

HOMeward

Serving the Sacramento area homeless community

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February 1997

Fisher of men

Former craftsman felt called to create artist's colony for creative homeless

By Christina Stock

Homeless people need to learn to support themselves. Clifford Crooks, once homeless, has an idea for an artist's colony which will give members of the homeless community an opportunity to do just that. The goal of this project is to give homeless people a chance to earn money through the sale of their own artwork, or by learning a productive craft.

"We've got to figure out ways for people to earn enough to put a roof over their heads, and one of the ways to do it is through arts and crafts," says Crooks.

Crooks spent 18 months living out of his truck after giving up a long career as a commercial artist. "I had lost all desire to live that life," he says. "I moved out of my house, and came up here to Sacramento to help my daughter with a drug problem, only to find that she was being evicted, so it put me on the streets."

Before that, Crooks had been an artist for about 15 years. His career started as a tradesman, but in the 1970's when quality gave way to profit, he gave it up. "I was an insulator in San Francisco. One night our union's business agent said to throw our code of



Photo/Jill Booth Macdonell

Artist Ray Hillestead with 'Hunger is Real.'

workmanship away, that the union would no longer control the standard of work, but the company would now control it. After that, I would say that half of the jobs that I worked on failed after the first year, because the work was so lousy, and it was breaking my heart. I was trained to do my

job right. I was also in manic depression—I've been manic depressive since I was 25. We were working in Death Valley on a job, and that was when I designed the fisherman."

"The Fisherman" was Crooks' first project. It was a

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FREE!
(for now)

Welcome to Homeward No. 1

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

SHOC hopes this newsletter serves as a vehicle to educate the public, both the homeless and the housed, about important issues and services available to homeless Sacramentans. It also will 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 for fighting to end homelessness. We welcome any participation or contributions. We would like to thank

the Vanguard Foundation for the grant that funds the committee; Loaves and Fishes for providing us a place to meet; and TC Printing for donating the printing of the first issue of Homeward.

We need your voice!

Homeward meets at 10 a.m. Mondays at Loaves and Fishes. For more information call 442-1198.

Organizers: Kathryn Felix, Christina Stock

Editor: Matt Peters

Editorial committee: Stacey Clarey, Art Clay, Helen Dodge

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee chairperson: Eddie Harris

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

Winter Overflow
4:30 pm sign up. Men/Women/Children. Bussed from Salvation Army after dinner. Nov 1 - March 31.

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

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

Salvation Army (overflow)
1200 North B St. Breakfast & Dinner. 442-0331

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. 446-9626

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 Mon, Wed, Thur 8:00 am-5:00 pm. 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

Department of 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.

Main County Jail
651 I Street. 440-6752

Rio Consumnes Correctional Center
12500 Bruceville Road (Elk Grove.) 440-6027.

Alcoholics Anonymous
454-1100

Runaway Hotline
1-800-843-5200

Infoline Sacramento
Telephone Information and referral service. 498-1000

VA Outreach
923-9787

Welfare cuts: Back to the streets for some

By Christina Stock

The Welfare system is shrinking, and the effects are beginning to show.

Unfortunately, many people who try to make it on their own are pushed back into the system by cuts to transitional programs.

One cut in the General Assistance program is in the area of 'shared housing.' Anyone who shares housing with others and receives a monthly General Assistance grant will receive a reduction. GA grants that were \$221 (\$201 cash + a \$20 bus pass) for people who live with three or more unrelated people will be cut to \$166 (\$146 cash + \$20 bus pass.) A number of GA recipients who were homeless now live in transitional rooming houses. These

represent that independence.

"My thought was that as long as they could stay in a stable living environment for 90 days, they'd be in a position maybe, to get at least part-time work, and if the rent was kept at that low level, they'd be in a position to keep paying it, and then be able to get full time work, if they can find it," he said. "But with this lower amount from GA, it's going to be almost impossible."

There is an obvious progression of needs that must be met before one is able to think long term. If housing is lost, then basic survival is once again the primary focus. Said Foley, "It's harder to get work, to make medical appointments. It's harder to get mail, to stay healthy, to eat well...to accumulate things, like blankets and pillows and

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'We've been meeting with county officials, but none of them are optimistic about it.'

— John Foley,
director of housing,
Loaves and Fishes

houses provide stability while a person looks for permanent employment and housing. Due to the shared housing cutbacks, people in these transitional houses are not coming up with enough money to pay rent.

