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New Rules Cut Back Overflow

by Stacie Clary

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to fund a winter Overflow Shelter at Cal Expo, beginning December 1. Two hundred beds will be available for men, women and children who have

no other place to stay. The new rules put a maximum fourteen day stay for those individuals who will not enter into a contract with the county about resolving the issues causing their homelessness.

The original proposal called

for one hundred beds at a cost of \$100,000 from the Community Development Block Grants, which is Federal grant money. In the original proposal the shelter was to open December 15, 1998 and close February 28, 1999. At the Supervisors' hearing

September 8, however, county staff reported that they could use another \$40,000 from CalWorks funds to increase the days open from December 15, 1998 to March 31, 1999.

see Overflow page 3

"Taylor's Campaign"

to show at CSUS
a benefit for Homeward

Award winning filmmaker Richard Cohen will attend the screening of his documentary film, "Taylor's Campaign", at CSUS's new Union Auditorium, Wednesday, November 18, 1998.

"Taylor's Campaign" follows the political campaign of Ron Taylor in his bid for a seat on Santa Monica's city council.

Taylor, a former truck driver who was disabled in an accident, once lived for ten months in the doorway of an abandoned building. Angered by increasingly restrictive public ordinances and police harassment, Taylor became the spokesman for the city's hungry and homeless population.

Ron Taylor said of the film: "You will meet people at the very bottom of the economic ladder and share in their laughter and tears as they face adversity. You may be amazed at the friendships formed on the streets by people who have lost almost everything they owned, yet are still willing to

see Taylor page 6

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

Events
2nd Annual Capital Rally pg 1
'Taylor's Campaign' to be shown as a benefit, review starts on pg 1
Health Fair pg 6

The controversy over Overflow continues, story starts on pg 1

A short history of Anti-Camping Laws by Bridget Reilly pg 2

Homeward Staff members attend NASNA conference pg 3

Gov. Wilson vetoes funds for homeless shelters pg 3

Two essays on living without by Sylvia Paldhan and Jean Scott pg 5

Is Profit the Purpose of Life— and Death? a social commentary by Lee Parks page 4

Eddie Harris gives a brief report on Stand down, pg 6

Homeless Services, Classified page 7

2nd Annual Capital Rally

for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

A Capitol Rally and other events are scheduled for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, November 15-21.

In observance of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee will hold a rally on the north side of the Capitol at L and 11th Streets on Friday, November 20 from 9 am to 3 pm.

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, November 15-21, brings attention to the needs of our community's homeless and impoverished population. The large turn-out expected at SHOC's rally by homeless individuals and activists from throughout the state will demonstrate to the newly-elected and current state leaders that people are watching how much state money is given to programs that benefit those in the greatest need for food, shelter, job development, mental health services, and medical care.

The rally will include speak-

ers on statewide and local homeless and hunger issues, music, an open mike, and food.

Activists from Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, the Bay Area, and Los Angeles have been invited to join with Sacramentans in sharing their stories and demands at the State Capitol. Tamara Hiebert, intern with SHOC, believes that it is important for the homeless community to support the rally, "Coming to the rally will allow homeless people to see first hand that they do have a say in what happens," she said.

Local activists will speak about the new maximum stay rules at the Winter Overflow Shelter at Cal Expo (see related story) and protest Sacramento's anti-camping ordinance that allows for sweeps along the river and throughout town, even if an individual's maximum time has run out at the shelter.

Also scheduled for this week is a benefit showing of "Taylor's Campaign", a moving documentary featuring Ron Taylor, a homeless man who ran for City Council in Santa Monica, and a com-

munity of homeless people attempting to shelter themselves in the midst of new laws aimed at running them out of the city.

The film, narrated by Martin Sheen, "can make you think about a lot of things — about what you want our society to look like, about poverty and homelessness and the civil rights that each of us should have, to live with a little dignity, a little honor," said Jason Albertson of Street Sheet of San Francisco. The proceeds from ticket sales will go toward the publication of Homeward and other SHOC activities. The film will be shown at CSUS' new Union Auditorium on Wednesday, November 18, 1998 at 7:30 pm. Call 442-1198 for more info.

