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HOMeward

Serving the Sacramento area homeless community

November 1997

Volume One, No. 5

Winter overflow housing shelter to remain shuttered

County hopes to move more into transitional alternatives

This winter may be the worst ever for those depending on Sacramento's overflow shelter, due to the county's decision to not fund the overflow program. County officials apparently believe that transitional housing programs will move enough people out of overnight shelters to open up sufficient emergency beds. It is still unclear, however, whether there will be enough emergency shelter beds this winter without help from a county funded emergency program.

"Our motto is, shelter forever, and not just for tonight," says Jan Galloway, Program Manager for the Homeless and Disability Program. She believes the county has made the right decision.

"The County has worked really hard to provide enough transitional beds for homeless people in the community," she says. "We've added 450 transitional beds," says Galloway. "What we hope will happen is that people will move more quickly from shelters into transitional programs."

Providers are working to get eligible candidates into programs such as the Mather Community Campus and Quinn Cottages before winter. "We're trying to get another 50 people in before Christmas," says Leo McFarland of Volunteers Of America. Mather Community Campus has many spaces open for singles and limited space for families. Applicants must come to the program on a referral basis.

The county has worked really hard to provide enough transitional beds for homeless people in the community. We've added 450 transitional beds.

— Jan Galloway,
homeless program manager

Quinn Cottages began taking its first applications last month. With 60 cottages available, 200 applications have been turned in, and there is already a waiting list of 200 to apply.

Those on waiting lists for programs and many who are ineligible still depend on emergency shelter. "The majority of these beds have requirements that the typical homeless person does not meet," says John Hammit, administrator of the Salvation Army. People with serious untreated mental illness, or untreated drug and alcohol habits are not candidates for transitional housing. Chris Hartmire, director of Loaves and Fishes' Friendship Park, says, "It's not like they're going to decide to change that habit overnight because it's raining."

With county funds directed toward rehabilitative programs, the winter emergency shelter budget is considerably lower than last year. This year's \$80,000 budget may be invested in a program to give hotel vouchers to those in need, or a smaller, alternative site to last year's \$500,000 Cal Expo program may be found.

The Cal Expo shelter provided 272 beds. An average of 140 were used nightly, although there were nights when 40 additional persons slept on the floor.

"We as a provider are going to continue to



Photo Christina Stock

The winter overflow shelter provided 272 beds for local homeless, many of whom suffered from serious, untreated mental illness or drug abuse.

Please see WINTER, page 2

National Hunger and Homelessness Week

November 16-22

Monday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Loaves and Fishes Friendship Park: TB testing, flu shots, health screenings, Breaking Barriers' Health Fair.

Wednesday, Nov. 19, noon to 3 p.m., Capital Park: Two-day event-rally and vigil.

Thursday, Nov. 20, noon to 3 p.m., Capital Park: Two-day rally/vigil (continued); 9 a.m. to noon, Friendship Park: Guest Health Outreach, flu shots, TB test results.

Downtown SROs

Is hotel housing alternative an endangered species?

From staff reports

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency is reportedly coming up with plans to make it easier for downtown, single room occupancy residential hotels, commonly known as "SROs," to be torn down or converted to other uses.

The policy change is a response to concerns that many of the SROs located on or

around K Street Mall are unprofessionally managed and a drag on the market. While housing advocates share the concern that poorly managed and maintained SROs are bad for residents and the community, they are equally concerned that a move to erode the supply of downtown SROs will increase homelessness. SHRA is seeking a policy which will require replacement housing that is well managed

and with services for special needs populations elsewhere in the city and county, but advocates fear that without new money set-aside for this purpose, and without comparable housing downtown, the policy will result in failure for poor downtown residents and downtown businesses alike.

Traditionally seen as a needed source of permanent housing for very low-income persons, many

Please see SRO, page 2

Winter: Providers promise emergency shelter available

Continued from page 1

pursue this," says Hammitt. They have responded to the county's decision by submitting a proposal for a limited emergency program for women and children this winter, with a back up proposal for men. "We'll find a site if the money becomes available, and work through the political processes to find a place for homeless people this winter."

Providers are looking at ways to expand their own facilities to compensate for the lack of a County funded shelter.

Hartnire says, "If there is no emergency shelter available this winter, we will do something...whether

it has to be here, or a warehouse somewhere." Salvation Army will provide a patio with mats on the floor. "We are looking at a space that will accommodate 14-20 women and children," says Hammitt, "not fully enclosed, but it will offer some modicum of comfort from the elements, and we will of course feed them."

With recent mild weather, waiting numbers are not yet high, and it is hard to get an accurate idea of what the need will really be this winter.

"There really aren't a lot of beds, says Hammitt. "Winter always brings in more people." Right now there is an average of five to 10 people on their

"We fear there will be people out in the cold and the wet, unless there is an emergency overflow shelter. I would love to be wrong."

Joan Burke,
Maryhouse director

waiting list. An average of 60 people are on a waiting list during winter.

Joan Burke, director of Maryhouse day shelter for women, says, "There is a possibility that it will be a very severe winter, and we fear there will be people out in the cold and the wet, unless there is an emergency overflow shelter. I would love to be wrong. The time to close our emergency shelter is when no one needs it," she said, "when its door is open, but nobody comes."

On Dec. 2, supervisors are scheduled to hear reports from their staff on the homeless situation in Sacramento. Those interested in homeless issues are urged to attend.