John Foley, Director of Housing Resources at Loaves and Fishes, believes the change in funding will make situations for those willing to make a difficult transition from the streets to find jobs and homes even harder.

"The rents range in these rooming houses from \$135, \$145, \$155. It's already the cheapest rent in town," said Foley. Each tenant has his own rental agreement with the landlord, which means if someone else in the house can't pay their rent, that person loses his space, without jeopardizing the others in the household. Each shares a bedroom with one person, and common areas are also shared.

"While people are looking for work, they need a kind of independence," said Foley, and these rooming houses



Artist

Continued from page 1

small metal sculpture made of horseshoe nails, a fisherman teetering on two legs against a counterweight fish attached to its wire line. "I couldn't figure out how to make that fish. So I asked God, should I put a gun to my head, or should I quit this trade that I love so much—and immediately the idea for that fish flashed into my mind. I've been working in the arts ever since."

Crooks developed his talent and was able to make a living for himself in the art market. He worked in metal sculpture and ceramics out of a studio in his Paso Robles home, selling his work in gift shops and arts and crafts shows throughout the United States. Some of his most interesting work is a series of stoneware kaleidoscope, several of which he sold wholesale through Smithsonian. He decided ultimately that commercial art was not for him, that he would rather help people using his talents.

"I got the idea for the artist colony project about three years ago," said Crooks. "I was living in Paso Robles, and trying to figure out a way to help the homeless through arts and crafts, but there are no homeless in Paso Robles so I wasn't getting anywhere."

Six months later Crooks came to Sacramento and found himself with nowhere to stay, except his truck.

"Here, I was put right in the middle



Photo/Christine Stock

Clifford Crooks and "The Fisherman."

of the homeless. I started about three months after I hit the streets to just build it." He met a few artists, and began to organize.

Most of the people he was able to organize have been artists for most of their lives. Ray Hillestead is a vietnam vet who used to work in graphic arts, and now works in oils and acrylics. "Wizard" is a tattoo artist and painter. Peter LaRue is a poet who makes shadow boxes from 'found' objects. Chris Day does pen and ink river scenes (see page 8). Helen Dodge works in mixed media, and Gordon Rorrer uses colored pencils.

"We've got probably 10 or 15 artists altogether who are donating their work," says Crooks. "We want people to know that we are homeless, but not hopeless."

The group got some artwork together and approached Dolores White, director of Phantom Galleries, about exhibiting their work. She was receptive to the idea and they were able to put on a show last September.

"The artists who participated were hard working and excited," said White.

They plan to do another show this year at Phantom Galleries, and Crooks is planning to begin work on a large scale fisherman sculpture for the median on Del Paso Boulevard.

Kent Wimmer, owner of Kent Wimmer Steel in Rancho Cordova, is sponsoring the sculpture for the Del Paso median by donating the materials, tools and workspace. He met Crooks last year. "I have a little background as an artist. I wanted to get together with artists but didn't know how. Clifford showed me one of his models and I agreed to sponsor."

For homeless people who are not artists, Crooks would like to offer art classes for enjoyment. He has taught disabled groups to produce the fisherman sculpture as a form of therapy. "I notice that as soon as the people start getting involved, it picks up their spirits," says Crooks.

"Art is one of the ways you build a community," says Dan Davidson of Sol Ceramics, a gallery on Del Paso Boulevard, who is familiar with the artists' colony project. "It gives a person something to do, builds their self esteem, and if they can see something beautiful, that's great. Then, to have something sell, is just...wow."

The Homeless Artisans project is still

'I wanted to get together with artists but didn't know how. Clifford showed me one of his models and I agreed to sponsor.'

*Kent Wimmer,
owner of Kent Wimmer Steel*

in its beginning stage. It will be open to anyone homeless, as far as materials and space can accommodate them. Crooks now lives in a house which will serve as a workspace. "My original idea is to open this up 24 hours downstairs and allow anybody when they get the urge to come in and work on their art projects, and we can store them."

Frankie Michaelson, president of American River College Art Club, is formerly homeless, and became involved with the Homeless Artisans last year. Once a graphic artist, he owned one-third of a computer business, but then 'burned out' and became homeless.

"I dove as far as I could," he says. "It probably wasn't the best way to go," he says, but it did change his life. "I decided to get into the fine arts, and took a class, then got into college, and that lead to teaching." He attended the Homeless Artisans' September show at Phantom Galleries. "I was really impressed with their work, and I wanted to know what I could do for them."

