

HOMeward

Serving the Sacramento area homeless community

Volume One, No. 2

April 1997



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homeless?**

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FREE! (for now)

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 days
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. 444-9626

Free clothing

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

Union Gospel Mission

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

Medical

Mercy Clinic

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

Capital Health Clinic

1500 C St. (at 15th.) Adults
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

This is your paper speaking

If you are reading this, then it's your
newspaper. Your voice, your vote, your
time, your talent — all are tools to help
the multiracial. Homeward needs:
cartoons/poems/ articles
your opinion on this paper.

What do YOU want it be? Please join
our meetings at 10 a.m Mondays in
Friendship Park; or give articles,
poems, and other writing to Birte in the
library at Loaves and Fishes.

For more information call 442-1198.

We need your voice!

Homeward meets at 10 a.m.
Mondays at Loaves and Fishes.
Organizers: Kathryn Felix,
Christina Stock
Editor: Matt Peters
Editorial committee: Stacey Clarey,
Art Clay, Helen Dodge
SHOC chair: Eddie Harris

Cover photo by
Andy Alfaro

Welcome to Homeward No. 2

'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.

Making homelessness a crime is criminal

'Sweeps' waste scarce financial resources that could go toward permanent solutions

By Kathryn Felix
Homeward staff

Homelessness and hunger in the United States' major cities increased in 1996 for the twelfth year in a row, according to many reports.

Many of those same reports predict that 1997 will see an even greater rise due to new federal welfare and immigration laws commonly referred to as 'Welfare Reform.'

The primary source of help for homeless and hungry people is emergency shelter beds. In every city studied by The National Center for Law and Poverty, in its report, "Mean Sweeps," the number of emergency shelter beds was less than the estimated number of homeless people in the area. The report makes it clear that local communities are not meeting the needs of their homeless and hungry.

This increase in homelessness has led to reactive, discriminatory responses by local governments which are frantically scrambling for solutions. One national trend is the enactment and selective enforcement of ordinances which criminalize many of the activities in which homeless individuals engage. Most of these ordinances prohibit sleeping in public places, aggressive panhandling, sitting on public sidewalks, and engaging in other life-sustaining activities in public such as urinating, camping or sleeping in cars. Another trend of local governments is ordinances which make it more difficult for social service agencies to provide assistance to homeless populations. In Sacramento, examples are the Social Services Siting Committee (created to make policy governing how and where social services can locate) and the city's lawsuit against Loaves and Fishes.

Many local governments pass these ordinances claiming that they are protecting the quality of life for other

Many communities hope that tough laws and 'sweeps' will send the homeless out of their community. But where are people without homes going to go?

residents of the community. Laws that criminalize homeless people's behavior have been upheld in the courts as legitimate efforts to regulate public space. Taken together, these laws almost criminalize homelessness itself.

The problem with these types of laws is that they fail to address the root causes of homelessness which include, but are not limited to, a lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs which pay a living wage, inadequate health and employment services, substance abuse, and mental illness. To penalize homeless individuals who have no private place to carry out these activities does not serve as a deterrent. Homeless people do what they have to do in order to survive. These laws and ordinances offer no alternatives or solutions. Rather, they only seek to punish.

Many communities hope that tough laws and 'sweeps' will send the homeless out of their community. But where are people without homes going to go — on to the next community, only to be 'swept' away from there, too? Concurrently, the sweeps waste scarce financial resources which could be used



Photos: Jill Macdonell

for permanent rather than illusory solutions.

These laws are also counter-productive because they make it more difficult for homeless people to escape poverty. Homeless people who are forced to pay a fine can't afford to end up in prisons or jails. Prisons do not teach job skills or help someone find housing. These laws put an unnecessary and inappropriate burden on the criminal justice system. Is someone who sleeps on a park bench really so dangerous that they need to be locked up? The City of Sacramento is proposing that we build a city jail just for these types of misdemeanor offenses. The millions of dollars needed to build and operate a jail would be better spent by building affordable housing, implementing job training programs and feeding the hungry.

Furthermore, these local ordinances end up in long legal battles over their constitutionality. This costs the cities even more money and the result often is that the ordinances do violate civil rights and need to be rewritten. Is this how we should be using our scarce resources?

Policies that criminalize homelessness are really reactions from

the public trying to present a better public image. Polarizing segments of the community is an ineffective way to reach this goal. If the community works together, all residents, homeless and housed, can take a greater pride in where they live.

