

HOMeward

STREET JOURNAL

Volume 5, No. 5

Member NASNA
North American Street Newspaper Association

December, 2001

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Resources

"We shall find peace.
We shall hear Angels.
We shall see
the sky sparkling
with diamonds."
- Chekov

The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), along with the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA) and Loaves & Fishes, held a rally on the north steps of the State Capitol on November 14, 2001, in support of legislation to establish a National Housing Trust Fund. The fund would set aside the money necessary to build affordable housing nation-wide. Approximately 1.5 million homes could be build over the next 10 years if the legislation is passed.

"We know that a national housing trust fund will work the same way that local trust funds do. Local trust funds, like the Sacramento Low Income Housing Trust Fund, have shown that building affordable homes helps the economy by generating thousands of living wage construction jobs, that the new homes stabilize neighborhoods, and also that trust funds provide homes for the elderly, disabled and working families who have been priced out of the housing market," said Arlene Krause, Executive Director of the Sacramento Housing Alliance, in a press release.

There are actually two bills currently being considered in the U.S. Congress.

HR 2349 is in the House of Representatives. It is being sponsored by Bernie Sanders (I-VT), John McHugh (R-NY), and Barbara Lee (D-CA).

In the Senate, S.1246 is being sponsored by California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

In all, over 1125 organizations and elected officials have endorsed the establishment of a National Housing Trust Fund.

The Rally began at 2 pm. A small but determined crowd gathered on the Capitol steps

Housing Trust Fund Rally



Photo courtesy Randy Dittmer

because, as usual, grounds maintenance had thoroughly soaked the grass. That meant the speakers stood facing the building and the audience looked out on the passersby - some who walked around the group without even a side-ways glance. Earlier, a supporter sitting at one of the outside cafes on 11th street overheard two men in suits complaining because the "beggars" had the steps from 2 to 4. Those who joined the rally from 11th street weren't bothered, but several who approached from

the corner of 10th street were stopped and questioned.

The Rally was MC'd by Garry Cox, of Loaves & Fishes, who started everyone off with chanting "What do we want? - Housing!" There were several speakers from the various organizations, and a skit by SHOC. The skit depicted a couple who were evicted by a landlord who had doubled their rent, and then they were arrested for camping and separated. The

see Trust Fund page 4



Photo courtesy Rebecca Terry and John. Left: The 'Renters' being arrested for camping.



Photo courtesy Randy Dittmer

11/14 Housing Now!

Released through the San Francisco Bay Independent Media Center (www.sf.indymedia.com)

by Michelle

November 14th: As part of the National Day of Housing Action, approximately three hundred people marched through the streets of downtown San Francisco this evening to demand the immediate creation of affordable housing. One sign read, "Todos tenemos derecho a un techo" (We all have a right to a roof), which summarizes the sentiments behind the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Campaign. This current push to establish a

housing trust that will build and preserve 1.5 million units of low income rentals over the next ten years is the most promising solution to the nationwide affordable housing crisis. The last meaningful federal effort to address the problem occurred during the Ford administration.

The spirited gathering began with a ceremony at Civic Center plaza, which included an introduction to the Trust Campaign by James Tracy of Right 2 a Roof/COH. A number of

speakers then outlined the present conditions faced by millions of low-income individuals and families. The spectrum of speakers reflected the diversity of those effected by the crisis, which includes low-income families, minimum wage and undocumented worker, the elderly, immigrants, disabled people and the unemployed. Currently at least 10,000 people are on the waiting list for section 8 vouchers in San Francisco; when the list was recently reopened over 30,000 people applied. In addition,

see Housing Page 4

"Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out."
- James B. Conant

Facing Affordable Housing Challenges

reprinted with permission from the Denver Voice

by Jim Bole

DENVER - At a Housing Justice Forum held at Jefferson Unitarian Church, October 23rd, Denver City Councilwoman Susan Barnes-Gelt and Jefferson County Housing Authority Director Alan Feinstein discussed metro Denver affordable housing barriers and actions for overcoming them.

Cities and counties need to insure that new developments or redevelopments are for mixed use, including housing affordable to families earning less than 80% of the area median income (AMI). The AMI in Denver is \$64,400.

Trust funds need to be established for seed money and subsidies to make mixed use features economically feasible. New retail complexes should include a substantial component of housing affordable to those who will provide the services. Covenants governing approved new developments should be directed, at least in part, toward reducing cost, including increased unit density and decreased setbacks and square footage requirements. Denver's proposed

Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance would require all developments of greater than 30 units to set aside 10% for work force housing.