He gained support from the ARC Art Club, and gathered donations of paper, colored pencils and other materials. Materials are badly needed so the artists can get projects done for this year's show. Many of the artists have used pads of paper found in bins, or used paints someone passed their way. Dumpster diving is illegal however, and canvasses and paints are hard to come by.

If you would like to support the homeless artisans by donating materials, tools or an unused workspace, please call Crooks at 456-5570.

Big SSI changes beginning to have effect

Beginning Jan. 1 the Social Security Administration stopped issuing Supplemental Security Income monthly checks to adult citizens who are disabled due to a drug or alcohol addiction.

The change was passed by Congress, signed by the President last year and is one of the first major welfare reform laws to take effect. More than 4,000 drug/alcohol addicted people in Sacramento will be affected by this change. Local social service providers said the new law could force hundreds of Sacramentans onto the streets to compete for limited

shelter beds and other emergency services.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, anticipating that many of the former federal disability aid recipients will apply for the County's General Assistance Program, approved a Department of Human Assistance program to help them reapply for SSI benefits.

County and nonprofit agency officials said they hope to help up to 80 percent of the affected SSI recipients retain their disability benefits.

SSI recipients must demonstrate that they have

Harris said the SSI reductions could create 'a new wave of homelessness.'

serious mental or physical disabilities in addition to their drug/alcohol addiction.

"If even 10 percent of these former disability recipients lose their only income and their housing, 400 to 500 people will be pushed onto the streets over the next six

months," said Ed Harris, chairperson of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee.

Harris said the SSI reductions could create "a new wave of homelessness in our community," because most shelters already are full and General Assistance limits benefits to (approximately) \$200 per month for three months for employable applicants.

Recipients of monthly SSI benefits who have received a letter saying their disability benefits were cut off Jan. 1, should go to a County Welfare Office and ask for help in reapplying for SSI.

From the streets

The Tin Man

by Ed Harris

The tin man
That's my name
Collectin' cans
That's my game

If I could find a job
I would work real
hard

A doctor, a lawyer
or even a guard

A shoppin' cart
is what I use
Through parks 'n
alleys
is where I cruise

Use to have a job
Twelve bucks an hour
As machinist's mate
Economy turned sour

My wife 'n kids
A.F.D.C.
Shelters, G.A. 'n
Food stamps for me

Til I find some work
Which I know I can
Til I find that job
My name is tin man

Letter to Homeward

The Future of Homelessness

Homelessness, the solution of, has always been, is, and will continue to be a complex issue on many levels. As funding remains to keep many service providing programs available, a number of families and individuals are not having their needs met. On the other hand, a significant amount of clients are receiving adequate assistance towards becoming self-sufficient. Then there are those who choose to remain homeless. The general public should be educated about the many levels, the causes, and the plight of homelessness.

The main reason for this letter is to state my opinion about the future of homelessness. I feel the major manufacturers of the world's products and services are attempting to create prisons. The North American Free Trade Agreement is a more subtle method of legalizing slavery than incarceration. California's Three Strikes law is another effort to subject the more destitute to this cruel and unusual punishment. I believe profiteering is what drives our elected officials, C.E.O.s, and those with control over groups of people so support these ideals. All this is an attempt to assist the failing economy, for which there are many more solutions.

The coming budget cuts and welfare reform will bring more homelessness and candidates for prisons. There are lots of solutions to what ails our society. We need to take control and not allow our elected officials make negative decisions toward these efforts. May God bless us all.

— Eddie Harris

Untitled

Shuffling along in the darkness.
You're living alone if you dare.
You hide from the dreams of the
heartless.

As you breathe in the stench of
the air.

A life on the run is so needless.
there's no where to hide from your
fear.

Crying for home is as useless,
as wiping your face free of tears.

Every dream comes and goes and
goes my friend,

Every road rounds a bend,
Every heart needs a hold my
friend,

Every life meets an end.

The pleasures of living on which
we depend,

Never last long enough.
Pressures are driving us all to the
end.

Never are we tough enough.

*Howard Johnson, Spring 1985, as
remembered 3-30-96
(2nd verse missing)*

An idea gone global

International street newspaper conference held in London

By Timothy Harris

Representatives from homeless newspapers all over the world gathered in London last November for the second annual General Assembly of Europe's International Network of Street Papers (INSP).

The gathering, hosted by London's *Big Issue*, was also attended by North American observers from Chicago's *StreetWise*, Montreal's *Journal L'itineraire*, and Seattle's *Real Change*. North American papers met for the first time in Chicago last August to begin forming their own North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA).