SRO

Continued from page 1

of the elderly, disabled, and non-transient long-termed city residents. SROs fill an important niche in the market for affordable housing. For many residents, SROs, often considered "last rung housing," located between the cheapest rental housing and the streets, are the last bulwark against homelessness. The city itself has acknowledged this reality. In the most recent draft of the city's Housing Element, which is intended as the blueprint for meeting the current and future housing needs for all city residents, the city has proclaimed the importance of SROs and identified SHRA as a leader in preserving and rehabilitating these units and in efforts to support proposals for new SRO construction.

So how to account for the desire to shift policy? According to staff, the shift is based in purported changes in the SRO tenant profile. The perception is that, until recently, SROs were occupied primarily by low-income elderly folks living on fixed incomes. In contrast, today's residents are seen as younger

with greater incidence of substance abuse and mental illness. And this new generation of SRO residents is accused of generally creating a bad downtown business environment. For example, one K Street Mall merchant interviewed by a local television station referred to the SROs as "heroin hotels." Among the reported "building blocks" for the new SRO policy is the belief that SRO housing is often little more than transitional, and that tenants typically are mentally ill, drug and alcohol abusers, and socially maladaptive. This is the basis for the proposal that replacement housing should contain special services related to these problems.

In any event, hostility to the presence of SROs and their residents downtown is nothing new. Moreover, differences in tenant profiles real or imagined have had no relation to downtown interests' zeal for razing SROs. In 1960, there were approximately 78 residential hotels in the downtown area, providing 3,558 housing units. By 1980, all but 15 of the SROs had been demolished or converted to commercial uses, leaving only 988 units. During the same period, only two new

residential hotels were built in the downtown area. Today, 14 hotels remain.

SHRA staff are struggling to write a policy proposal which answers the concerns and perceptions of downtown business interests but which also will provide alternate, affordable housing for typical SRO residents. But affordable housing advocates recognize that process as fraught with uncertainty. Without concrete commitments to "no net loss" of units including SRO rehabilitation and new construction in locations that are convenient to residents' transportation, employment, social, and other services needs, replacement requirements will not be successful. And without housing downtown that is affordable to current SRO residents and others in the same economic situation, a new wave of homelessness may erupt and result in even more hostile anti-homeless sentiment on the part of downtown business interests. Such a situation would further frustrate efforts to develop a viable plan for a downtown that is welcoming for both business and residents of all income levels, a characteristic which is the hallmark of other "successful" downtowns in the US.



Photo: Marlene Schmitz

In 1960, there were approximately 78 SROs in the downtown area. By 1980, the number had been reduced to 15.

Reader recalls time when SROs were a handy alternative

Recent stories in various local papers about the hotels downtown (now called SROs—single room occupancy in bureaucratize) have brought to mind how it was when I was younger. It used to be all a person had to do was walk in and lay his money down, for a night, for a week, what ever he could afford, and he had a room and was off the street.

Some 15 years ago, I arrived in a town in another part of the country with only a few dollars. It wasn't long before I heard of a boarding house (are

Homeward forum

there any of those here?) where I was able to rent a bunk in a shared room for \$20 a week. That was about all the money I had, but before the week was out, I had a job out of the labor pool that lasted four years. I never was on the streets or collected welfare in that town. Times have changed. Nobody can get a room now without going through credit checks and employment checks, etc, that used to apply only to those who were buying a house. The local law

makers have written so many rules and regulations regarding hotels and boarding houses that it has become too expensive a business for most people, except motels which are all expensive. And if you need an inexpensive place to live, you must turn to rent support from some government agency. If you pass all the legal hurdles to get it, these agencies all imply that there must be something wrong with you because you are poor, and you ought to get into some program or another. In the meantime, while going through all these hoops, you're on the streets going from mission

to mission hoping for a bed. They are all brow beating you with the message that there must be something wrong with you, also.

I think the biggest wrong is all these government agencies trying to blame the victims of a failing economic system. What they want is for men to give up their liberty, which is freedom of choice, in exchange for material security. All one has to do is be willing to take the blame and march in step down the road to poverty of the many, for the welfare of the rich.

— Anonymous

This free spirit willing to trade security for independence

Yesterday my buddy from the camp down on the river told me they had been rousted out by the cops which has been happening to a lot of people down there and which I daily expected myself, before moving up to G dorm. They are going to begin bulldozing down there, and have already started cutting down trees, and affecting the egrets, the falcons, the deer, and other wildlife. No doubt they'll mow down the old growth cottonwoods and the beaverteeth around them will all go, and a little piece of the real America will once more fall before the onslaught of the soulless, heartless money grubbing ignorant greedy locusts who are gobbling up the physical and mental and spiritual landscape of this nation.

One of the bravest and most fatalistic things that homeless people do is insist on their right to be free spirits. This is not an indulgence. By their works ye



Homeless at home

By Bob Savage

shall know them, and if you look at the world as interpreted by all these persons of good intentions who are themselves manipulated by the money people and the police, people you find that with all

their work ethic and view of how the world ought to run it is falling down.

Homeless people are for the most part, inherently gentle people being pushed to the wall. They are castigated to take the heat off the real enemy. In Sacramento here, the regular downtown real home people are getting pushed out, too, by all these corporations and the people who got their jobs out of construction and never learned how to do anything else. But it's not the homeless people who are doing that. The homeless people are just the messenger of bad news. They always try to kill the messenger (old tradition.)

I hope you can keep your mind free to hear what people are really saying beneath the inadequacy of their words (including me), that we in some ways are very proud of ourselves for not knuckling under the System and have kept our true American values, whether or not people call us "addicts" or whatever, the profile of rebellion in addicts has another side,

the Pitiful Revolution I call it when I see a bum sitting down there on the curb with his brown paper bag hiding a bottle. He is saying THIS IS MY VOTE. You ask me why I don't work. How can I work when the sky's so blue. And those words (to the old Wobbly song) mean "I am a spiritually free person. I pay an awful price, but can you say the same thing about yourself?"