Also this week, Breaking Barriers' Homeless Program, along with the Sacramento County AIDS Education and Prevention Program, and Harm Reduction, will sponsor a Health Fair at Loaves & Fishes' Friendship Park. The health fair will be held Thursday, November 19 from 8:00 am to noon. —

Court Challenges to Anti-camping Laws

by Bridget Reilly

I am writing this on September 5, 1998. The date is significant, as tomorrow will be the anniversary of the day I received a Prohibited Camping citation from a Eugene police officer. This citation was thrown out of court the following February—or to put it more accurately, it never even went in front of a judge. The city prosecutor dropped the case like a hot potato, because my pro bono attorney had done some meticulous research that convinced him we were dead serious about challenging the camping ban. So that was a personal victory for me, but it also means that Eugene's anti-camping ordinance remains stubbornly intact.

In the intervening time I have learned a good deal more about the law, and I want to share some of my observations with other homeless advocates who wish to challenge anti-camping laws in the legal arena. The following information has been gleaned from the brief my lawyer wrote for my case, a document from Danielle Smith's case in which she fought several camping citations, and the chapter on vagrancy laws in *American Jurisprudence 2d*.

Numerous Constitutional arguments have been raised to challenge camping bans in different U.S. cities. What I have found from studying information on several cases is that there are three major issues most commonly raised:

1. Over breadth
2. Punishment of homelessness as a status or class, in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.
3. Restriction on the freedom of travel, in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The logic behind all of these arguments is borrowed from that of past court challenges

of the post-Civil War vagrancy laws, in recognition of the fact that today's anti-camping ordinances are but a modern-day version of those older laws. The vagrancy laws were eventually struck down because they were declared to be "unconstitutionally vague or overbroad." This means that they target a particular status or class of people for engaging in innocent activities such as standing on the sidewalk, which are otherwise considered lawful.

The reasoning such laws held is that this class of people called 'vagrants' were not gainfully employed because they chose to be idle, and were therefore prone to committing crimes. Please note that this EXACT SAME assumption is made about homeless campers of the present day, and is the root idea behind all of the current anti-camping laws.

The courts and lawmakers nowadays try to obscure this fact by substituting different terminology. Since the vagrancy laws were overturned because it was found that they discriminated against a certain class or status, it is no longer acceptable to use such terms as 'vagrant' in the wording of a law. Instead the verb 'to camp' is used, to emphasize the act of setting up camp in a public space (which is presumed to be "voluntary conduct"), as opposed to the use of nouns such as 'vagrant', which telegraph statements about the presumed character of the person committing the act. In this way the laws attempt to distinguish between the 'status' or 'condition' of homelessness, and the 'conduct' of camping engaged in by homeless people which is a natural consequence of said status or condition.

In other words, it is not illegal to be a homeless person; it is only illegal to engage in many of the life-

sustaining activities that homeless people must engage in.

"In other words, it is not illegal to be a homeless person; it is only illegal to engage in many of the life sustaining activities that homeless people must engage in."

The City of Portland vs. Johnson case of 1982 was one of the early attempted challenges to a modern-day camping ban. In this case the argument was used that the anti-camping laws, like the vagrancy laws, are "unconstitutionally vague and overbroad." But unfortunately the challenge failed.

This same argument was again raised in *City of Eugene vs. Smith, 1997*, and again it failed. Judge Eveleen Henry's reasoning went as follows: "...The ordinance prohibits certain conduct on public property, without respect to any identifiable group of persons or economic situation...This court concludes...that the Eugene ordinance represents a rational exercise of power in furtherance of a legitimate city interest..."

The *Pottinger vs. Miami* case of 1992 was somewhat more successful in at least preserving the right of homeless people to sleep in public places. This was a case in which homelessness was determined to equate with status, and that an ordinance against sleeping in public was overbroad when applied against homeless people, because it punishes them for innocent life-sustaining activities which they have no choice but to perform in public. Evoked were the Eighth Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Now, a distinction should be made here between sleeping bans and camping bans:

The mere act of sleeping on the ground, after which a homeless person will presumably get up and go somewhere else, can more easily be argued to be a constitutionally protected right. Camping, however, is a somewhat stickier matter. It involves the presence of camping gear and other objects placed so as to "maintain a temporary place to live." It can also include a vehicle or motor home in which a person lives, and is parked on a public street for a prolonged period of time, and might have objects adjacent to it that one would normally find in a campsite.