A Colorado Legislative Task Force presently is investigating options for affordable housing help by the state. One promising measure, initiated by a large consortium of groups, is a proposed Colorado Housing Trust Fund. It would provide a multi-million dollar, annually renewable fund of seed money to be used in alleviating a wide variety of affordable housing needs, including support for homeless shelters.

The availability of Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) money has diminished substantially since the mid 1980s. According to the Colorado Division of Housing, Colorado has a current need for about 66,000 affordable rental units. About half of these must be deep subsidy rentals and transitional housing. Our state is in the top ten where rent is least affordable. A worker here must earn about three times the minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment (\$750/mo).

Sane Housing Development

reprinted with permission from the Denver Voice

by Steven C. Flanders

DENVER - The local newspaper recently had a couple of interesting articles. The one was talking about energy independence and how dangerous it is (since Sept. 11) for us to be so dependent on oil from the Middle East, and the other was celebrating the new laws recently enacted to manage Colorado's growth problems. These two articles brought to mind a plan, originally developed to reduce the problem of homelessness, that would also help with energy independence and growth management.

Allow, by lightning-up on the zoning laws, extremely low cost housing to be built. The idea is to sell these units, as some form of real estate, to the occupants, getting the poor out from under rent, and enabling them to accumulate wealth in the form of home equity. Instead of zoning laws aimed primarily at enhancing property values (such as minimum square footage requirements, prohibition against less attractive building materials, etc.), have zoning laws that merely require decent sanitation, for the health of the community, and sound construction, so that the units aren't blowing down in the wind. Basically, the idea is free up, as much as possible, the bottom end of the housing supply, thereby reattaching the bottom rung or two to the mythical ladder of the American economic dream.

Allowing thin strips of low cost housing to be built around the edges of our commercial districts would not only not hurt the local housing market, but would in fact enhance the value of all the property in the community, especially long term, since former apartment renters would come to have different priorities and perspectives as they became home owners.

At this point, many self-described free market advocates are sure to raise the cry that the land to erect these houses on is not for sale, and even if it were, it could never be afforded by the poor. They will further assert that these areas were developed by the enterprise, and the free market has set the price of the land.

Puhlease! First of all, most of these developments received direct and indirect subsidies from various agencies of government. Second, the poor pay state and federal income taxes, as well as state and local sales taxes. These taxes not only go to subsidize many commercial developments, but also go to support city, state and federal parks, forests, grasslands and open spaces.

There are probably good reasons for all the zoning restrictions and all the rest, but the point remains that the result of all these rules is that our housing prices are not based on a free market. What's more, these artificially high housing costs are causing a great deal of human suffering, and many of the suffering poor are taxed to keep this structure in place. This is

oppressive, and must end.

In the interests of justice shouldn't we at some point compensate for that lack of freedom by ensuring that the poor have the kind of economic empowerment that would exist if we were totally free? On that basis it would be more than appropriate for federal, state, or local governments to require new and existing developments to make available, at low cost, areas (at the edge of commercial districts) for super low cost housing to be erected.

Developers must meet certain standards when building water, road, and utility facilities. These days, developers must also set aside land for greenbelts and parks before new developments can win government approval. In fact, before a development can turn a shovel of dirt, it must complete an environmental impact statement, and if it is found that some little sub-species of the snail darter might be endangered by the development, it is cancelled or changed, even if it costs the developer money. Requiring developers to set aside areas for low cost housing isn't that radical or unprecedented, but merely means that the middle class and rich would have to offer the same level of concern to the poor that is presently extended to the snail darter.

Lets step back and look at what this concept might do for us.

Homelessness would obviously be reduced as more low cost housing was built.

Mass transit would be made more efficient. With the erection of dense, low cost housing at the major nexuses of the city, there would be a spike of increase in population along the major thoroughfares, precisely where mass transit can serve it most efficiently.

There would be a short-term stimulus to our economy, as companies scrambled to fill a huge demand for low cost housing, a demand that at present isn't allowed to be filled. Second, there would be a long-term economic stimulus because workers would be able to live on less income, therefore we could expect America to become more attractive to the international manufacturing sector, as our labor costs become more competitive.

So there's the plan, let's call it the sane housing development plan. At heart this idea is about freedom, because it simply seeks to restore to the poor the freedom to build the least expensive shelter that earthy resources and human ingenuity allows them. By getting back to as close to a free housing market as we prudently can, avoiding the pitfalls of socialism, we can improve the lot of the poor, improve our economy, strengthen our families and communities, reduce crime, improve our environment, and strengthen our nation.