And while I endeavor in AA and through Jesus and through Native Ways of Worship to turn control of my life over to a Higher Power, I have reserved my own personality and perceptions for my own writing, a little island of Jeffersonian democracy in a sea of information and therapy as well, or as the Old Boy said, "To thine own self be true" (granted he had Polonius say it) and mainly what America is supposed to be all about to reserve the integrity of me as an individual, just as I am, Lord, just as I am.

Local homeless artists have a full palette

There's a lot of things brewing with the homeless artisans over the next few months. The Sacramento Housing Alliance is sponsoring an art show to be held at the Shasta Hotel. The date has not been set yet but it's in the works and it looks like the show will be open for Christmas sales. That is not much time so anyone wanting to enter this show should get their art ready.

I'm still looking for paintings, sculptures, etc., that depict street life, especially the true crimes committed by Bronco Billy against our people.

You can register for this show by bringing your art to Art Clay any weekday morning until noon at Loaves and Fishes Friendship Park on North A street or drop it off with Birte at the library at the park. While in the library, check out the art work on the back wall.

— By Art Clay

National Hunger and Homeless Week

Nov. 16-22 is National Hunger and Homelessness Week. SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee) has a

Notes and news

two day event planned at Capitol Park. The Homeless Artisans will be there with a protest tepee. We will peacefully protest the laws that make homelessness a crime.

The event will be Nov. 19 and 20. If you wish to join us at the protest, let Art or Birte know or just show up. Just look for our tepee. All are welcome.

Historic homeless newspaper conference held in Seattle

The founding conference of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) was held in September in Seattle, Washington. The Sacramento Housing Alliance sponsored several "Homeward" writers to attend the conference.

Attendees included Stacie Clary, Susan Oliver, Marvin Jensen, Peter LaRue, Christina Stock, Rod Beaton and Lisa Smith. Each of the 80 delegates from the U.S. and Canada were involved in workshops, decision making and elected a diverse representation to carry the

work forward.

All participants were involved in the creation of the NASNA Mission statement, which is, "to support a street newspaper movement that creates and upholds journalistic and ethical standards while promoting self-help and advocacy among North America's homeless and people living in poverty."

From Sacramento, Susan Oliver and Marvin Jensen were selected for the Permanent Steering Committee for NASNA, and Jensen was elected to the Executive Committee by members of the PSC.

News of the conference was on NPR and articles appeared in the LA Times and Seattle Post.

We also heard from Walt Crowley, an activist who helped found the Helix, an underground paper published in the late 1960s. Crowley spoke on the important role of street papers in the renewal of authentic urban pressy.

Loaves and Fishes forum

Loaves and Fishes' public forum was held Oct. 16 at the Blue Diamond Plant, on the issues of providing meals on

Sunday and the use of a trailer in Friendship Park. Loaves and Fishes was required to sponsor the mediated forum as part of the lawsuit settlement between them and the city. Petitions were presented with over 500 signatures stating that the signatories depended on the Sunday meals in order to get any food for themselves and their families on that day. Testimonies were also given that the services by Loaves and Fishes — the Sunday meals, the housing program out of the disputed trailer, as well as all the others — were necessary for their well being. Speakers testified that the needs of Sacramento's poor cannot be overlooked in favor of businesses and housed neighbors, and they also testified that the irresponsible acts of a few cannot be justification for denying food and services to all who need them.

Walter Mueller, a supporter of the lawsuit against Loaves and Fishes, set the tone for the forum by speaking of ending the "bashing," and the beginning of both sides to work together to find common solutions. Few of Loaves and Fishes opponents attended the forum to speak.

Homeward staff

Editor: Christina Stock
Copy editing, layout: Matt Peters
SHOC president: Eddie Harris
Office: Bob Savage
Distribution: Rod Beaton
SHA director: Stacie Clary
Editorial committee: Cliff Crooks, Helen Dodge, Crazy Horst, Marvin Jensen, John Legge, Ellen Ostergren, Lee Parks, Paula, Bob Savage, Geoff Seal.

Welcome to Homeward: Please feel free to make a contribution

"Homeward" is a publication of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), which is a part of the Sacramento Housing Alliance.

Homeward's mission is to publish a newspaper for the homeless so that communication and concerns of and about the homeless are presented in a way that increases public awareness through education, involvement, and encouragement of our

community about this segment of our population. It hopes to alleviate miscommunication by providing a dialogue between disparate communities. It also serves as a creative outlet for homeless people.

Our committee meets at 10 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at Loaves and Fishes. We welcome any participation or contributions.

Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted to the Sacramento Housing Alliance or given to Birte in the library

at Loaves and Fishes.

We would like to thank the Vanguard Foundation for the grant that funds the committee.

Introductory subscriptions to Homeward are available with a \$10 contribution. A one-year subscription is offered with a \$50 annual membership to the Sacramento Housing Alliance. Make checks out to SHA.

All correspondence can be sent to Homeward, 2125 19th St., suite 101, Sacramento, CA 95818.

For information call 442-1198.



'The kids' Summer Handbook' good for adults, too

You might ask, "What the heck do kids and summer have to do with homeless adults in the winter?" Answer: Limited funds and outdoor activities.

I've found myself quoting this book many times in the last several weeks so I thought I should do a book review on it. 'The Kids' Summer Handbook,' written by Jane Drake and Ann Love (1994) is jammed pack with useful information and projects you can make for free or very cheaply.