It may have been for this reason that the *Tobe vs. City of Santa Ana* case of 1995 was unsuccessful in challenging that city's camping ban. In this case the concept of homelessness as a status was brought into question and answered in the negative. It was found that laws against camping and "storage of personal property in public areas" do not violate Eighth Amendment protections against punishment for status, are not unconstitutionally vague or overbroad, and do not restrict freedom

"It should also be sobering to realize that these modern day laws are of the exact same nature as their Medieval antecedents..."

of travel as protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. So this finding represented a step backward in the fight for homeless people's rights, after the encouraging *Miami* decision.

From this we can see that the courts spend a good deal of time quibbling over

whether homelessness is a "status" or a "condition", whether the homeless should be officially recognized as a "protected class", and whether the "conduct" of camping can be treated separately from the economic situation of the "offending" parties. And all of this preoccupation with legal jargon serves to obscure the fundamental thinking behind the anti-poor and anti-homeless laws: the assumption that poverty, like vagrancy, is a voluntary condition that can be corrected through punishment or enforced servitude, and the even more basic notion that the rich have the right to control the lives of the poor.

It should be further illuminating to discover the actual hidden purpose behind the old vagrancy laws, which was to criminalize former slaves. And these laws in turn were descended from a more ancient set of feudal laws whose purpose was to chase down runaway serfs! Starting to see a pattern here? It does not take a genius to figure out that these types of laws are designed by the rich entirely for their own benefit, and are invariably enforced against the poor. And therein lies the real explanation for all the anti-camping laws.

It is daunting to realize that it took an entire century to get the vagrancy laws overturned, and that we now face a similar uphill battle in challenging the anti-camping laws. It should also be sobering to realize that these modern day laws are of the exact same nature as their Medieval antecedents, that today's homeless are classed in the same category as yesteryear's "vagrants", who were nothing more than runaway slaves or serfs. =



Overflow from page 1

After hearing the testimony of shelter advocates at the same meeting, the Board of Supervisors directed their staff to return the September 9 with cost estimates for opening on December 1 and increasing the number of beds. At the meeting September 9, the supervisors voted to open on December 1 and increase the number of beds to two hundred. An additional \$126,000 for funding will come from the general fund, with \$40,000 added from CalWorks, and the original \$100,000 federal grant money, for a total of \$266,000.

The change was the result of homeless people and advocates who expressed many concerns over this plan at the September 8th meeting. After the staff presented their recommendations, shelter advocates presented over two hours of testimony on behalf of the homeless. Individuals testified that one hundred beds were not enough, especially because of the fact that last year, on average, 195 persons requested shelter each night, and that there were many nights when use exceeded two hundred. Advocates also objected to the time period being cut; that the funding was greatly reduced from the \$350,000 spent last year; and that expecting an effective transition off the streets by an individual within fourteen-days was unrealistic.

The last few winters have seen struggles to fund and approve a Winter Overflow Shelter program, and this year was no exception. Building on concerns brought forward during last winter's debate, when the county wanted no

Overflow at all, county staff this year designed a program that was "consistent with the goals and philosophy of Sacramento's Homeless Continuum of Care to resolve homelessness and promote self-sufficiency," according to a Department of Human Assistance report presented to the Board of Supervisors.

The county staff designed this plan under the assumption that the Board of Supervisors "expects that individuals and families will address and resolve their homelessness when they ask for and receive homeless services and assistance and recognizes that winter weather does pose an emergency situation. Furthermore, [the plan] reflects the department's policy of promoting self-sufficiency. The department does not want to provide band-aids which enable a lifestyle of continued homelessness and dependency," stated the staff report.

The Continuum of Care is a plan that the county has been developing over the years to offer a diverse number of services directed at finding permanent solutions to an individual's or family's homeless situation. Since 1984, the program has grown to a budget of \$12 million and includes over thirty-eight housing and service programs with 742 shelter beds and 853 transitional housing units; according to the staff report presented to the Board of Supervisors.

The concerns discussed in 1997 that were addressed in the current year's plan include a belief that individuals from counties that do not provide emergency shelter will travel to Sacramento to utilize this

city's winter shelter; and that there remains a small core group of individuals who will not work to resolve the issues leading to their homelessness, even if required to in exchange for services and assistance from the government.