The London General Assembly made minor amendments to the INSP Charter, ratified a proposal for 1997 program, and heard reports from papers in the United Kingdom, Russia, South Africa, Australia, the Netherlands, and North America.

Continuing a practice that began last year with network-wide support for *The Depths*, a paper in St. Petersburg, Russia, the INSP adopted 'The Big Issue,' *Capetown*, and Paris' *La Rue* as papers that would enjoy special support, including financial help and political solidarity.

The Big Philosophy

While the network has, until recently, been funded by the European Community, it is clearly led by 'The Big Issue,' Europe's largest and most visible network of street papers.

'The Big Issue,' which was founded in 1991 with a 400,000 pound grant from The Body Shop, claims a United Kingdom circulation of well over 300,000 papers a week. 'Big Issue' representatives were in attendance from Manchester, Scotland, London, Wales, South Africa, and Australia.

A reception was hosted by 'The Big Issue' London at its 4-story office building on Clerkenwell Road. The newspaper offers a variety of social services from the building, including housing search, drug and alcohol counselling, and computer training.

'Big Issue' founder John Bird gave the keynote address at the General

'The Big Issue is not a homeless paper. It never has and never will be. It is a paper sold by homeless people. While we have a ghetto in the paper for the homeless called Streetlights, we want to break people out of that.'

*John Bird,
founder of 'The Big Issue'*

Assembly, issuing a plea for homeless newspapers to publish general interest journalism in order to appeal to the largest possible market.

"The major point of street papers," said Bird, "is to provide the opportunity to earn an income. It is a business. Some papers do not fulfill that requirement. 'The Big Issue' cannot just sit back and say, 'You've got it wrong.' We need to adopt papers and say, 'How can we help?'"

The 'Big Issue' founder committed to spreading his paper's model of general interest entertainment journalism and corporate support, combined with social service support for vendors.

"The Big Issue' is not a homeless paper. It never has and never will be," says Bird. "It is a paper sold by homeless people. While we have a ghetto in the paper for the homeless called 'Streetlights,' we want to break people out of that."

'Streetlights' is the one page the paper regularly sets aside for poetry and other writing by homeless people themselves.

Bird claimed that New York's 'Street

News,' which has inspired 'The Big Issue' and numerous other papers since it began in 1989, is on the verge of complete failure because the paper is 'unreadable.' The New York paper has, in recent years, focused editorially on poverty issues, but has been racked by internal difficulties.

While no formal announcement was made, several lower-level 'Big Issue' staff confirmed rumors that 'The Big Issue' plans to begin a competing paper in New York City, probably before the summer of 1997.

International Solidarity

Over the past year, more than 20,000 pounds have been raised by INSP member publications for 'The Depths,' a struggling paper in St. Petersburg, Russia. Equally important was the political support provided by the INSP, which let Russian authorities know that the eyes of the world were on this new project.

'The Depths' editor Valeriy Sokolov reported that their paper took the Russian government to a United Nations human rights committee, which acknowledged that 'the Russian Federation violated the rights of the homeless and obliged them to change their practices.' St. Petersburg officials are consulting with the paper on how to approach the homeless problem.

'The Big Issue Scotland,' in particular, has provided extensive support to the Russian paper. The Scottish paper has raised 10,000 pounds for 'The Depths,' and has committed to working closely with the paper for two years to provide technical assistance and political support.

"We were able to move from a squat to a new office, due to the support of 'Big Issue Scotland,' who was able to pressure the St. Petersburg government," said Sokolov. "This proves the power of our network."

The INSP adopted 'The Big Issue Capetown' for 1997, as well as 'La Rue,' which has been under attack from competing papers. Of the six homeless papers now operating in Paris, 'La

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Global

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Rue' is the only one considered ethical by the INSP. Network-wide financial support, however, is reserved for the Capetown paper, which is one of the few street papers that operate under third-world conditions.

Debi Diamond, editor of the Capetown 'Big Issue,' reported that "homelessness is very urgent and serious in South Africa. In our country, it is about the destruction of the family unit."

The South African is beginning a newspaper in Capetown as part of organizing a day center for the city's homeless population. Presently, almost nothing exists for Capetown's homeless.

The majority of Capetown's homeless are laborers, classified as colored, who come from the farmlands. "In Black culture," said Diamond, "the community is still able to take care of itself, but this is beginning to break down."

