic model of a survivable wage (starting wage?), as this wage would provide a means to

meet some unseen or unexpected financial events.

Many possible expenses have NOT been considered in computing a survivable wage. Some examples are: automobile (financing, insurance, registration, license, gas, maintenance), cost-of-living increases, renter's insurance, birthday presents (relative, friend, or fellow employee), savings, entertainment, religious tithes/donations, further training/schooling, newspapers, hobbies, out of town trips, etc.

In the end, it is up to each and every individual to determine if any particular wage will meet his/her specific needs. However, this article should provide a model to allow an individual to realize what financial implications are suggested by any given

wage/needs ratio, as plugging in any given figures in to this model will allow one to extrapolate for specific situations.

The above data further suggests that, a wage below \$6.30/hour is best left to teens living at home, students who are being financially assisted by their parents/relatives, or to persons with a second income (retirement, disability, inheritance, lottery payments, state/federal grants/programs, the independently wealthy, etc.)

To increase one's awareness of the importance of a given wage, and as a mental exercise, it might be interesting to investigate any similarities, if any, which exist between an individual barely meeting his needs through employment, and a slave's situation. Freedom?

• **Homeward and The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee** would like to congratulate its first paid employees! Two stipend positions were offered for the Homeward staff, including SHOC office assistant, and supervisor of distribution. The office assistant job went to Robert Brassil Savage, and the distribution supervisor position will actually be shared by Roderick Beaton, and Helen Dodge. SHOC would like to congratulate these members of the committee and thank them for their hard work.

• **SHOC is organizing a sub-committee for lobbying** the city, county, state, and federal governments on behalf of the homeless community. If you are interested in joining this lobbying committee, SHOC meetings are held in Friendship Park on Mondays at 10:00

Notes and news

am. or call the Housing Alliance at 442-1198. No experience in lobbying is necessary.

• **Water Windsongs is a collection of original poetry** written by some of the finest contemporary writers in residence at Eskaton American River Manor. The anthology is an innovative work that captures the personal sentiment and expressions of creative poets traveling on the winds of introspective movement. Water Windsongs is the fourth anthology in a series of literary publications written by adults with psychiatric disabilities in the Adult Education Program at Eskaton American River Manor. The Sacramento County Library has included all of the

programs previous works in their Special Collections of Area Authors. The "touring company" of poets has been invited to perform at various community functions, including a reading before the Board of Supervisors, and are the recipients of several letters of recognition from Rita Dove, Poet Laureate as well as members from the community-at-large. The following poem was written by Rusty R.

Gazing

The walls shifted forward
between shadows
of blue and black.
Patterns
of light
flowed

through my soul
to my outer self
tracing my memoirs in Braille
until the season changed
into an onslaught
of heavy rain
cracking tinted mirrors
into fragments that split open
my mind and moved me into
a realm of rumbled smoke
and ice
that covered my
existence.
Then,
I awoke.

Rusty R. is enrolled in the Adult Education Program at Eskaton American River Manor. GAZING appears in Water Windsongs, a literary anthology published by the San Juan Unified School District.