The county's 1998-99 Winter Overflow Program addresses these concerns by designing the shelter to be a short-term solution, until a planned permanent social services complex is completed. These design changes include operating the shelter for a shorter duration than in the past; establishing an intake process to ensure that all permanent shelter beds are being utilized in the community, before using the emergency beds; placing clients in a more appropriate program than emergency shelter, if the beds are available; implementing a service contract with clients, and setting a maximum stay of fourteen days for those individuals who will not create or comply with a service contract.

The service contract is a plan designed by a case manager and the client to resolve the issues that are causing that person's homeless situation. Exceptions to the fourteen day maximum stay can be made on a case by case basis. If it appears to the case manager that the client is making a true effort to address his or her homelessness.

Supervisors Collin, Cox and Nottoli voted for the plan. Supervisor Johnson voted against it, stating that while she believed it was a very worthwhile program, she had concerns about taking money from the county's savings. Supervisor Dickinson abstained, because he wanted all requests for additional

Homeward Staff Attends Streetpaper Conference

In August three members of the Homeward staff attended the third annual conference of the North American Street Newspaper Association in Montreal, Canada. Attending were Sacramento Housing Alliance Director Stacie Clary, Homeward's Senior Editor Christina Stock, and Lee Parks, a graphic artist doing volunteer work for the paper.

Each year the annual conference is hosted by a different member of NASNA. The association's founding conference was in Chicago in 1996, hosted by StreetWise. The 2nd annual conference in 1997 was in Seattle, hosted by Real Change. This year's host for the '98 conference was the Journal L'itineraire in Montreal.

There were thirty-nine street newspapers at the conference, most from the industrial Northeast and the West Coast, with some papers from the South and Southwest. A quarter were from Canada. Also present were representatives of other press related associations, including the International Network of Street Papers, which is in Europe. Several American street papers who wanted to attend were unable to because of the distance.

This being only the third year of NASNA's formal existence, the conference was concerned with continuing the work expressed in its goals: Creating a mutually supportive network of streetpapers to share

resources and skills; increase public awareness of the streetpaper movement; and build a more unified movement to combat poverty in North America through free speech.

The workshops at the conference were oriented towards giving advice about improving the quality of the papers to increase readership and other means of generating income. Also the conference attendees discussed different ways member papers could assist each other.

The biggest controversy involved membership guidelines. A streetpaper from London, called the Big Issue, with locally published streetpapers worldwide, moved into Los Angeles, competing with a local streetpaper, Making Change.

The concern among some in the streetpaper movement is that a large vendor paper, though it uses street people to sell the paper, and runs stories concerning the homeless, is too profit motivated and runs too much entertainment and advertising to qualify as a "homeless" paper. Others contend that a paper that makes money has money to help the poor, even if it isn't the exclusive voice of homeless advocates, or of the homeless themselves. The question was not resolved at this year's conference after the Big Issue withdrew its request for membership.

see
Conference
page 6

Governor Wilson Vetoes Needed Funds for Emergency Housing

(Information obtained through the Housing California Capitol Alert)

On Wednesday, September 30, Governor Wilson vetoed SB 1950 (Sher) which would have provided state matching funds for construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of facilities for emergency homeless shelters. The funds were targeted to communities using National Guard

armories for temporary winter shelter. These communities have been under increasing pressure from Governor Wilson to discontinue use of the armories.

Armory rental costs were raised last year to \$450 per night (not including costs for security and janitorial services). Current state author-

ization for armory usage was also limited to two years, and expires next March.

Governor Wilson gave no comprehensive explanation for his action. His veto message simply stated that any funding for emergency housing beyond the current state level was a local government responsibility. Current state

support for emergency housing (\$2 million annually) meets only one-tenth of the need statewide.

Governor Wilson's view on this issue are contrary to that of the Legislature, including many members of his own party who don't see the state assuming its fair share of the responsibility for addressing

what is a statewide problem.

Fifty-eight counties use armories to provide shelter. Sacramento County does not; however, had SB 1950 been signed by Governor Wilson, a small amount of additional funding would have been available to go toward the County's Winter Overflow Shelter Program.

Is Profit the Purpose of Life —and Death?

by Lee Parks

Another year, another debate, and the same arguments about Overflow.

