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Homeless Resources Classified

"Day of

**Marching
Chanting
Speaking
Fasting
Praying**

Rally

**becomes struggle
for a year-round women
& children's shelter.**



On February 26, 2002, lead by Loaves & Fishes, area advocates and homeless individuals took action to express their discontent with Sacramento County's long term disregard for the well being of the county's poorest residents.

Over two hundred people assembled in the south-east courtyard of the County Administration Building the morning of February 26th. The group chanted and carried signs for nearly an hour before a large group went into the County Board room. The remainder of the protesters then marched around the building along the sidewalk. When this was over many of these people also went into the board room, filling it up and compelling the County Supervisors to suspend their agenda and address the issue before them.

Several advocates and homeless persons stood up and challenged the Supervisors as to what people staying at the winter "Overflow" emergency shelter were to do when it closed on April 17th.

The Supervisors began by making individual comments about the situation. Don Nottoli and Illa Collin were generally in favor of a year-round shelter, particularly for women and children, the others were more vague. Roger Dickinson commented that the other board members knew his position on the matter and he wasn't going to discuss it in public. He also left the table while Chris Delaney, a co-founder of Loaves & Fishes, was addressing the board.

After all the rhetoric, the Supervisors stated that they were not prepared to come to a decision at that time, and the discussion degenerated into a conversation with staff as to the availability of funds and how much

extending the shelter time would cost. In the end, Cheryl Davis, chief of the Department of Human Assistance, was directed to prepare some cost analysis's and present them on March 19th in conjunction with the City-County Board on Homelessness report, which was scheduled for that date.

On March 19th the meeting began at 2:15 pm. Loaves & Fishes closed many of their programs and their staff were in attendance, as well as individuals from many other service providers, shelters, and transitional housing programs. Though there was no formal rally, the board room was again filled with those most concerned about housing the homeless.

see Shelter page 4



National Coalition for the Homeless Announces Opposition to "Chronic Homeless" Initiative

Calls on Congress and the White House to Abandon Harmful Rhetoric and Policy Initiatives, Change Focus to Ending Homelessness for Everyone.

Washington, DC - The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) on February 27, 2002, announced its opposition to the "chronic homelessness" initiative undertaken by the Administration and embodied in numerous Congressional mandates.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez has stated that "ending chronic homelessness" is a primary goal of the Department's homeless assistance programs. In addition, a variety of federal legislation now directs federal agencies to prioritize their efforts and target their resources toward the so-called "chronically homeless."

Although the term "chronic homelessness" is rarely defined with any degree of specificity, it is generally used to characterize people who are homeless and who also have mental health or addiction disorders, and who are therefore more likely to experience homelessness for longer periods of time. In a detailed paper released today, *Poverty Vs. Pathology: What's "Chronic" About Homelessness*, NCH charged that the terminology distorts the history, causes, and nature of homelessness; that the policies that accompany the initiative pit vulnerable populations against each other in competition for scarce federal resources; and that the "chronic homeless" initiative as a whole - terminology and policy - is short-sighted and likely to exacerbate, rather than end, homelessness. The paper notes that the "chronic homeless" initiative is especially misguided

at a time when the affordable housing gap is at a record high and the economic recession is forcing many people out of work and into homelessness.

"People who are homeless and who have disabilities do not need yet another stigmatizing, pathologizing label. Homelessness is primarily an economic condition, not a medical condition," said NCH Executive Director Donald Whitehead. Whitehead also criticized the policies that have accompanied the terminology. "The 'chronic homeless' initiative does nothing to prevent people - with or without disabilities - from becoming homeless. It is fundamentally flawed as a strategy for ending homelessness."

NCH called on Congress and the White House to abandon the terminology and its attendant misguided policies, and to focus their efforts on the underlying causes of homelessness: lack of affordable housing, insufficient incomes, and inadequate health care. In particular, NCH urged Congress to work to enact the National Housing Trust Fund, legislation that would create 1.5 million units of housing for people with the lowest incomes.

The complete paper may be found on the NCH web site at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

Founded in 1982, NCH is a national advocacy network committed to ending homelessness.

Washington Conference on Housing and Homelessness Set for April 29-30

The National Low Income Housing Coalition and the National Coalition for the Homeless will hold a joint Washington Policy Conference April 29 and 30, 2002, at the Loews L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. Production of affordable housing, preservation of existing housing, dealing with community opposition to affordable housing, civil rights for low income and homeless people, and many other topics are on the agenda. For more program information and registration forms, visit the Coalition's web site at www.nlhcc.org or call 202-662-1530.