There are many alternatives to criminalizing homelessness. Some have proven to be effective and others are only in experimental stages.

Policing programs can involve service providers, allowing them to make the first contact with homeless on routine law enforcement calls.

Seattle has proposed a hygiene center in the downtown area to serve the homeless. A disagreement over location has put the project on hold.

Some cities have a one percent tax on restaurants grossing more than \$400,000 per year and use the money to fund programs for the homeless.

Officers can be specially trained to work with homeless individuals so they can be called on the scene to provide outreach.

Alternative spaces can be offered to homeless people to be used during the day and at night so they are not using public areas to engage in life-sustaining

Please see INCREASE, page 4



One man's search for his existence; or, 'I don't think we're in Texas anymore'

By Blaine
Special to Homeward

In my struggle to leave the streets, visits to agencies which can provide that magic carpet ride back to what society refers to as a 'real life' are mandatory.

These consist of weekly, bi-weekly and often daily journeys to the V.A., G.A., various doctors and more social workers than I can count or remember. Thus came the time to visit the Almighty Social Security Office.

I have spent more time in these various offices than I have in my own bed. This is a very true statement as I have no bed.

Upon entering the Social Security Sanctuary I drew a number and positioned myself to watch the lighted board which indicated whose lucky turn it is next. I leaned back in my chair to enjoy the serenity of the office. No one spoke. Everyone sat and stared at the magic board where slowly, oh so slowly, the number changed.

My number finally appeared, and I was strangely tempted to yell 'Ringo!'

I emptied my pockets of countless papers and jumped to the counter where a lady sat behind a glass partition (undoubtedly bulletproof.) I explained that I came to this office to file for an

administration hearing on disability, turned in my waiting number and was asked for my SSI number. She quickly typed this information into her computer and calmly informed me that I was in Texas. Not California.

I produced all of my ID documents, and she glanced at them and said, "Well, according to our machine, you are

I retrieved the papers and asked if I should do them here, take them home, wait until I transfer to Texas, or file here and then transfer the case to Texas?"

In a tense voice, she said, "Fill them out and return them to me."

My back aching, I bent one more time to speak through the slot in the window.

But Miss, I'm not in Texas. I'm standing here in front of you in Sacramento, California!

in Texas."

But Miss, I'm not in Texas. I'm standing here in front of you in Sacramento, California! At this time I received the 'look' we all recognize. We know it so well — part anger, part boredom. My alarm bell sounded, and I knew that if I pushed her even one more millimeter, I would never accomplish my goal. I raised up from speaking through the window slot and stepped back half a step.

She took this as submission on my part, rattled through her drawers and came up with enough paper work to keep me busy until the second Tuesday of next week.

"I can't fill them out, because I can't see them."

In exasperation, she threw up her hands and told me to go to the corner of the room, (I thought I was back in elementary school) and a counselor would assist me.

I smiled, my back really hurting by this time, took my paperwork and found the correct seat. I sat there wondering when someone would come and give me my 'dunce cap'.

Now the counselor took her vengeance. Two and one-half hours later, a lady called my name and led me into the inner sanctum. She was more polite than the previous women who

guarded the 'gate to enlightenment.'

Of course, the first thing she said was, "according to our computer, you are in Texas."

Once again, I placed all of my ID in front of her, at the same time informing her that I had filed for reconsideration some four months previously in this same office.

Once again she typed God-knows-what into her computer and said, "We have no such record and still show you in Texas."

I looked around the room in dismay, more than a little confused, when I spied the lady who had filed the papers during my previous visit!

She glanced up from her work and (thank God) she recognized me! She told my counselor, "I know this man...he's the one who called me 'honey child!'"

Eureka. Just like that I was no longer in Texas!

The two women conferred for a few minutes, then my present-day counselor returned to me, helped me finish my paperwork and efficiently entered into her computer.

I arose and said, "Thank you, honey child."

She smiled and said goodbye.

As I exited the room I passed by the lady in her bulletproof cage, smiled and gave her the victory sign.

She flushed and quickly left her post.

I always have the strangest feeling when I'm leaving one of the offices, as if I've just escaped from Folsom prison...

Increase:

Continued from page 3

activities

Voucher programs have had some success in certain cities. In this program vouchers can be purchased from local merchants and given to homeless people instead of cash.

In Nashville, service providers work with law enforcement to differentiate between a social service response and a law enforcement response.

In Oakland, the rehabilitation of Lafayette Square Park included homeless people to help them feel part of the park and the community.