Since numbers are so important to the accountants of public trust, let's run some. The original Overflow proposal was \$100,000 for 100 beds for 12 weeks. Those are easy round numbers: $100,000 \div 100 \div 12 = \83.34 per bed per week. Multiply by 52 weeks and divide by 12 months equals \$361.11 per bed per month. Interesting. A couple could pool that money, getting \$722.22 a month, and rent an apartment, pay the utilities, and have a little left over for groceries.

What do the homeless actually get for the county's \$83.34 a week? (Actually, the only money in the original proposal was federal grant money, costing the county nothing, but the final proposal is for more than the grant.) First they wait for hours in line, often outside during inclement weather; then they are hustled through a mass meal; shipped by bus to a crowded dormitory, and in line again for showers in a common bathroom. They are forced to bed early so they can be awakened early, to be exiled back onto the streets until the next evening, when the cycle starts all over again. That is Overflow, and as little as it is, people do it because it is less dangerous than freezing on a winter's night, with nowhere to go.

Would you spend \$83.34 a week on those accommodations for yourself?

Some would say the indigent do not deserve even that. Reviewers have quoted people in the film "Taylor's Campaign", showing at CSUS on November 18th, as saying the indigent should be "put to sleep" or "allowed to starve". Currently, chasing money seems to be the only game around, but does a loser in the get-rich rat race really deserve death? (Remember the Crash of

1929? Would you jump out a window?)

When the founding fathers severed ties with England, one of the reasons they used was a rejection of the Divine Right of Kings, the belief that a king's authority was derived directly from God, and was therefore absolute. They wrote in the Declaration of Independence that rights are "endowed by God" to all men and are "inalienable". Inalienable means they cannot be separated from the one who has them. And who has more authority than God, by whatever name He is called? Certainly not a king. Consequently, rights are not given at a king's pleasure, only to be taken away at his displeasure—nor any one else's displeasure either.

Since the Right to life is given by God, this sets a very high worth on the life of each individual person. This worth is inalienable; it is part of life itself, one in the same as the living person himself, and is not dependent in any way on a person's social standing, age, sex, race, nationality, or other worldly classification.

It is this intrinsic worth that rights give men that is denied when the value of a person is measured by his bank account, or his property, or his family, or how much profit somebody can make off of him.

The values expressed by people who judge this way, as represented by individuals who are willing to say in a film "let the poor starve," is that a human being is just his things, to be used, abused, and thrown away like any other thing in this disposable culture. The trap is that when they do this to others for their own profit, it will be done to them by someone else, for his own profit; because in treating others as an economic commodity, they make themselves into an economic commodity as well.

To return again to the belief that rights are privileges

endowed by a king, to those who conform, and that there is no higher authority than this king; no transcending Spiritual authority which is above all human authorities, will lead back down the road to tyranny, even if this new king is called majority rule. And the most telling symptom of this debasing of human rights is individuals who say that the poor should die because they are a "burden on society".

Individuals in groups have

always created general rules of behavior that the majority obey, for the well being of each individual. Individuals chosen to speak for the group have legitimate authority, but those claiming to speak for 'society' without legitimate authority are claiming authority for themselves, based on their own idea of what society is. It is a concept in their own heads, a mental construct, a ghost, a bogeyman, their own delusion. The power such per-

sons have is that of a mob; a group of individuals willing to use physical force to punish or kill those who have offended their ghost in the machine—their Mr. Society, which is actually themselves, though they'll probably never admit it.

Would most Americans condone a society that killed its poor because they are too expensive? —

LETTERS

to the Editor

Dear Editor,
Your newspaper, Homeward, is wonderful. I read it cover to cover. I especially enjoyed the poetry and thought the recipe for Switchel was terrific.

However, I was disturbed by one of the letters from a father who was very angry because there was no shelter in Sacramento for he and his son.

BUT, of course, he was wrong because Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center's Family Shelter takes fathers with their children all the time. They are families and the shelter takes one and two parent families which includes single dads and their kids. I regret that in his travels around Sacramento that no one told him about the Family Shelter. It is my hope that the word gets out

that all families are welcome at SAEHC.

Please help us get let all families know that, if space is available, they are welcome. Thanks for this opportunity to say so. And keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Heather Andrews,
Director, SAEHC

Dear Editor,
I attended the work seminar here at Loaves & Fishes presented by David H. Ware on July 20, 1998. We both agree on the need for providing clothing vouchers and bus fare for this work project to be successful. I personally have a lot of strong opinions on this subject. I have been on the street for going on four years now, and only twice have been able to make any progress on gainful employment or improving my condition.