Camp Paradise Verdict Issued

Commissioner Irwin Joseph sees No "Necessity" for Homeless People

Released through Santa Cruz Indymedia
(www.santacruzindymedia.org)

by Becky Johnson
November 26, 2001

Santa Cruz, Ca. — Four Camp Paradise residents ticketed on August 3rd used a necessity defense at trial on November 19th and 20th. Today, Commissioner Irwin Joseph issued his 5-page ruling in writing, but he read it for the public in court. He outlined the 6 prongs of a necessity defense as gathered from the State Supreme Court Elchorn Decision which requires the court to allow a necessity defense in camping cases. Successfully using that defense involves admitting the defendants broke the law but showing by a preponderance of the evidence (51%) that they did so:

1. To prevent a significant evil
2. With no adequate alternative
3. Without creating a greater danger than the one avoided
4. With good faith belief in the necessity
5. With such belief being objectively reasonable
6. Under circumstances in which he/she did not substantially contribute to the emergency

In his findings Joseph writes: The court finds that establishment of a campsite, relatively permanent in nature, is not a "necessity-justified" response to the homeless condition in Santa Cruz. If the defendants had been charged with sleeping in a public place (as opposed to erecting and maintaining a campsite) the result might be different.

In so finding, Joseph essentially dismissed defense expert testimony from CAB Shelter Project Director, Paul Brindel, and Homeless Services Center Director, Ken Cole, that there were no places for these defendants to legally sleep that night. Santa Cruz has emergency shelter space for 39 people during the non-winter months and 1-14 spaces when the Armory opens November 15th (for those with State picture ID only). Since Assistant City Attorney Jennifer Pousho presented no evidence that there were any legal places to sleep on August 3rd, many were baffled as to what evidence Joseph was relying on to refute the defense's case.

Joseph agreed there was no housing the defendants could afford. He wrote "As of now there are no solutions provided by the City or County."

Brindel also testified that Police Chief Steve Belcher's own data in 1999 found that homeless people were 3 to 5 times as likely to be the victim of a violent assault than someone indoors. This statistic gives strong credence to the need to camp together for safety, and was ignored completely by both the prosecution and the judge.

He chastised Pro Bono Attorney Paul Sanford for his closing arguments. "The final arguments of counsel ran the gamut from quoting 17th Century philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588 - 1679) to exhortations worthy of a protester's placard ("This case is about the criminalization of poverty!") Neither characterization is appropriate for these proceedings." Joseph also concluded that legal options existed for the campers, but did not specify what they were.

"What options were in Joseph's mind?" asked an angry journalist. "Suicide, wandering around all night every night, banishment to another city or breaking another law such as trespassing?" Many dismi sed Joseph's ruling as politically motivated. Despite the fact the defendants had admitted they broke the law by camping, presented evidence supported by the court that there was no alternative, showed they left the environment in better condition than they found it in, believed they had no other choice, were supported by expert testimony that there was no legal alternative available, and that they were not "homeless by choice". Joseph ignored both the letter of the law and the spirit of the defense of necessity. Brutal violent acts regularly committed against homeless people, did not excuse them for gathering together for their own safety. There were 41 deaths in 2000, according to HSC director Ken Cole.

The City was obviously hard pressed to win this case. To prosecute the 8 defendants for a \$54 maximum fine, attorneys estimated the City spent an estimated \$10,000 in legal expenses. Eight convicts with the maximum fine charged would only be \$432. Such are the courts of the rich and privileged. Commissioner Joseph has proven that no matter how hard a homeless person tries to be a good member of his community, the law will make sure he cannot succeed. Camp Paradise Founder Larry Templeton announced the four "camp criminals" would return to their tents tonight. "We have no other choice."

Paradise Update see page 5

March for Compassion and Spiritual Renewal

Political and Faith-based activists finish 8 day March from San Jose to San Francisco

On Sunday, November 4, 2001, fifty or so foot-weary hikers, who had spent eight days on the road from San Jose during the March for Compassion and Spiritual Renewal, reached their destination in front of San Francisco's City Hall. The marchers were a coalition from many organizations, including the Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP), the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC), and the Community Homeless Alliance Ministry (CHAM) in San Jose, along with many individuals who have been adversely effected by the continuing increase in poverty in California.



community of various faiths and denominations. There were speeches and prayers all calling for unity and God's (by whatever name) help to overcome this society's callous treatment of the poor.