Make sand candles from string and old crayons; a crayfish trap using two one-quart plastic net berryboxes; a snorkel from horsehair (the plant, please, and wait for summer for this one); a hand-paddled raft from three car tire inner tubes, a board and 32 feet of nylon rope; a diving raft from a sheet of plywood, wood planking (to frame the floats), wood screws, marine paint, rope, a heavy rock (for an anchor) and empty, sealed small

Book review

By Paula

barrels (illustration shows six barrels) or left-over Styrofoam insulation. (For this item, included is a section titled "Eco-watch" stressing the importance of not buying new styrofoam for the project because of the harm manufacturing styrofoam does to the environment.); a waterscope from a large plastic container, clear plastic wrap and a strong rubberband; a vegetable garden ("Eco-watch" suggests chemical free gardening); a mini-composter from a laundry basket; intruder alarms from five tin cans, string and 15 pebbles; a campfire ring; a simple reflecting telescope from a curved shaving mirror, small flat mirror and a magnifying glass (point the shaving mirror away from you at the moon, hold small mirror ahead of large mirror, catching the first reflection.

There's more!
Besides the projects
there is gobs of
information.

View small mirror with magnifying glass); a backpack from a pair of old jeans; wild anacis (spread mashed berries on a tray and let dry several days for fruit rolls); natural rope or string from cedar bark; a lean-to; starting a fire without matches (choose a piece of glassy stone (quartz, agate, jasper or flint) with sharp edge; strike with iron pyrite (fool's gold) or steel); a bead loom; knotting beaclets; plant fabric dies; plant weaving; claywork ("a cool, smooth, easy to mold kind of mud is probably clay"); Rock Art (trail sculpture and rock

painting); whittling a whistle from a stick; various knots and stitches. Whew! (And I've only named a few).

There's more! Besides the projects there is gobs of information. Some of the "Nature Watch" information can provide survival hints. For example, "Natural Weather Reports: When foul weather is coming birds fly low and line up on wires, fish bite, flies bite, ants travel in lines, pinecones close, dandelions close and milkweed pods close."

I hope I've included one or more ideas from the book that might spark your interest. If not, look through the book. I wouldn't doubt you'd find something that could be a benefit to you. You can find this book in the Sacramento Public Library (call letters J790.1992). It's located downstairs in the kids section of the downtown library. Watch out! There's a some real professional kids down there. Try to blend in. Give that inner child of yours some time.

There are many misconceptions regarding homeless

By Demetrick Brown

Over the last few years I've heard some outrageous stories, but the one I heard last week floored me. While talking to some friends who write for this newspaper, I was showed a statement by a private security officer who said 75 percent of Leaves and Fishes clientele were involved with illegal actions, which is a sure sign that Sacramento's public

Opinion

and private sector has a vast hatred for the homeless population.

From the beginning, the people and business knew what Leaves and Fishes was for: to help people get back on their feet, but now they want us gone with cuts to programs and harassment from all sides. The homeless population not only here but elsewhere are

under attack by the police, guides (Bumble Bees) and the governor's office. I've been stopped by cops for no other reason than for being homeless. Oh sure, sometimes if you're lucky they'll give you a BS reason like you look like someone we're looking for and so on. However, the guides are outright harassing the homeless on the K Street Mall. I'm the first to admit that there are some problems, but to blame it on the homeless

population is a copout. People, the vast majority of the homeless at Leaves and Fishes, are just trying to get back on their feet and on with their lives. So the next time you hear someone say the homeless are a bunch of lazy drug using lowlifes that live where they are, stop and think and even maybe talk to some of us. And I know you'll find that through a stroke of misfortune it could be you and yours. And ask what can be done to make

things better. Hiding, moving or jailing the homeless is not going to make it go away, neither is pretending we don't exist going to help. All Leaves and Fishes is doing is giving a handup, not a handout.

Demetrick Brown was homeless in Sacramento streets, became a resident at the Salvation Army, now has his own downtown studio apartment and is continuing his education.

Drop-in church opens door to new home for ex-junkie

By Peter S. Lopez
(Part one of two)

Thesis: To have a home is to have a safe, secure and sane time-space-place for your stuff where you can grow and develop your natural talents, a sanctuary from the concrete jungle and its lions, tigers and bears.

In my past-life, I had a home, sweet, home. Cozy, comfortable and cushioned by the personal effects of my earthly belongings — my stuff, my toys and my so-called pets (my white male snow dog, Tao or 'The Way' and Yin-Yang, my brother-sister pair of cats). I had a good-paying job with the Redevelopment Agency, my office keys, cubicle, desk, computer, multi-line phone and business card. My tender old love, sweet days and soft nights. No big problems, no major concerns. At least, on the surface, though, underlying issues that triggered into homelessness were brewing. Life was good, love was fair, been there, done that. Indeed, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

Sure I was a good social drinker, but I was a functional drunk, put in my 40-

First person

plus hours as a wage-slave to help keep the economy going. It was all good, but it got all bad. I remember a scary Halloween: lots of laughs, fell off the wagon on a drunken binge, got fired from my job for alleged insubordination, I was unemployed, but my beer mug was full. Then, I did a long thick line, drank see of aged wine, felt so fine in the 'rush' to bizarre-o'-land. Life for me was an on-going party of sex, music and drugs. Eventually, I got evicted, moved in with my pretty neighbor and then we both, with her two children, moved across the tracks. One drunken evening she cut out with her purse and left me to care for the children. Nowadays, the children are safe with blood relatives and their Mom, last I knew, was still MIA (Missing In Action) partying.