In California, AB2521 was introduced as a bill to include homeless people and immigrants as protected under the hate crime laws, but it was vetoed by Governor Wilson.

The criminalization of homelessness is an expensive and counterproductive trend in our community as well as others. An understanding of why people really are homeless and solutions that address these root causes are the only ways we will be able to help people get off the streets and into the living situations they desire.

Kathryn Felix is an intern from CSUS Masters in Social Work Program working with SHIA and SHOC

Homeless organizing committee attends homeless civil rights conference in L.A.

Several members of SHIA's Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) attended a conference in mid-January in Los Angeles entitled, 'Building Unity: Defending the Civil Rights of Homeless People,' held by Holman Methodist Church. The conference

board to mediate with police and monitor conduct toward homeless people. Christina Stock, an organizer with 'Homeward,' established contacts with several homeless newspaper publishers and other organizations. Helen Dodge, who works with 'Homeward,' was

impressed by the consistent focus on affirmative solutions to problems and was very excited that every person at the conference had something to offer.

Panels presented information on

Please see ATTEND, page 5

The focus was to organize an on-going fight against the breach of civil rights of homeless and the poor.

brought together homeless advocates, and concerned community members in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and Buddy Gray, a longtime homeless advocate. The focus was to organize an on-going fight against the breach of civil rights of homeless and the poor.

SHOC members found tools that they could bring back to Sacramento. Eddie Harris talked with many people about forming a Sacramento civilian review



A painting, untitled, by Ray Hillestead, a formerly homeless artist.

Photo: J.R. Macdonald

Workers at housing program offer 'heavenly' safety net

By Peter LaRue
Special to Homeward

If there is a reward in heaven for saving lost souls, it's a lock that Jerry Alexander will get it. Jerry is a SHEP (Supported Housing and Entitlement Program) outreach coordinator for TLCS (Transitional Living and Community Support.)

He is the first person a mentally ill, or homeless person meets when he or she has decided to get on the road to recovery and once again become a useful person to society.

Jerry Alexander is certainly more than qualified — a Vietnam Vet, PTSD (post-traumatic shock disorder) victim, and recovered addict and alcoholic

What sets TLCS apart from other programs is their sincere effort to hang in there with the client.

himself.

By using his liabilities as assets, he has used his career as a vehicle to not only truly help himself, but also his



Jerry Alexander, outreach coordinator for SHEP, is a saint to many people.

clients.

Upon meeting him, I was overwhelmed by his honest concern and love for his clients. Just knowing Jerry is out there improving the state of affairs in Sacramento always brings a much needed smile to my face.

SHEP is located at 470 Bannon Street in a portable trailer, truly an oasis in an otherwise drab and dreary landscape. A word of mouth organization, it receives its clients through referrals generated either from hospitals or straight off the streets, from seeds planted by concerned individuals.

It is of course, a voluntary program. In order to qualify for the TLCS program, a client must be able to meet specific criteria. As a rule of thumb, the person must be homeless, mentally ill and at risk. They use the T.M.H.D. (Target Mental Health Diagnosis) for evaluation. SHEP is the intake office and first step in the TLCS program. Then there is a 30-day appraisal stay at Cami's Place to make sure that the client is serious and able to handle the program.

A client, in order to succeed, must have a willingness and sincere desire to work the TLCS program to its full potential. The prospective individual must have come to a decision that they have had enough and are willing to get a doctor's help and work the A.A. or N.A. program, as well as attend group meetings and learn independent living skills.

The feasibility and practicality of a client's goals are checked and outlined,

as well as discussed and rechecked, so as not to waste any valuable time. This is done on a continual basis, with the emphasis towards reality, to ensure the client re-acquires valuable independent living skills he or she will need to start life in that area.

All the resources are right within the client's reach. This is done to improve and create a positive and nurtured mental outlook. At the heart of this approach is the clearest understanding in the belief that every human being has a unique and special worth.

What sets TLCS apart from other programs is their sincere effort to hang in there with the client. If an individual isn't ready, they can return to the program at a later date, if their case allows.

The TLCS staff is loving, very professional and supportive. They constructively help the client confront and work through any and all issues that have led to a destructive lifestyle in the first place.

It is this writer's own personal joy in knowing that this unique program exists, virtually plucking people out of the mix who would more than likely be lost, forgotten, or worse, worn out by the cruel, insensitivity of this grinding life.