The march organizers released some interesting statistics about California and San Francisco:

In the United States, California has:

1. the 10th highest percentage of people in poverty between 1997-1999;
2. The 6th highest percentage of people without health coverage in 1999;
3. The 11th highest percentage of children below 200% of the poverty line;
4. The 8th highest percentage of children below 200% of the poverty line without health coverage.

And if you think things are bad in Sacramento here are some figures on San Francisco from data compiled by the Religious Witness with Homeless People in September, 2001:

- 13,961 households are on the waiting list for public housing. The waiting period is from 5 to 8 years.
- 83% of the city's aged subsist on incomes of less than \$15,200 a year, meaning they are frequently forced to spend 100% of their income on rent.
- Permanently disabled people who have been deemed eligible by the Social Security Administration receive an average of \$650 a month, while the average Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel room without a kitchen or a bath rents for \$500 to \$1000 a month, depending on quality
- The average take home pay for someone working minimum wage (\$6.25 an hour) is \$923 per month, the cheapest apartment advertised in the paper is for \$925 per month.
- 25% of all homeless people are working but still cannot afford decent, affordable housing since they are usually in low paying service jobs.
- In almost every case, low-paying service jobs do not offer health benefits, making individuals and families vulnerable to displacement in the event of a medical issue.
- Despite the estimate of 14,000 people being homeless in San Francisco, there are currently fewer than 1,500 shelter beds available on any given day.
- The waiting time for any shelter, no matter how temporary, is typically 2 to 6 months.
- 150 families, who had no other housing options, were on a waiting list for shelter each night during August of 2001.
- 600 shelter beds were lost when the Mission Rock shelter closed two winters ago. To date there has been no equivalent replacement.



The organizations called for the U.S. Government to live up to its agreement when it signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, along with every other member of the United Nations. Two of the articles in the Declaration are particularly applicable:

Article 23 states that "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment....and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection..."

Article 25 states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood..."

The WEAP web site contained an article about the march, in which they wrote: "We are marching because we have buried too many of our family members, friends and loved ones due to poverty. We are marching because we deserve, as every human being does, to have adequate housing, enough food to eat, a good education, access to health care and a living wage job that supports us and our families. We are marching to take back our humanity and our dignity and to continue to build this movement to end poverty."

The Reverend Scott Wagers from CHAM was quoted saying, "We cannot continue to live in a world of economic apartheid. The rich continue to get richer, while the majority are struggling to survive."

After a brief pause across from the City Hall, in which the marchers were joined by more friends and supports, the group crossed over and were met by representatives of San Francisco's faith com-



Trust Fund cont. from page 1



Tim Brown
Photo courtesy Rebecca

were arrested for camping and separated. The point of the skit was made by one of the actors who said that it was a depiction of what happened to people every day who did not have family or friends to burden.

Attorney Tommy Clinkenbeard was the first speaker up.

He told how he became involved with homeless civil rights when he was investigating a case of a homeless man accused of murdering another homeless man. While down by the river doing interviews, he witnessed homeless people running from something - then saw Rangers in trucks with trailers full of the property of the homeless. "I realized that American Citizens living by the river, simply because they were poor, were being chased by other American Citizens as if they were the enemy," he said. This motivated him to start a legal clinic for the homeless at Loaves & Fishes.

He said he does not consider that homelessness is a choice, nor that the homeless are criminals, but are American citizens and should be treated as citizens. He discussed the limitations of the shelter system, of the many varied reasons why some people can't or are ineligible for shelters. He questioned transitional housing (where do people transition to, back to the shelter?)

He strongly encouraged homeless people not to be invisible, not to let themselves be treated as invisible. That the lack of support is because the public ignores those homeless individuals they encounter. "Even the homeless have a right to life, and housing is as necessary for life as food and clothing," he concluded.

Rachel Iskow of the Sacramento Mutual Housing Association talked about the politics behind affordable housing.

"Why we are here is the affordable housing trust fund," she said, "if it is passed all across the country there will be funding for affordable housing. More than that, it will be a statement by our national leaders that they are taking the housing crisis seriously."

Locally, however, it is the city leaders who are responsible for the housing crisis she went on. It is the members of the City Council and County Board of Supervisors who are spending affordable housing funds on ritzy projects

downtown that have nothing to do with the housing crisis. She said that even if the housing trust fund does become law, those most effected by the lack of affordable housing must endeavor to insure that the local city leaders use the money to build housing for low-income families, instead of diverting it to market rate housing.

She went on that SMHA is seeing a substantial increase in families whose median income is \$16,000 a year, who are being forced to move because of rent increases, and a corresponding lack of available housing for them to relocate to.