About 40 percent of farmers pay their laborers in alcohol. "When people become so damaged they have to move to the city, they only have a few years left," said Diamond.

"Work allows a person to become independent of patronizing charity," said Diamond. "The options are now washing cars, recycling, begging, or stealing. The 'Big Issue' now offers

Timothy Harris, Director of Seattle's 'Real Change,' reported that a Steering Committee has been formed to organize a second North American conference of street papers.

another alternative."

The INSP, which represents 16 of the 60 papers in Europe, Australia, and South Africa, was founded in July of 1994 and regards itself as the 'voice of the European street paper movement.' INSP member publications have a combined circulation of over one million copies per month.

While the European network has until recently been funded by the European Community, an initiative by the governments of the United Kingdom and Germany to eliminate EC funding for anti-poverty work has frozen the relevant line item in the EC budget until the matter is resolved. INSP staff are

optimistic that other means of funding for the network will be found.

The network of papers provides support for its members, assists in new start-ups, promotes the exchange of information, and provides an agreed upon ethical framework for the operation of street newspapers. Member publications must commit to 'financial transparency' and to spend any post-investment profits on social support for the vendors. The INSP committed to continuing a social audit process initiated last year.

The INSP hopes to continue expansion throughout Europe and to other continents, and committed to establishing a 'concrete working relationship with NASNA, through information and article exchange, linking up through the internet, and attending conferences.'

Timothy Harris, director of Seattle's 'Real Change,' reported that a steering committee was formed to organize a second North American conference of street papers, at which it is hoped a NASNA Charter will be adopted.

One concrete way the INSP has strengthened the European street paper movement is through staff exchanges. INSP Coordinator Tessa Swithenbank reported that twenty-one exchanges have taken place within the network since last May, allowing for the exchange of ideas and skills between papers.

A third INSP General Assembly is planned for late 1997.

Street digest

Did you know?

The homeless can't use public toilets downtown. The city, noticing this problem have put portable toilets at different locations downtown for the homeless to use. We want to extend a big thank you for a much needed service.

Clean and sober hotel

The Shasta clean and sober hotel is accepting applications for 12 Shelter & Care units. Applicants must be homeless and have a chronic mental illness and/or have history of chronic substance abuse. Those interested must be willing to work with the case manager on site at Shasta. For more information please call Dana at 444-2905.

Free screening

The TALALOC Health Center offers free screening for individuals without health insurance. Ends April 30th. Open Monday-Friday 8-5. 5385 Franklin Blvd, Ste C. 455-5507.

Disparity is an unyielding foe. So many dreams are lost to survival. Trust is replaced with solitude and the vulnerability of truth hidden by the lies spoken in fear. Permanence is a vague ideal, obscure and disbelieved.

— Howard Johnson
March 26, '96

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



Untitled, by Chris Day, 1996

Cuts

Continued from page 3

shoes. If you end up losing your housing, you end up losing your stuff, because it's hard to keep that stuff clean and dry and secure when you're on the streets. People can make adjustments, but for sure some people are not going to be able to make that change in such a way as to keep their tenancy."

The cuts in the shared housing program will save the county \$2 million this year. The people at GA recognize that it is useless to turn people from a transitional program back to a homeless program. It costs the county money either way. The cut does not affect those living in residence hotels like the Shasta and The Ridgeway, because they are exempted in the plan under the term SRO (single room occupancy.) The only difference is that in the transitional houses, the tenants share a bedroom. The people

'There's no such thing as a rooming house in the city codes. There's no special licensing they have to have.'

— John Foley,
director of housing

at GA can not exempt the rooming houses without jeopardizing the whole of the shared housing program, where they save the \$2 million. "We've been meeting with county officials, but none of them are optimistic about it," said Foley.

"The key is in defining a rooming house.

"In a sense, there's no such thing as a rooming house in the city codes," said

Foley. "There's no special licensing they have to have. If there were a way to identify a rooming house, then maybe those places could be exempted, but there's a whole process to go through. It doesn't really help short term," he said.

The tenants in the rooming houses can work part-time to supplement their General Assistance check, when work is available.

"Part-time usually means working for a temporary agency like Labor Ready, and today I've already had three people come to me today and tell me that they're just not hiring right now," said Foley.

"In one house, the landlady was willing to receive a lower amount of rent for one month, because there was a chance to get this changed, but she's not willing to continue doing that month in and month out," he said.

Some people already have moved out of the rooming houses due to the welfare cuts.

For those unable to supplement their GA income, it's back to the streets.