For Jerry Alexander and all those other special people at TLCS, I say not only should they be applauded, but that this program should be supported and expanded to be able to facilitate more and more clients, to pick up the slack that has been created when taxpayers and politicians let the axe fall on so many innocent heads.

Attend

Continued from page 4

national, state and local perspectives. Smaller workshops then focused on the specific issues of homelessness and marginal communities and discussions were opened up to offer solutions.

Individuals from various cities shared local news, including a video of recent police sweeps in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Workshops focused on specific issues such as welfare reform, anti-camping ordinances, and NIMBYism (Not in my backyard).

A great amount of information and thought was shared along with a sense of urgency to maintain a strong network with all who attended in order to continue the progress of the conference.

The conference was co-sponsored by the California Homeless and Housing Coalition, the Los Angeles Coalition to End Homelessness, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, and the National Coalition for the Homeless. Excellent meals were provided by the West Hollywood homeless organization, Foundation Catering. Conference organizers stated that they had difficulty funding this event and stressed the need for more support in future efforts.

Welfare-to-work program reported on slow track

The New York Times reported last weekend that while the administration is trying to fast-track welfare-to-work programs, companies are implementing the jobs program at a slow pace.

Robert Shapiro, CEO of Monsanto, the nation's fourth-largest chemical maker, was listening in August when President Clinton challenged every boss who had ever grumbled about public assistance to 'try to hire someone off welfare, and try hard.' He called in his company's personnel planners and directed them to find jobs — careers even — for welfare recipients. While they were at it, Shapiro

News

said, they should lean on the firms that supplied his company with goods and services to do the same.

So far, Monsanto has hired five welfare recipients, and its contractors and suppliers have found jobs for roughly 20 more. Until it completes an assessment of its fledgling program, the company is not sure how many more of the nation's dependent poor it will be able to take on. But the number, in any event, will remain limited.

Monsanto's experience underscores one of the difficult truths of welfare reform:

Putting millions of recipients to work will require more than financial incentives, more than presidential exhortations, more than extensive training and placement programs. It will require considerable patience because progress will be measured in tiny steps, not great leaps.

According to Gary Burtless, a welfare reform analyst at the Brookings Institution think tank, implementation will require work to be found for more than 2 million aid recipients during the next five years.

— Excerpted, with permission, from *Real Change*

Opinion

Removal

The suffering today is a pattern that follows a path introduced in America from 1790 and the migration westward from the Atlantic shores of speculation. First to go were the nations of the Creek and the Cherokee.

From the banks of the Tallapoosa came a trail of blood in the true spirit of capitalism finding no refuge among the acres of endeavor. The face of the earth

was swallowed by man's inhumanity that left no frontier for the Choctaw or the Cheyenne villages, burned for their children's children. Death to the Chickasaw in the name of Christianity before the, the Seminoles ahead the Sioux and Apache and Navajo and all the tribes of the Shawnee and the Fox.

The suffering of prejudice was written in the westward march they called manifest destiny. Mexican blood spilled on their own soil, thousands slaughtered

in the summer of 1845 sustained by expansion across the Rio Grande to Camargo and southward to Monterrey in a Death March to Mexico City.

The suffering of today doesn't recall every woman or child killed but it makes all brown people of this continent blood brothers and sisters engaged in a battle for our removal from the soil where we stood first.

— Joe Montoya Jr.

Poet's Corner

A Better Tomorrow

Sometimes I think this pain
inside of me is going to drive
me totally insane - Lord
Help me out of this cold pouring rain

It seems like I'm always
walking a long, lonely and rocky road
Nothing to grasp and nothing to hold

Feeling tired, feeling old.
The dark days and nights always follow
Why does my life seem so hollow?
Silently I cry and I ask Lord, oh why,
As my soul seems to slowly die

and my heart is so torn apart.

Yet even in my deepest sorrow
I hope to see a better tomorrow
as I wander through the whirlwinds of night
Sometimes it's so hard to see what's wrong or right

Lord please help me through this plight
Lord knows it takes all my might
to make it through this fight
Will there ever be a day for me?
that will shine ever so bright

Will I ever reach my height?
Let there be goals in sight
Lord bless me with your
Guiding Light