Tim Brown, Director of Loaves & Fishes, discussed the history behind the housing crisis:

First he congratulated all the homeless at the rally for "being a model of standing up" for what is right. He remembered how twenty years ago, the Feds cut housing funding 80% during the 1980's. It only took 2-3 years to put thousands on the street. Even now, 20 years later, even accounting for inflation, funding for housing is one-half what it was before "Reaganomics". A study has found that nation-wide, over 800,000 people are homeless in any one day. That 3 million people (1% of the general population, 10% of the poor) are homeless some time over the period of a year.

He said that people in government say that poverty is unsolvable, but it is we as a society that have created the housing crisis, and we as a society that can solve it. Before the major cuts in housing spending twenty years ago, homelessness was not a major problem. That it was the cuts then and now that are causing the housing crisis, and the politicians continue to ignore the issue during elections.

"The trouble is the government got out of the housing business and turned it over to the private market. The private market does not take care of people at the bottom of the market. We can't let the politicians ignore the housing crisis," he concluded.

John Marcoff, of Acorn, talked about why he joined that organization.

He said he lived for seven years in a shared apartment at \$275.00 a month. Eventually he rented his own place for \$425.00 a month in downtown Sacramento. His rent has increased twice in six months, and he is now paying \$575.00 a month. He expects that his rent will keep going up, and he will be priced out of downtown Sacramento.

Never grow a wishbone where your back-bone ought to be. ---Clementine Paddleford

He attended a city hall meeting where the members talked of allocating 20% of housing for low or medium income, and thought that good, until he realized that they were calling \$68,000 a year income as medium. And in giving tax breaks to developers to build condos for those making \$68,000, the property values for the whole neighborhood goes up, and the landlords raise the rent.

He was astounded that the city is calling a middle-class income as eligible for affordable housing, so that the truly low-income cannot afford to live in downtown or midtown. "How do they expect anyone except rich yuppies to live in downtown Sacramento? It is wrong for them to use affordable housing money for people who make \$68,000 a year" he concluded.

Evan, of Food not Bombs, had a lot to say about CADA.

"In CADA's endless pursuit of developing downtown Sacramento, they won't let anything stand in their way of sculpting our community as they see fit...CADA's vision includes regularly removing apartment complexes of entirely low income housing and replacing them with market rate luxury condos and apartments with only a handful of "affordable" units. All the while CADA continues to produce propaganda touting themselves as a leader in promoting low income housing..." he said.



Tommy Clinkenbeard
Photo courtesy
Randy Dittmar

In an attempt to preserve the Ron Mandella Community Garden and promote true low income housing, garden members obtained a letter of intent from the Sacramento Mutual Housing Association indicating their willingness to build an entirely low income development on the parking lot adjacent to the garden that would incorporate the garden as part of the project. In response, CADA indicated that they were not interested in creating projects which were entirely low income. This despite a statement made by Marc Brown's CA Housing Law Project promoting legislation prohibiting discrimination against building affordable housing. Marc Brown also sits on the Board of Directors of CADA he continued.

The Fremont Mews project which CADA plans to build over the Ron Mandella Community Garden includes only 10% of the units available to those with low incomes... in exchange for including a misleadingly minute number of affordable units in the project. [they] will receive a subsidy of a one million dollar grant and a \$1,345,000 low-interest loan" he concluded.

George Logan read his poem "Ain't My Fault", included on page 6 of this issue, and afterwards the mike was then opened to anyone who cared to speak. Several people came up and expressed their concerns and personal problems with getting housing. One speaker said there was enough housing already, there were vacancies all over town that weren't renting because the units were priced too high. That the solution to the problem was rent control (The question of rent control was brought up in several discussions at the rally.)

The Rally concluded on time with an a cappella rendition of the National Anthem by David Butts, and everybody went home to whatever place they called home.

Housing cont. from page 1

undocumented workers, for instance, are not even eligible for federal housing subsidies.

A small contingent of motorcycle cops surveyed the scene, roaring up as the march began. Carrying banners and signs in several languages, the diverse crowd set off to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) Loud chants of "Homes Not Jails" echoed over the sounds of rush hour traffic. After paying a visit to H.U.D., the procession continued to the Page Hotel, a residential hotel where overcrowding, arbitrary evictions, and tenant harassment are the norm. With assistance from a range of community groups, however, tenants are organizing to contest these conditions.