There I was, wheelin' 'n dealin' in the lowlands of Del Paso Heights. Gradually, oh so gradually, line-by-line, step-by-step, I got spun out of orbit as a spaced-out satellite, lost power and crash landed in 'the dope house.' Day became night, night

I wandered into
Calvary Christian
Center on Del Paso
Boulevard, got
baptized and adopted
it as my 'home
church,' but 'the dope
house' was right
behind it...

became day — it did not really matter because my flash point was the shiny needle-tip dope squirt and my focal point was the 'lecha' (arrow) in my sore arm. The typical concept of time itself became irrelevant. At a given crossroads of life, one crucial decision can set you up into other critical decisions deviated by rapidly decreasing options.

I wandered into Calvary Christian

Center on Del Paso Boulevard, got baptized and adopted it as my 'home church,' but 'the dope house' was right behind it on Branch Street. I wandered by 'to visit only' that Sunday after church, got cranked up until that rainy Thursday of June 15, 1995 when, as rain wet my face, I was brought to my senses. I put on my backpack, said, "Catch ya' later!" to my noddin' accomplices, opened the door and walked away without looking back on the trail of tears, fears and smears behind me. I walked on!

Antithesis: Street homelessness is to be without a safe, sane and secure home; to be thrust outside into the streets in order to face both natural and unnatural environmental elements. Barely existing from hand to mouth on a day-to-day basis with no place to call home, no place for your stuff, no place to lay your weary head and no relief in sight. Hopeless and homeless.

From the 'dope house,' after my five-day run in concentric circles, I staggered down the dark street and hid in a field of debris and weeds by a drainage ditch.

Please see CHANGE, page 6

Who is responsible for plight of the underpaid?

In recent years we have witnessed a large number of events called recessions, corporate downsizing, and the loss of a great many manufacturing and industrial jobs. This was called, if I recall correctly, something like increased "fiscal responsibility." All of this so called "good stewardship" led to the displacement of many people. Many of these people have lost their homes which they were buying back from the banks or mortgage companies, finding themselves virtually destitute with only part-time jobs of low pay. Some tried working as many as three or four jobs in attempt to be "responsible" for their families. And it almost worked. The following is a typical American story.

Joe and Mary were working 16 hours a day, but it was too much. They found they needed something to keep them awake. Coffee was not doing the trick any more. Joe and Mary began asking their peers in the working realm, "How do you do it?" Al says there is this guy he knows who has some pills that do the trick for him. So Mary and Joe decide, what the hell, there are bills to be paid and little sisters need braces. Off they go. But then, Joe suffers a heart attack, and cannot work. Mary fears she must leave Joe and go get welfare for her and the kids, so they can eat. She really does love Joe and does not want to leave. So they decide that they will start selling those little white pills and, maybe, a little pot. Then they might have enough money so they won't have to break up the family.

Life seems better as Joe is recovering and the bills are getting paid. Oh, yes, there are a few things they can not tell the kids but at least the kids have new clothes and little Debbie has her braces. Then one night there is a knock on the door. Debbie runs to answer. The door opens wide and in rushes a SWAT team who seize Joe, Mary, and the kids. All go to different "facilities," never to be reunited.

End of family, end of America dream. Beginning of America nightmare. The names used are fictitious but the scene is quite real. Scenes like this are becoming as American as apple pie, though not as tasteful, and can be attributed to a break down in the American system. We have a multitude of prisons full of Joes and

Essay

Marys. There are foster homes full of children seized by the authorities at the cost of untold billions. Wouldn't it be a better use of that change to aid under employed workers so they might not have to go the route of Joe, Mary, and their family? Who is responsible? No one from Washington on down wants to be pointed out or will admit any responsibility.

Our government boasted that it tricked the U.S.S.R. into spending itself into collapse in the arms race. Well we overspent ourselves, too, to the point of even taking the retirement monies that were paid in to Social Security and robbing our own population. The government simply broke the piggy bank of the elderly and disabled, the dependent children, etc. Now our government is telling, in quite ambiguous and "politically correct" terms, that, in effect, we have been ripped off of our retirement and that since they (our own government) did the ripping off there is nothing that they can do for us other than rip us off again and again. Of course, we must pay the bill because ripping us off is an expensive affair.

The point that we should be looking at is: Has our government, with its ever-expanding police courts and prison system (the most expensive on earth) tricked itself into spending the U.S. into oblivion?

With the huge expense of putting all of these BAD Americans in prisons, the cost of police, courts and prison operation which has been afforded at least in part (either directly or indirectly) by funds taken from Social Security. By the GOOD American. Is that really what grandma wanted done with her retirement funds? Has our government become so lost in its own convoluted possibly corrupted ways that it now takes from the elderly? Moneys set aside by and for our peoples! And instead now spend them on projects which in light of real fact actually destabilize our people's security? Have we or they lost sight of the fact the nation is the people? And a displaced people become a displaced nation.

I would ask that you the reader ponder



Homeward Illustration Lee Perks

these issues, the state of affairs of our nation. Consider how these moneys which are being spent on punishing our America, might be better spent helping them to realize a dream like Joe and Mary's without having to resort to illegal pursuits.

Also to our government, I would say that you make more enemies with punishment than with aid. More Americans will be loyalistic when it is easier to live that very real "America dream." Remember that America is a land that is set forth for "we the people."

This being so, let us join together to solve our differences, instead of making more! Let us put our trust in "God and country" as did our forefathers. And when our government and men of government fail us, then let us seek God and the men of God. Which we have guaranteed rights to do under the first

amendment of our constitution which reads as follows:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abjudging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

This is part three of a four part essay on homeless and poverty stricken Americans and so meant to illustrate that a few on the mitigating conditions which do lead to these conditions. This piece was written with a rail road underpass for shelter on a hot August day. When the writer was too weak and sick to travel. Wishing he had something to eat the second day of wishing that wish. Thank God for water and a place to rest.