— Michelle Jean Moncus

The Damage Done

Slowly my senses flooded over; then arise -
some imperishable secret place
in my spirit remains reclusive
a shadowy presence locked up
in the depths of the heart
the brittleness, awkward
misunderstood child that lurks within

confounded by a bewildered reluctance,
a dubious assessment
to let it come to the surface
surmising the damage done
lingering past tragic scenes of trauma
scattered, running movies left alone-unwind
subservient to the unconsciousness madness

internal conversations abound
in fragile unanswered memories
beyond all understanding
grasping at imperfections
leaning toward fresh forgiveness itself
fighting against the forces
of all traces of evil
in an endless struggle
toward wholeness

— Peter LaRue

George Lampella

The storm approaches from nowhere,
but no one seems to know where
this is at. Waves off the Great Lakes
are dusty carpets shaken with the force
of maids in black and white uniforms.
A cargo ship, lifted underneath, complies
with hierarchy, its lower rank in this
chain of command. The idea to capsize
is the mind of little boys. Whitecaps
are palms that cup this foreign insect
passed from friend to friend, each

taking turns to examine every angle,
opening of a mystery even to itself.
The moon is a hole in this jar of night,
bright and big, content with the view,
wanting no part of the journey below.
The transporter ship rocks back and forth,
back and forth, too far to turn around,
too close to the processing plants
to anchor down, wait it out. Breakers
beat on the side of the hull where inside,
Iron Ore protests captivity. Lights
from the shore swell, instill faith
to hold on a little longer.

Thirty years later, this ship
is still adrift. It swaggers with
Smirnoff on its breath, the broken
hull in its liver never repaired
from endless encounters with lakes and wind,
clouds that held grudges. Now,
it's its own cargo, docking below bar
awnings, corner store signs. But younger
seamen, who live to conquer instead of comply,
will never see the vessel inside of him,
will never understand that night across
Lake Michigan when the wind blew hard,
and he prayed for the first time. Take
the Irish out of his grin, place a port
in front of his eyes, and he'll sink
where he stands. There is no dock
close enough, no destination assigned.
He comes and and goes and can make the birds
laugh with a beard that turns red in the sun,
with hands, calloused and large, thick
as nylon ropes that pull handshakes closer
to his pier, so any new journeyman can learn the
rules,
hear stories that were just stories,
but might as well have been lived.

— John Koewitch

A Nightmare on North C Street

I lie awake in my casket bed
Listening to the night sounds of
39 other non-beings
All resting after a long day
of rushing purposely from
one place of nothingness to another.

Small children wail in the night
as ambulances rush to rescue
the non-people in the nasty park
that no one loves, except the homeless
who spend their days in trances
brought upon by officials who
have no feeling, except for revulsion

I wander through the nasty park
and look at empty eyes and the non-beings
sinking slowly to their mental deaths
who cares about these non-beings - no one
except other non-people

Back in my coffin bed, I close my eyes,
hoping to not dream. But I do dream-or perhaps its
vision of things to come
I see hundreds of men in business
suits, wielding huge grippers. With blood
and death in their eyes
They take their grippers and start to
pick up all of the non-beings and
throw them in the dumpsters

The screaming and crying have no
effect on the monsters
They're here to destroy the non-beings

who have become an eyesore in the
sparkling capital city

So we die, one by one, beyond the screams,
I hear an echo of my comrades, thanking
God for ending the pain and nothingness
May we all rest in peace.

— Mary Crandall

Only a Few Friends Remain

Homeless but not alone.
There is a sense of awe in my
heart as I listen to the laughter
and sharing among the diversity
of manner, language, ages and
stages in our lives
Why now, Holy Mother, when
I have searched for you in so
many places Why do I feel your
presence now?
The wonder of motherhood, then
the baby died — and later the
marriage...only a few friends
remain.
Then West to California to
work with dying children. They
taught me of a deeper love than
I had ever known

I prayed at the shrine
of Mother Catherine and the
statue of Christ...still an
emptiness...only a few friends
remain.

Off to the mountains, it was
natural, quiet and free. Fifteen
years past as my business and
fame took me from the quiet
retreat half way around the world.
Still searching for your face
in Cathedrals
all over the world and in 'A Work
of Heart,' two letters from Mother
Theresa and a publisher for my book

Then came the losses.
Kathleen, grandmother my home
and Smokey my cat and such
pain.

In quiet desperation I sought
your peace, the loneliness
unbearable - a darkness so vast
I tried to take my life.
Was it you who touched my
soul and brought back
my life as I was air lifted
from the monastery and later
locked up

Behind locked doors I found
some rest...with people
that society has not the courage
to touch. I saw the face
of Christ in those who shared
my grief and shame.