In Salt Lake City my success was due mainly to a place called "Welfare Square" (a Mormon establishment) where a person can trade a day's labor for a clothing voucher plus 'Salt Lake City Gold'—bus tokens. The Mormons are not cheap, but you get access to good

clothes and a decent stack of "gold".

In Boise my success was due mainly to a place called "Idaho Youth Ranch", a secular non-profit thrift shop, who will frequently trade labor for clothing vouchers.

I would like to propose that Loaves & Fishes consider a similar policy that is instrumented through David H. Ware's ideas and the L&F labor pool.

Basically, what Mr. Ware's "Work Seminar" lacks is any type of 'meat' to it, and until there is 'meat' in it, there is not much incentive to show up. Mr. Ware has studiously put together a proposal titled "Back to Work", outlining steps to bring meaningful sub-

stance to this program, but unfortunately it has fallen into someplace called 'the files'.

At the present time I could not give this program good reports, and until Loaves & Fishes gives this program the attention it deserves, it will be basically useless to the homeless. It is my personal opinion that the current method of free clothing that many charities use is not only inadequate but detrimental. I also believe that providing free bus tickets is grossly inadequate and detrimental. A merit system is easier to understand and provides mutual benefit for all parties involved.

Sincerely,
Carl Al Currie

Welcome to Homeward: Please help us make a difference!



"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. The opinions expressed in Homeward are those of the authors, and not necessarily the Sacramento Housing Alliance or SHOC.

SHOC meets every Tuesday at 10:30 am to discuss political issues, and the Homeward editorial committee meets on Thursdays at 10:30am. All meetings are held at Loaves & Fishes' Friendship Park.

We welcome any participation or contribu-

tions: Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted to the Sacramento Housing Alliance or given to Birte in the library at Loaves & Fishes.

Subscriptions are available with a \$15 contribution. A one-year subscription is also offered with the standard \$35 membership to the Sacramento Housing Alliance. Make checks out to SHA. All correspondence can be sent to Homeward, c/o SHA, 2125 19th St., Suite 101, Sac, CA 95818. For information call 442-1198.

Street Stories—essays on living without Packing Books, Not Clothes by Sylvia Paldhan

Homeless, penniless, wanting to continue an education after having transferred from a too expensive school—and vacating campus housing with no money for rent elsewhere—to one where a foundation for a good, interesting, and well-paying job could be earned. Wanting to ensure the ability to be self-supporting—first of all—and to complete a graduate degree, in due course... That is where I was at the start of August. Since then I lived in three women's shelters until mid-September, and then by the railroad tracks until my student loan came through in October.

How have I been able to get into classes and do homework? With the help of the people in the Electronics Department of City College, where I am majoring in

Electronics Technology, the micro-computer option. My departmental advisor is Mel Duvall, my circuitry instructor is Bill McGrath. These two gentlemen have been helpful above and beyond the call of duty assisting me with the necessities of texts and tools, during the interim between beginning classes and getting the money to provide the means to do the work. Wang Ng has lent his own books and makes it a practice to put books for his classes in the library. Even professors in the advance classes have been supportive with my homework and getting lab supplies. I wish that there were more people who understand how much it means to have the helpfulness of the E.T. staff.

During the time I had no place of my own, I became acquainted with several

people in my situation. The homeless include some shiftless drifters, but many of these men and women want to make a self-sufficient life for themselves, and need every break while they earn that life.

I, and those with me where I was, had no money. This means that only rarely could we make a telephone call or ride the bus, let alone buy a sandwich. If we missed the shelter meal time, we would go hungry until the next meal.

We seldom found enough benches to sit on while we waited for the shelters to open. We spent much of our time in lines, seeking health or job or housing or bus assistance. We had no place to sleep, if we needed to make up the lack due to crying babies or sick children or other noises of the night,

except for the benches or the grass in parks during the day.

We could take one shower a day, at best, and have laundry once a week, at best. Only those who choose a derelict existence—and they are the least number, by far—do not use these blessings with assiduous eagerness. We mostly look pretty decent, although we have no closets in the shelters, and no room for more than one suitcase of casual clothes suitable for life on the streets.