Established in 1974, the National Low Income Housing Coalition is a membership organization dedicated solely to ending America's affordable housing crisis. NLHCC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing within healthy neighborhoods for everyone.

The Mission of the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is to end home-

lessness. Toward this end, NCH engages in public education, policy advocacy, and grassroots organizing.

NCH provides information to thousands of people each year; publishes reports and fact sheets, and maintains an extensive and constantly growing database of research.

NCH provided leadership in the successful effort to pass the Stewart B. McKinney Homelessness Assistance Act in 1987, and has continued to monitor the reauthorization and appropriations process. Over the years, they have helped ensure that billions of dollars have been made available for McKinney programs.

NCH has contributed to the development of dozens of state and local coalitions, and works with them on efforts to empower homeless people, whose voices are essential to the public policy debate.

Renter's Penalty

Originally published in the *Denver Voice*

By John Cassella

It's called the renter's penalty! In our capitalist controlled society, renters provide free capital (or subsidized housing) for home-owners—\$100 billion per year in the form of mortgage-interest deductions, capital gains exclusions, and property tax write-offs. These tax gimmicks are supported by three powerful special-interest groups: the real estate, banking, and home builder/contractors.

Families with yearly incomes of more than \$100,000 receive the major share of the subsidized housing benefits. The main economic effect is to inflate the price of homes while diverting investment away from other sectors of the economy.

The home mortgage interest deduction costs renters more than twice as much as is spent on low-income housing assistance and low-rent public housing for the elderly, disabled, and homeless. There are no limits or restrictions on it. The deduction applies

to summer homes in Aspen and beach compounds in Key West. It's worth about \$5,000 a year to individuals making more than \$200,000.

There are no facts that support the real estate industry's contention that these tax gimmicks promote home ownership. Canada has the same rate of home ownership as the United States without the benefit of tax subsidies.

When Howard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies looked at the net wealth of homeowners versus that of renters, it showed vast differences. Senior homeowners and renters (those 55 years and older) show how wide the gap gets: homeowners had a median net wealth of \$177,400 and home equity of \$80,000. Renters, by contrast, had a median net wealth of \$5,500 and zero dollars of equity.

The message is clear! Homeless people and renters are the only ones in our society who do not receive subsidized housing.

Rent Subsidy

Originally published in *Spare Change, Boston*

by Barry Shuchter

When my elderly mother moved to the Boston area a few years ago, we had a little money, thanks to cousin Mac. We were all surprised that cousin Mac had money; he had secretly hoarded it, even though the paint above his bed was peeling. When he died, he was rich enough to pass his money on to us.

Since we never had much money before, I went to a financial advisor to see if there was any special way we should handle the money, not that it was all that much, but I wanted to learn how best to provide for my mother. For example, would buying a condo be cheaper than paying rent? However, the advice I received was shocking, and opened my eyes a little more to the way the world of money and real estate works.

The advisor showed how quickly the money would disappear by renting an apartment. The money was not enough to buy a condo, even adding in my income, it was not enough for my mother and I to share a two-family house. However, it was enough for us to buy a three-family house! Imagine that! We can't afford rent, or a condo, or sharing a two-family house, but we could afford a three-family house, with my mother living almost rent free! How could that be?

The secret is the third apartment in the three-family house. My mother would live in one apartment paying minimal rent. My income would cover my apartment. We would rent the third apartment to a tenant at market rates, which would help cover the mortgage costs for the building. Furthermore, we would end up owning a home in the bargain!

Notice why this financial scheme works; it works because the tenant, paying market rates, would end up paying us more than it cost us to maintain the third apartment. In effect, the tenant would be subsidizing my mother's rent, as well as helping us to purchase the building. What would allow us to make someone pay more than the cost of our apartment? Because we had cousin Mac's money, and the tenant didn't. Our small amount of money would allow us to decide that the tenant would subsidize our chosen lifestyle. Perhaps we could be generous landlords and charge the tenant less than market rates, but it couldn't be much

less or else it would defeat the purpose of providing for my mother.

We chose not to buy a house. For one thing, there was no way my mother would become a landlord after a lifetime of being a tenant activist and advocate herself. She ended up renting an apartment (thereby subsidizing her landlord), as predicted by the advisor, the money eventually ran out. Now she's on a government-sponsored rent subsidy program (where the government subsidizes her landlord).

Meanwhile, the rent at my previous apartment was raised six times in seven years. It started out at \$442 per month, and I was paying \$1025 per month when I moved out seven years later. Each time it was raised, I received the apology that my landlord's costs were increasing and so the rent had to be increased as well. (Needless to say, my wages were not increasing at the same rate.) From my end, I thought to myself, I'm subsidizing the landlord's apartment, subsidizing the landlord's ownership of the building, and subsidizing the landlord's lifestyle.