— Rev. M. Jensen

Here are six easy ways to catch a cold or flu

After a weeks-long reprieve, the cold and wet looks like it is finally here to stay. This is the time of year when extra precautions must be taken to help ward off all those nasty little (and not-so-little) bugs. However, for those who aren't as concerned, here are six ways to improve the chances of coming down with something

1. Make sure your immune system is a little haywire. Avoid vegetables and fruit (especially citrus.) If you think 500 mg to 1,000 mg of vitamin C a day helps you prevent colds, don't take it. Do not get 30 minutes of daily exercise. Fill your life with unnecessary activities so that your stress level reaches new heights. Give

humor the heave. Limit sleep to five or six hours a night.
2. Smoke cigarettes. Smokers are more prone to viral infections, and more apt to pick up secondary bacterial infections (which demand doctor's visits and antibiotics).
3. Hang out with a crowd. Stand in long lines. Sleep in shelters. If you are homeless,

there aren't many choices. Many homeless people get used to what they affectionately call 'the hack.' You can avoid the crowd by sleeping on the street by yourself, and trade the flu for pneumonia.
4. Don't wash up. Using handrailings, picking up a phone, or touching a doorknob can transfer live cold and flu

viruses onto your hands. Don't disturb the germ's breeding grounds by washing up.

5. Rub your eyes, nose, and mouth frequently. This is one of the most effective ways of helping a live cold or flu virus make its way from your hands into your bloodstream.

6. Don't get a flu shot. Hey, you're tough. Take your chances. If you're laid up for the holidays, don't worry. There's always next year...

GA cuts put hundreds of homeless at risk

Sacramento County has joined the growing national trend of balancing its budget by withdrawing support from residents who need it the most. This summer, the board of supervisors approved the termination of the "potentially employable" category for General Assistance (GA) recipients; opening the doors for the possibility of over 1,500 people to lose the only financial support they have.

In August 1996 Sacramento County changed its GA policy to limit "employable" recipients to only three months of benefits in any 12-month period regardless if they have found jobs or not. All recipients are presumed employable unless otherwise determined. At this time, the County created a category for "potentially employable" persons; these people face barriers to employment such as physical, mental or functional limitations, lack of education, age or lack of work experience. The county's belief is that this group of people can become employable through employment services, appropriate vocational rehabilitation and/or other treatment and services. This group of recipients has continued to receive benefits while receiving services and was not subject to the three-month limit.

However, after only one year of this program, the county is planning to reevaluate all 1,587 cases of potentially employable recipients with the possibility that hundreds of these cases will be reclassified as "employable." When this happens, those people will only have three more months of benefits before their sole source of income is cut off — whether or not

they actually have found employment. During the reevaluation process, work experience, educational levels and moderate medical and/or mental health limitations that do not "functionally preclude employment" will not be considered when making the determination.

Examples of "moderate" limitations would be: chronic, mild depression; personality disorders; chronic back and joint pain; or severe allergies. People with medical and/or psychiatric barriers make up at least half of the potentially employable caseload. Close to 40 percent of the caseloads do not have a high school diploma; considered almost essential for any type of job these days.

Hundreds of people in this category are at serious risk for homelessness, if they are not homeless already. At a meager \$166-221 per month in GA benefits, obviously they cannot save for the impending loss of income. GA is the income of last resort, so evictions would seem imminent.

Sacramento County has not learned (or does not care to learn) from other regions' experience that GA cuts lead to more homelessness, not to more employment. While proponents of GA cuts assert that those losing benefits will find jobs now that they are no longer getting money for nothing, studies show that the cuts actually lead to more homelessness. In a study of GA cuts for employable recipients in Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, the data shows that the vast majority did not find jobs, but instead homelessness, hunger, ill health and social isolation increased. "The data in this report destroys the principal rationalization offered by states for GA cuts: that thousands of able-bodied people were being

supported by the state who could actually be absorbed into the labor market," explains Sandra Hauser of the Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law in Washington DC and author of the report. "The reality is that most of the people terminated from GA have not found jobs, and face significant barriers to long-term employment." Other studies demonstrate that most of the people who do find work do not remain employed over the long-term.

This change in policy can only lead to more homelessness and hunger in Sacramento. And what did the county get in exchange for taking a mere \$200 a month from people? A \$500,000 savings for their annual budget \$1.2 billion. On the same day the Board of Supervisors approved the cuts, they found the money to save programs for victims of domestic violence and food for low-income elderly people, among other programs — all very worthwhile and deserving programs. However, GA recipients deserve that the three members of the Board who voted for the GA cuts had taken the time to be equally creative in order to ensure that hundreds of individuals and families could keep their income of last resort. GA recipients and their supporters need to remind our elected officials that the Board of Supervisors represents all residents regardless of income or status and the budget cannot continue to be balanced by withdrawing life support from the poorest of the poor under the illusion of full employment for all.

Stacie Clary,
Homeless Organizing
Committee Sacramento Housing Alliance

CLASSIFIEDS

Submit your classified to the Housing Alliance or give to Paula (the lady with the blue "ISE" cap with feathers) before lunch time at Friendship Park or put in the black and white can in the Loaves and Fishes Library.

One Ad Free to private parties and non-profit organizations per issue. Try to keep it under 25 words.

Lost: Blue "ISE" cap with feathers. If found, just stuff it in the want ad can in the Loaves and Fishes Library. (It is not being used much lately. Doesn't anybody out there want something?)

Loaves & Fishes Retail Store, 1225 N. B Street, open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday thru Saturday. Donations of unwanted items appreciated. Work shoes and boots; candles; bicycles; hot plates; and crock pots were in short supply and requested often.