We could not always find beds in the shelters. The men are often left on the streets all night, and many women, too, especially those of us without children. Any help anyone can give to provide more space for shelters will be greatly appreciated, as it is deeply needed. So are day centers with showers, clothing donations, razors and

shampoo, food, and couches or benches, so we have some place to be. Friendship Park is the only place that provides all the above in one spot, and the library where I typed this.

Thank you to all who give so generously to Loaves and Fishes or Francis House and all the other centers for us.

Thank you to the staff of the City College Electronics Technology department for making it possible to continue my education without interruption.

Bless you all!



Moving With the Morning Sun

by Jean Scott

September on the American River brings a change as this month hails in the season of Autumn. The green leaf foliage is thinning out with the summer season's regulars, who become scarce once the first real rain drenches that sleeping rolls, and God's dear roof of starry nights no longer holds back the storm clouds gathering against the Sierras after the sun traverses along its course into the western ocean.

The early September dawn chases storm gray clouds away, as Sister Breezes and Brother Wind lift the purpling pink curtains of night away. The sun's first rays light on our river while the permanent residents are breaking their camps. Bed rolls, cook stoves, food and what-have-we of our sparse personal possessions, must be toted off to our individual stash places, while we humbly and silently pray that the powers-that-be will not be too thorough in their sweeps,

confiscating our basic necessities and leaving us exposed to the chilly, hungry nights.

These shadows dawning in the dark blue or brown khaki robes of our sorrow—constantly harassing our camps, stressing us into moving our selected places to less accessible sites—are simply a factor that comes along with the territorial history of homeless camps.

But where was I? Oh, Yes—The Khaki Colored and Dark Blue uniformed folks that



basically draw a pay check from city and county actually police the area along the North and South sides of the American River. This activity helps teach us the respect each individual camp should have for the face of the Mother that we wrap ourselves onto each night. Keep your camp clean! Trash bags are provided by the Neighborhood Cleanup crews. Most of us know this, but the new nomadic folks might need a reminder.

Most camps do respect the face of our Mother Earth.

Most folks will help a new comer through their first days with some food and a blanket or sleeping roll, to make it through the week or until something breaks for that newcomer. So, newcomer!—Please give the items back or pass along what you have been given—this is the way we manage to get over our hardships, with each others help.

For now this is a small glimpse of our American River home, and as long as we can get along, keep our camps on the move and respect the face of the Mother that we walk upon, we are not homeless.

Until Winter checks in, the best to you all. Hope you are dry and have a loving companion as your trail is blazed. Thanks for all your help. I am grateful and there is not a price on gratitude. Love you all, always—Jean

Standdown '98

by Eddie Harris

The 6 am blustering winds ruffled threw the line as we stood waiting for the gates of Camp Pollock to open. The registration started at 8 am, and went slowly while those of us in line anticipated the physical, mental, social, financial, emotional, medical and legal assistance that would be the reward for all who had the patience to wait in the long lines.

Coffee, soft drinks and pastries were available throughout the day, while all seven meals during this three day event were excellent. AA and NA meetings were in abundance.

Entertainment on Friday was a surf music playing band, Saturday was an alternative music band, a song from Snake, and a standup comedy routine by yours truly.

On Sunday morning was church, with a choir composed of the Standdown participants. All too soon lunch was served, and then the annual event was over. ∞

Conference

from page 3

Also high on the agenda was establishing an information network for sharing with other street papers across the nation, and thereby the national public, the homeless situation in different areas, as an important step in enabling the poor to defend their civil rights. Knowing how local advocacy groups in other areas have successfully overcome local restrictions on homeless populations, and what programs have actually worked to alleviate poverty, instead of just covering it up, should help to provide an effective national response to what is a national problem.

The early sun reveals
A velvet carpet
Shrouded with crystal
dew and spider lace
—Lee

Taylor

from page 1

help a stranger and share what little they have with others."

The 75-minute film is narrated by Martin Sheen, who is himself a dedicated activist, and feeds the homeless once a week in Venice, a seaside community next to Santa Monica. He often appears at demonstrations against the ban on public feeding, and it was at one such demonstration that Cohen spotted him and asked him to narrate his documentary.