The next stop was the West Cork Hotel. The building was formerly home to the Empress Hotel, a residential, low-income housing facility. After the Empress' shutdown, the building remained vacant for twenty years. It was then illegally converted into a tourist hotel. The owners spent \$2 million on the renovation, despite the fact that their other property, the Alder Hotel, which houses many disabled tenants, remains in dire need of a functioning elevator.

Weaving its way through a perplexed line at the Warfield, the march then paused in front of the Examiner building. This local rag featured an outrageous series over the summer entitled "Mess on Market". With blatant ignorance and disrespect, the paper launched repeated attacks on the residents of 6th street.

The evening culminated in front of the Defenestration building (formerly known as the Hugo Hotel). After a mass of evictions, the building has now remained vacant for twelve years. Though the outside has featured various art projects, the vacant interior has yet to offer shelter to those in need. Until now, that is. Homes Not Jails, an organization dedicated to immediate housing for all, occupied the building. As one man announced, "[We] will turn it into affordable housing."

After brief comments by several additional speakers, the megaphone was turned over to the crowd. A number of 6th street residents weighed in with their perspectives. Food Not Bombs distributed bread. Cheers filled the air as Homes Not Jails participants unfurled banners from the building's fire escape.

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Welcome to HOMEWARD:

Please help us make a difference!



Homeward Street Journal has been publishing since 1997 as a non-profit project of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, which is a part of the Sacramento Housing Alliance. The paper's mission is to alleviate miscommunication between communities by educating the public about housing and poverty issues, and by giving the homeless a voice in the public forum. Homeward also informs the homeless of shelter and occupational assistance, and acts as a creative self-help opportunity for those individuals who wish to participate.

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

Submissions and Editorial Policy

We welcome any participation or contributions. Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted to the Sacramento Housing Alliance or given to Birte in the library at Loves & Fishes.

All writing submitted for publication will be edited as necessary, with due respect for the authors' intent. The editors will attempt to consult with an author if changes are necessary, however, the paper will go to print with the story as edited if the author is unavailable.

All Letters to the Editor must be signed to be published. If the writer wishes to remain anonymous she should so state, but the letter must still be signed.

Poetry and graphics will not be edited, either the paper will publish the submission or not.

In submitting articles to the paper, authors give their permission to print their submissions in accordance with the above stipulations, as well as publishing excerpts on Homeward's webpage and possible reprinting in NASNA member papers, with due byline. Any requests for stories outside the above three will be referred to the author.

Subscriptions are available with a \$15 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC. All correspondence can be sent to Homeward Street Journal, PO Box 2430, Sacramento, CA 95812

For information call 442-2156.

The paper may also be E-mailed at Homeward2@yahoo.com

excerpts from the paper are published on the web at www.geocities.com/homeward2

SHOC is now on the Web at http://users.cwnet.com/shochome

MAX'S VIEW

by Max Biddle

Sacramento's local officials are facing a serious problem concerning affordable housing, especially in regards to the homeless. For years local officials have ignored the housing needs concerning the homeless and low income population, hoping by some miracle that it would disappear.

But now we are faced with a whole series of new problems that will expose this neglect, by causing a whole series of social dislocations throughout the community. A list of the problems facing the community at large will bring into dramatic focus the issues facing us.

First and foremost the collapse of the economy. We are in a recession that looks to be far more serious than anyone cares to admit. Growing evidence points to years of economic stagnation. A problem that local public policy has failed to take into consideration when planning for low income housing. With unemployment on the rise the first of many problems will be the collapse of the welfare reform programs passed into law in the middle of the nineties. Hurt most will be single mothers who had to give up their welfare and medical coverage to take minimum wage jobs. Single mothers who recently found work and are the newest employees in the job market are already being laid off. Many will have to return to the welfare rolls. But many state's welfare reform laws prohibit them from receiving welfare again. This inevitably will increase homelessness.

The further elimination of Sacramento's single residency hotels (SROs) and the determined refusal to add new low income housing will add to the homeless population.

With the global economy in full scale retreat, countries like Mexico, who sells nearly 70% or more of their products to the U.S., is already reaching 25% unemployment, due to the U.S. slow down in purchasing Mexican products. This will mean a huge increase in illegal aliens crossing the border. Hence an increase in homelessness. Let's consider the communities in the best position to handle these problems.

The social upheaval caused by these economic conditions will put enormous strains on local government budgets. The communities that will be able to deal with these problems, especially housing, will be the communities that have closed

Political Commentary on Poverty Issues

ing military bases close. by Sacramento is one of these communities. The Clinton administration recommended that these facilities should be used first to house the homeless. But this advice was ignored, not only in Sacramento, but across the country.