I'm free now with nothing
of value - only memories of
the love I shared with my
husband, child, special children
dearest friend, grandmother and
my cat. There is a peace inside
and only a few friends remain.

— Susan Oliver

What does Loaves and Fishes mean to you?

"Many people are reluctant to speak about Loaves and Fishes. It's rather as though you would ask them, 'What do you think about your mother?' How could one say all of the things that Loaves and Fishes has been to all of us?"

—Bob

"They gave me spiritual nourishment when I most needed it."

—Helen Dodge

"They saved my life — literally. I could be out there, under the bridge, under the tent, in the hood, on the corner, but I'd rather be right here with breath in my chest."

—Dimitris, resident, St John's Shelter



"They got me off the streets."

—J.C.

"I just got here Monday, but I kind of like the people here, because they don't seem to care one bit about your background or anything. People are people. That's all that counts. It doesn't matter if you're a millionaire, or a person on the streets who can't seem to make ends meet."

—unknown

"I just came from a memorial service for a guy who died in detox. They didn't have to do that, but they did. It doesn't matter that he was homeless, and probably couldn't get his

act together, they still cared about him. That's what people are all about, at least they should be."

—Rod Beaton.

"They provided a port in a storm."

—Marvin Jensen

"I may be giving more than I'll ever know, but I'm learning more than I'll ever give."

—John, volunteer, Friendship Park

"They gave me air to breathe."

—Terry



Photos by Jill Booth Macdonell

Opinion

It will not pass

The coming and current persecution of the poor and the homeless by a nation who's soul has grown weak and uncaring is of deep concern to God. The poor are always with us for it is the tool that God has provided mankind to measure the spiritual health of the city, the state and the nation.

The nation created the circumstances that has created the economic dislocation

of millions and will deny responsibility for creating these problems.

The attempt to deal with these problems will lead to denying first the poor and homeless their humanity, then their constitutional rights as citizens.

The state will foster programs, supposedly to help the homeless, and will establish centers to locate them in, and with coercion and force, these centers will be nothing more than concentration camps. The state will create legal problems for the poor and homeless to derive cheap labor for community projects that will allow

government agencies to avoid paying a living wage for services.

As Christ said, 'Whoever does harm to the least of my children, they do it to me.' Again Christ will be nailed to the cross, as again the nation and even much of the church, in his name, will cooperate with these methods of persecution.

The poor and the homeless are called upon to pray for the soul of Sacramento, the state, and the nation. For the city, the state and the nation is separated from God's understanding.

The state will target places like Loaves and Fishes, because they are outside

their control. But God will not allow the destruction of such places that do his work.

St. James 2:5 Listen my beloved Brethren: has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

—Max Biddle

Poet's Corner (continued)

The River

time quickly goes elastic
as in the river's
sudden speaking
a thundering voice roars
out of the foaming chasm

this life of boredom
has ended at last
pretty sights illuminate
images inside the soul
it initiates the crying
the type so hard to control
we've chosen this road
so there's no reason
to ignore its message

Escape

precious objects shimmer
like the stones floating in the
water
starting on to discover
the mysteries of love
the loss and cost of all
unfair expectations

finding one's way through
valiant acts of love
fools call it magic
like the murmur of clouds
above
like the sounds the river
teaches

as it never quite reaches
the ancient riddles posed
under trees and sky
that everthing returns
to by and by

—Peter LaRue

If you would like to hear more of Peter LaRue's poetry, you can hear him read on Thursdays at 7:00 pm at Luna's Cafe, 1414 16th St. He will also be featured on the CD, 'Inside the Turtle's Shell, Vol II,' a spoken word collaboration of California poets.

A note of gratitude

Homeward would like to thank Darrell Steinberg for his efforts to take the load off of Loaves and Fishes.

If your organization is involved in feeding meals on Sundays, or would like to be, please call us at Homeward, and we will get the word out or help you get more information.

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

Good Friday Vigil March 28th, 10:30 a.m.



City Hall
915 I St.

Demonstration

'Be a united voice for the homeless and hungry within the city of Sacramento'

Free lunch for the hungry
&
the first 25 people in need will
receive a new blanket

Sponsored By: The River City Pax Christi Gospel Justice of the Diocese of Sacramento, Sacramento Catholic Workers, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of Mercy Justice Committee, Sacramento Housing Alliance, Sacramento Cottages Housing Inc., Lutheran Social Services Transitional Housing, Franciscans-St. Francis Parish Central Guadalupe