• WANTED: Harm Reduction Services, HRS, is looking for the women who took the HIV test at Maryhouse in July. Please come back for your results. Some of you asked HRS to find specific services and we now have more information for you. YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE. Please call HRS at 456-4849 Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. or else come in to the office. Thank You. Dee Cullen.

• Give hope and happiness. Give a job — such as moving, yardwork — to a homeless worker. Call Loaves and Fishes job phone: 446-9316 Ask for Marie or Margaret Mary, or mail to: Loaves and Fishes, Jobs for Homeless, P.O. Box 2161, Sacramento, 95812.

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., No. 101
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 442-1198

Disabled must self-advocate for civil rights

By Michael Storman

All persons, men and women, are made in the image and likeness of God and themselves deserve equality. Persons with disabilities, whether mental or physical, deserve equality. It was not until congress passed the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that our society began to move toward equal treatment and protection under the law for persons with disabilities. Prior to that time, there were no laws to protect persons with disabilities from prejudice and discriminatory practices. Unfortunately, there are no boundaries of discrimination against persons with disabilities. No matter what sex or race, discrimination can occur

in housing, employment, transportation, public and private accommodations, and public services.

Unfortunately, the first population to be targeted for cuts in benefits are the elderly and disabled — the people who need it most. Government officials know that without a lot of money, we as persons with disabilities will have little or no clout to fight back.

If you are homeless, chances are that you may have a disability of some kind. With the knowledge that God loves you, you should not settle for your present lifestyle. You deserve better. If you have been subjected to prejudice and discrimination, you can get help

if you are willing to fight and advocate for our own survival.

The following numbers are for persons with a disability who have been victimized by discrimination:

Housing discrimination:
Department of Fair
Employment and Housing, 2000
O St., 445-5523.

**Employment
discrimination:** Equal
Opportunity Employment
Commission, 1301 Clay St.,
Oakland, CA 94612; (800) 689-
4000.

Department of Fair
Employment and Housing,
Office for Civil Rights, 80
United Nations Plaza, San
Francisco, CA 94402.

stuck outside in the summertime streets close to sunset. After all I once had, real or imagined, I was now an urban predator, Dumpster-diver and street scavenger. However, I was free from the dope usage and my North Sac dope environs.

I hung around Loaves and Fishes, wandered aimlessly

where I was raised downtown and basically lived like an alley cat. I would dread sunset when nighttime came and I would be "in search of" the night's hideout. Sometimes I would pick the darkest, scariest spot by the Sacramento River by Old Sac — between the Tower Bridge and the I Street Bridge — approach with a quiet creep up to my

**Public services and
accommodations
discrimination:** The American
Disabilities Hotline for Title II
and III, (800) 514-0301.

**Transportation
discrimination:** Protection and
Advocacy, 100 Howe Ave.,
Sacramento, CA 95825, 488-
9950.

Proving discrimination in our society and culture is difficult. The American legal system makes it difficult. However, if you can find a way in your heart to combine the knowledge that God loves you even as a homeless person with your legal right as a disabled person to be regarded and treated equally, you will indeed be inspired to fight for equality as I have.

Each homeless creature has his own day and his own way.

Change

Continued from page 4

After a chilly night, the morning sun rays woke me up into the nightmare of homelessness.

My life, or lack thereof, was full of confused changes. I met a fair weather friend until my little money ran out and I was

Poetry

Song: Bronco Billy

Anonymous

(Billy is an X-generation, fetitious cop in Sacramento.)

Bron-co Bil-ly was a lev-ee cop
a sad-is-tic cop, was he.
Gung-ho Bil-ly made a vow to stop,
all the home-less guys, like me.

Billy was shuttred by a lev-ee Doe,
who slept with the dogs, like me.
So, he ran down tents and man-y does,
a-sleep in their bags, like me.

He ran down Jane on a cit-y street
what a mad young cop was he.
But, they didn't jail the Bron-co Freak,
nor count all the Joes, like me.

Bron-co Bil-ly was fired from the force,
but, may be look-ing, for me.
So, hide your bod or go find a horse.
Don't sleep near a church, like me.

Bron-co Bil-ly was a craz-y cop.
Is back on the force, is he?
But, will he ob-ey those Rats on top,
and stomp home-less guys, like me?

Bron-co Bil-ly is a lev-ee cop,
wears Hit-ler's mus-tache, does he?
But, does he be-long to that neo-group
that har-ass both you and me?

(Three poems by Just Alice)

Destitution by Design

Everybody needs help sometimes.
Leaves and Fishes did that for me.
Do you need a shower, food, clothes?
A place for you or your mail to be?

There's some of us that need you,
But some of us who don't.
I'd work if I could but...
There's some that just plain won't!

Destitution by Desire

Dealing dope ain't where it's at,
It makes the rest afraid.
I want our park to be secure,
Not a place to work a spade.

It should be a place for everyone,
The young, the old, the ill,
A place of safety and for rest,
Instead of moved along against our will.

Destitution, but Inspired

On a tiny G.A. check,
You can't rent a place to live.
Just keep looking for a roommate,
You know something's got to give.

There are those who aren't eligible,
So they don't receive a dime.
Who seems to be the cause of
Destitution by design?