One must lay the blame for the neglect of Sacramento's affordable housing problem at the feet of our local city and county officials. They have refused to implement the housing requirements mandated by state law. And seem to look the other way as low income hotels for the fixed and low-income population disappear. Next year's destruction of the Berry Hotel downtown will be another step in aggravating the problem. Using the local military bases to solve this coming housing shortage seemed the logical solution.

In a recent article written for the News and Review by Supervisor Roger Dickinson, he listed what he thought were valid reasons for not opening up McClellan Air Force base as a solution to the housing problem. When you review his reasons they strike you as nothing more than excuses for never seriously considering using the facilities for housing. With the economic realities looming ahead the County Supervisors' flawed vision of our housing problems will surely haunt them. With a little imagination the air force base offered an opportunity to address these social problems that will become painfully obvious during this current recession.

First, the homeless housing problem could be greatly ameliorated. Second, the base has environmental problems to be dealt with. You could use this opportunity to combine sheltering the homeless and employing them to clean up the base. The federal government should be responsible for most of the cost. Thirdly, you could centralize health care, rehabilitation, and educational centers in one convenient location. But we know there was never a serious consideration to use these bases to solve a growing social problem.

And as the homeless population explodes because of the years of economic stagnation ahead of us our local authorities will come to regret their limited visions. Homelessness is a problem that will prove more pervasive than our local representatives want to deal with. They continue to view it as a transitional problem, which will prove shortsighted.

Camp Paradise Update

by Paula

Because of the court ruling, see story on page 2, the City Council of Santa Cruz voted to have the police enforce that city's sleeping ban on Camp Paradise.

On November 29, 2001, Human Resource Officer Eric Selly warned Paradise Camp residents that the police would be back the next day to tear down their camp if they hadn't moved out by then. Around 7 AM the next day, the officer arrived to find many cars parked near the camp, many sporting Green Party, anti-war and Save Camp Paradise bumper stickers on them. The visitors were at the campsite, invited by camp residents to witness the police's promised activities. Bob Woodside, who observed Officer Selly's arrival said, "He drove down, took one look at all the cars, did a U-turn and sped off. He didn't look too happy about it."

Camp supporters invited the public for coffee, tea and donuts, touted as a new trendy coffee shop, at Camp Paradise on Monday and Tuesday mornings. They were expecting police action on Tuesday due to the weather forecast. Camp leader, Larry Templeton, said that they weren't planning to stop the police, but just wanted as many supporters to witness the police's removal of the camp as possible.

Saturday night, December 1, the camp's fate was dictated, not by the police or city council, but by flooding. When the high water reached the lower lying tents, the decision was made to evacuate. Great effort went on into the night to get campers' belonging to high ground. Sunday morning when the coastal flood tide was at its peak, the water came up into the kitchen area. A nearby

cemetery opened their gates for a staging area. Private property owners donated 2 garages for storage. Dr. Paul Lee paid for motel rooms for some of the campers. The Quakers brought trucks and transported people to motels.

Campers went to rest up in area homes and motel rooms and planned to meet Sunday, December 3rd, to make plans on to what to do next.

To be continued...

Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are.

The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that perseverance means a strong will and obstinacy means a strong won't.
---Unknown

**Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?**
-Thomas B. Macaulay

Joining SHA

The Sacramento Housing Alliance is a network of concerned citizens which promotes decent affordable housing for low income households and homeless people through advocacy and participation in public discourse.

The SHA does not itself provide or manage housing.

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

Annual Membership dues
Standard, \$35.
Low-income, \$15

Organizations:
Full, 0.1% agency budget.
Associate, \$100

Send donations to:

Sacramento Housing Alliance
PO Box 2430
Sacramento, CA 95812

Streets Are Made For Walking

by Phil Goldwarg

After the Affordable Housing Rally -Sacramento, CA

streets are made for walking,
 not living,
 not beds for children and elders
 wrapped in cold night,
 hunger forced sleep,
 empty lots fill with corporate greed,
 warm kitchens disappear
 in high rent floods,
 bedrooms are replaced by bushes,
 cardboard caves,
 abandon garages,
 beware of the land hunters,
 home hunters,
 bulldozers at the ready,
 cheered on by city councils,
 state committees
 in research mode for the homeless,
 there is this false sense of beauty,
 where stone and marble
 are clothed before skin and bone,
 dark night streets
 have no door,
 shadows have easy entry,
 mothers shiver over young children,
 body heat dwindling
 into an ice wind,
 the streets are made for walking,
 not living.