Richard Cohen has made films about the courageous and powerless in their quest for self-determination in America for years, including "Hurry Tomorrow", an expose about the involuntary drugging of mental patients in a California state hospital, and "Deadly Force", an inquiry into the fatal shooting of an unarmed man by a Los Angeles Police Officer. His films are often described as shocking, compelling, and

inspirational. "Taylor's Campaign" is no exception. It won the Special Jury Award at the Big Muddy Film Festival in Carbondale, Illinois.

Los Angeles Times reporter Kevin Thomas wrote: "Taylor's Campaign" cuts right to the heart of the plight of the homeless. The widening gap in America between the haves and have-nots could not be more dramatically demonstrated than in affluent, beautiful Santa Monica."

The film is being presented by Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee as part of the National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week campaign. All proceeds will go for the production of the Homeward street journal. The film will be shown at California State University at Sacramento's Union Auditorium on Wednesday November 18, 1998 at 7:30 pm. By special arrangement, filmmaker Richard Cohen will be present at the screening and is scheduled to speak, along with representatives of Sacramento's advocacy groups.

Health Fair

Loaves & Fishes Friendship Park

Thursday

November 19, 1998

8 am to Noon

HIV testing, tuberculosis testing, pregnancy tests, hearing screenings & other related services. Entertainment, incentives, and prizes for those attending

The Midtown Gardeners Could Use Some Volunteers!

This program helps train the homeless as well as provide wonderful gardens in the Midtown Sacramento area. Currently they need help in the following areas:

- Help getting plants and gardening materials
- Help doing extra gardening
- Help with garden design and bidding garden projects
- Help researching other similar businesses and projects
- Help finding grants—Help with general PR (i.e. Going to events as a speaker)
- Help with billing and accounting
- Help with marketing—finding customers

You can help?! Call Michael at 441-4515



MRS. CLAUS'S NEW PARTNERSHIP IN THE CONTRACTS LAW FIRM PUT HER IN A HIGHER TAX BRACKET.

HONEY, WOULD YOU CHECK THAT LIST AGAIN? WE NEED ALL THE DEDUCTIONS WE CAN COME UP WITH.



The Can Lady by Lenora Mathews

Suddenly without warning jobless,

No money or savings

she found herself homeless.

Tears mingled with sweat on her face,

Needing income she

gathered cans from place to place

Collecting cans in town

she pretended not to

notice

sneers or somebody's frown.

What was once so tragic,

as a job and check

came through,

became a day of magic.

Homeward Staff

SHA Director: Stacie Clary
SHOC President: Eddie Harris
Senior Editor: Christina Stock
Layout: Lee Parks

Newspaper Committee Volunteers:

Cliff Crooks, Stormin' Norman, Helen Dodge, Marvin Jensen, Paula, Billeen Pruitt

News writers needed

Joining SHA

Annual Membership dues:

Standard, \$35;

Low-income, \$15

Organizations:

Full, 0.1% agency budget;

Associate, \$100

Send donations to:

Sacramento Housing Alliance

2125 19th St., No. 101

Sacramento, CA 95818

SHA is a network of concerned citizens which promotes decent affordable housing for low income households and homeless people through advocacy & participation in public discourse. The SHA does not itself provide or manage housing.

You may call for info: (916) 442-1198

Winner of the
Special Jury Award at the Big Muddy Film Festival
Showing at

CSUS Union Auditorium

Nov 18, 1998

7:30 pm

a benefit for

HOMeward
street journal

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

Taylor's Campaign

"Excellent documentary...cuts right to the heart of the plight of the homeless. Taylor's Campaign shows us how easily many of us could end up on the streets ourselves and leaves us aware of a terrible vacuum in creative, morally imaginative leadership in our self-absorbed society."—Kevin Thomas, Los Angeles Times

"A Grapes of Wrath for today, a stirring uphill battle for justice...investigative film making has not been silenced"—Terry Messman, Street Spirit, Berkely

"A thoughtful, rounded look at a subject that won't go away no matter how hard we try to ignore it."—Renee Downing, Arizona Daily Star

Tickets \$10

Discounts for groups

Seating is limited

please call in advance 442-1198

Narrated by Martin Sheen

Directed and edited by Richard Cohen; Produced by Amy Ziering Kofman and Richard Cohen;
Cinematography by Gil Kofman and Baird Bryant, Assisted by Marcello Bice; A production of Raindog
Films in association with Film Arts Foundation. Released by Richard Cohen