A Dream Of Freedom

By Rod Beaton

Last night I had a dream
The earth was the seven seas
and I was an eaglefish

who swam after sharks to be free
And a voice spoke to me
My child my child
You swim like a fish
Arise arise
and soar like an eagle
to America and all her mountains
and there you shall pity fish
while soaring through her canyons free
Then I woke

Prayers for a Dead Friend

By Peter LaRue

You never really received
the serious mourning that
you deserved
an early entrance to an
unwanted grave

Setting up in the quicksilver
of your coffin; you taught
me how to structure my
dream machine
as you were torn away from
the world of methamphetamine

Your teardrops, your cars,
and your trailers, such
an automatic mess, falling
for the same women; how
could we have possibly been
outpressed

So then how truly
I was distressed, the
way in which your torso
and head were so pressed
three ugly large men
in steel pain metal dressed
booted to kill; motorcycles,
chains and those sleeping bags
and all this gruesome stress

that gleam of your last known
smile and all those decisions;
the crazy choices you had made
left you to be chosen and
included as the target
of the day

(The following four poems are from the
"Water Windsongs" collection)

At The Eclipse Of The Moon

By Susan Oliver

Deep behind the walls
Of my soul
In the still center
Where grasping
Has died,
Poison surfaces to
Tears and grief.
I feel a transformation
A stillness to
River the tide
Cleanse hurt and despair
Anger, frustration and doubt,
Serenity is peace
That can never be taken
Fruits of the spirit
During the dark night
Fresh as dew found
In a morning splendor.

Darkness of the light
Eclipsed,
Transformed by the darkness
Found the light.



Homeward illustration/Lee Parks

City By the Bay

By Kelly L.

I left home
for San Francisco in 1969
in search of gold paved dreams
that shone like the grandeur
of Aztec jewels.
Long narrow pathways
clouded my vision
hastened my stride
and pounded me against
the hard knock of concrete.
Deception created self portraits
ripped from biographic scrapbooks
buried in Golden Gate Park.
I mourn the passing of a dream
scattered westward towards the sunset
severed memories of Haight-Ashbury
the streets of indiscretion,
voices of freedom spoken in Berkeley
a subdivision of decrepit peace,
insolent nightmares
crash against the rocks.

Where once was bay land, now a city
torn,
Each colorful soul creeps in search of
watercolors to brighten brazen escapes.

The Grass is Greener

By Laure Stronach

Counterfeit dreams
plastic angels
statues made of clay

Forgotten memories
unused time
empty faces

The American dream
stagnant rivers
polluted streams

A million cars
going nowhere fast

The grass is greener
but the fence is higher,

Destiny
is in your hands.

The Derelict

By Randall H.

Miles forgotten while strolling
about the city
looking for a strong drink
a steady companion
reliable and cheap
to open the day of hope's promise
and wonder about tomorrow's pint.

My pride was stripped apart long ago
when nightmares cluttered dreams
and dismantled my soul
at the market of trade and ill fortune.
Panhandling for minted coins
became my profession of opportunity
brushing the streets clean
for remnants of solemnity
but finding none, left me bankrupt
frail and hopeless
to chase away the ghost
arrest the sickness
and make it through the day
Perhaps a mission in San Francisco
or the altar
near 6th and O'Farrell Streets
to be saved
for the thousandth time
from life's sin
and hope
to null the burning
from the rot gut liquor
that rests in my lower hip pocket.

I'm a lonely soldier
in the ranks of desperation
who exists for the next bottle
of White Port
staggered between interludes
of denial and trepidation.

At night, when the chilling fog rolls in
through the squalid streets of Skid
Row,
the underground world
danger's alley
where dreams and hop are covered
with blood and apathy,
the builder of roads,
morning street cleaner
wears a cynical grin
and scoundrel's snare.
Later he realizes
that just yesterday,
I could have bought the whole District.

HOMELESS SERVICES

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.
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

Maryhouse.

1321 North C Street, suite
32. Serves women and
children. Day shelter hour of
operation 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Monday through Friday for
women and families. Also,
breakfast 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Free clothing

Sacramento Food Bank
3333 3rd Avenue (at
Broadway.) 8 a.m.-4 p.m. 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: Wed. 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. Adults,
children: General Health Care.
M-F 8 a.m.-noon, 1 p.m.-4:30
p.m. Sign-ups in Friendship
Park, 7:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
446-3345.

Capital Health Clinic
1500 C St. (at 15th.) Adults
8-5 M, W and Th. 440-5802.

Dental

Sacramento Dental Clinic
1500 C St. (at 15th.) Adults-
Emergency Dental. Call for
Appt. M-F 7:40 a.m.-5 p.m.
Walk-ins screened. 552-8300.

Mental health

Guest House
Loaves & Fishes. Homeless
Mental Health Clinic. M, W,
Th, Fri. 8-11:30 a.m. 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

Wind Youth Center
300 Ahern Street. Serves
youth ages 12-19. Serves
breakfast and lunch, offers
clothing and case mgmt. Open
six days a week: M-W and Fri.
from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.,
Thurs. from 8:30 a.m. to 1
p.m., and Sat. 11 a.m. to 12:30
p.m. Youth outreach.

WEAVE

24 hour. Battered women
and children. Victims of rape,
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

Horizon Project:
Transitional living and
support services for women
and children who have become
homeless due to domestic
violence. Will do assessment
for mental illness and
chemical dependency. Contact
Delita 448-2951

**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. M-F 9
a.m.-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 rep. 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

**AIDS/HIV
CARES**
(Center for AIDS Research,
Education and Service.) 1500
21st Street. Serves people
with HIV and AIDS. Medical
care, mental health, case
management, health
education and regional
prevention/education classes.
443-3299

Breaking Barriers
Provides direct services to
people living with AIDS and
HIV. HIV Testing at Loaves &
Fishes every Wednesday.
447-2437.

Alternative Test Site. Free
anonymous testing by appt.
Wed./Thurs. Call for appt.
440-7720. 1500 C Street.