Ain't My Fault

by George Logan

As the night night falls I have only the street.
 Hunger from my stomach calls, but
 I have nothing to eat
 It ain't my fault.

People step right over me as if I'm not there
 They look away like they don't care
 But no one said that life was fair
 It ain't my fault.

I ask people 4 help
 But, no 1 is sharing
 I need a break in my life
 But no one is caring
 It ain't my fault.

What do I do, when it ain't my fault
 I got holes in my shoes, but it ain't my fault
 Do I turn to stealing
 Cause it ain't my fault
 I just need something to believe in me
 I ask you, what should I do
 When it ain't my fault



Exhibit Dates

"Sacramento Streets by Streetpeople"

Some of our readers may be part of an exhibit called "Sacramento Streets by Streetpeople" which travels around various places in the city. If you remember being in the poetry sessions held in the L&F Library by Carmela, and writing about some of the city scenes in her photographs in the last 2 years, then probably you are in the exhibit, one time or another. Next places to see it are:

December 1-15 at Matrix Arts, 1615 Del Paso Blvd., Wed through Sat.

Izzador's Coffee and Tea, on N. 21st. Hours are Mon- Thurs 6:30 am - 4 pm, Friday 6:30-10, Sat. 7 am - 12 noon.

Even if you're not in the Exhibit, go see what those poets had to say, and if you're interested in joining in, ask Birte in the Library at Friendship Park when the next poetry session will be.



During this holiday season may you and yours have a:

Enlightening Ramadan

**Familial
Kwanzaa**

Bright Hanukkah

*Merry
Christmas*

and a Happy New Year!

from
all of us at
SHA, SHOC, &
Homeward

Peace On Earth and Good Will Towards All

Close to Home: Homeless Remembrances & Street Insights

by Morgan W. Brown

This time of year never fails to bring to mind the many experiences I have had of trying to survive among the cold, damp, dark streets and woods during those times when there was nowhere else to live independently.

Homelessness is something that I have experienced in one form or another off and on over the past twenty-eight years. Despite these countless experiences, I was never able to get very good at coping with being homeless. It takes a lot out of me when I am without permanent, safe, warm, dry shelter.

There have been many times when these experiences, or something that happened to me during them, have made me feel utterly defeated, helpless, hopeless and worthless.

If it were not for all the support

and assistance received when they were most needed, it is certain that things would have become much worse for me than they already happened to be.

Learned from the Streets

Homelessness can happen to anyone, at any time, for a variety of reasons.

Our society is built on the premise that it is better to share with others than it is to dictate and hold something over them. This is what I understand the Vermont motto, Freedom & Unity, to mean anyway.

Based on personal experience, along with my observations of others over the years as well, I am convinced that it is extremely critical to provide hope, opportunity, shelter, support and services to people when they need such assistance.

It is as crucial, however, to do

this in a manner that does not force a person or family to choose between having access to these or having to give up certain freedoms and responsibilities - along with the independence and self-respect that goes with them - that people who are housed may take for granted, yet still prize for themselves as well.

Rather than attempting to manage, control or coerce people in ways that we may want to believe is for their own good, our efforts are best served when they are positively focused. This provides people with a better working role model for building faith and trust in themselves and with others.

No matter why or how many times or ways a person or family is in need, everyone deserves to be believed in and offered the assistance they may seek and require toward helping themselves meet their needs.

In this way, people are not only helped toward becoming housed again, but they are more easily and freely encouraged to learn or enhance skills, strengths and abilities of their own that anyone needs to be independent members of the community.

Time and time again, I have seen that what can make a difference in the circumstances and well being of a person or family who is homeless is when they receive quality contact, support, encouragement, services and shelter when needed.

Our communities will be enriched and strengthened when each individual and family living within them has permanent, safe, decent and affordable housing, along with the other usual and basic needed opportunities, from which to thrive and grow.

Morgan W. Brown is a homeless activist living in Montpelier, Vermont, USA.



Jesus on the Light Rail by Eric

Obituary

For the test of the heart is trouble
And it always comes with years.
And the smile that is worth the praises of
earth
Is the smile that shines through the tears.
---Irish Proverb

Marc Souriseau

d. October 17, 2001

in his sleep at Salvation Army

Marsha Michiko Cowart

d. October 30, 2001

In an auto accident
28 yrs old, daughter of Cheyenne, one of
the first Mustard Seed students

Kenny Trot

d. November 21, 2001

at Sutter General, cause not available

John Anderson "Ya-Ya"

d. November 25, 2001

struck and killed by a train

Saundra Bloom

d. November 29, 2001

of Heart Failure