The largest single jump in rent, from \$442 to \$693, happened while the apartment was still under rent control. The rent control board approved the jump because the landlord had made significant improvements to the property. Even the rent control board helped ensure that I would subsidize improvements to my landlord's property.

I don't tell this story to brag about how we refused to use our little bit of financial power to gain advantage. I don't tell this story to judge anyone who makes that decision for him/herself. My purpose is not to elevate tenants, not to demonize landlords. I tell this story to show how the financial system discourages renting and encourages being as landlord. Those of us without much money are forced to rent and watch our money disappear, perhaps being forced to seek assistance from the government. But even with assistance, we don't get ahead; the landlords do. Those of us with a little money are forced by economics to drain away other people's resources in order to get ahead. It is a system designed to produce poor people, homeless people, and government-assisted people, while landlords continue to be subsidized. We need a new system where power is not based simply on who owns property.

Stations of the Poor



On Good Friday, March 29, 2002, the River City Pax Christi organization held their annual Downtown Stations of the Poor. The event is based on the tradition of the Stations of the Cross, in which participants retrace the events of the day that Jesus was condemned and executed. In the Stations of the Poor, various locations in downtown Sacramento are chosen to reflect contemporary problems between society and the teachings of Jesus. The problem addressed this year was called Housing Suffering.

A half-block long procession followed two people carrying a large cross, and four people carrying Stockton artist Fonseca's sculpture (photo, top left) of a homeless sleeper, from station to station.

The first station - Jesus arrested and taken to Pilot - was at the County administration Building. Chris Delaney read the reflection which talked about the Winter Overflow Shelter, and how when it closes "...women and children will be forced into our city streets, there to wander seeking desperately to find safe and secure places for themselves and their children... We will see them huddled in doorways, behind dumpsites, under bushes, in cars or vans, on church steps, under freeways and on our riverbanks in constant danger from the threat of rape and violence."

The second station - Pilot asks the crowd what to do with Jesus, and is told to crucify



him - was held before the Downtown Jail. Gerne Baskerville and Angie Mendoza read the reflection in which it was written that "...Using prisons and jails as social housing exacts a price from the individuals who are incarcerated instead of treating their symptoms and housing them ... from the 'criminal justice system' which is not capable of meeting the needs of its population, from the public in terms of tax expenditures and from the politicians who are ultimately blamed for the failure ... to permanently control groups of people."



The third station - the soldiers strip Jesus - was before the Downtown Plaza. Rosemary Orlando read from the reflection that "...When we walk through this example of tax supported corporate welfare, let us remember the lowly Galilean and how he was stripped of even his meager garments. How similar is that to today's world where ... [the poor are] without adequate shelter and a

decent existence. Their anguish and deprivation continue so that the luxury stores for the middle class and wealthy can prosper even more."

The fourth station - Jesus falls carrying the cross - was in front of the closed Biltmore Hotel. Dorothy Smith read from the reflection that "... the Biltmore Hotel was condemned May of last year. There were 38 poor souls evicted from their homes... [It] has sat here for over one year - EMPTY. It has not been used for a hotel, apartments, not even to provide a business for our community - what a waste of our resources!"

The fifth station - Jesus nailed to the cross - was in front of City Hall. Sister Judy Illig read from the reflection that "...We are the voice of the poor ... who cannot afford a decent home or apartment ... who wait endlessly for public housing ... who work for minimum wage, pay rent on time and then run out of food ... of those called 'criminal' because they must sleep at the

river, under a bridge, in an alley... These poor are nailed to the cross every day in our midst. They are denied adequate shelter and affordable housing in the city and county of Sacramento..."



The Sixth station - Jesus dies on the cross - was again in front of the County Administration Building. Sister Libby Fernandez read from the reflection that "...We speak for the poor women,

children and men who do not have night shelter and must sleep on the streets ... for the poor who cannot afford a decent home ... who cannot afford the sky-rising rent cost due to the shift of bay area commuters looking for cheaper housing... We call upon our elected officials once again to fund a rear round emergency shelter and affordable housing programs... We demand shelter for the hundreds of women, men and children, even babies, who are turned away each night from family shelters because of lack of beds."



March for Moratorium on Death Penalty

MAY 1, 2002

begins 12 noon at Court House, downtown Sacramento, to the North Steps of State Capitol

Join Ed Asnor and possibly Danny Glover in an action to stop the legal killing of human beings

Our justice system is too imperfect for our society to be sure that only the guilty suffer the ultimate penalty.

"...Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. Even the very wise cannot see all ends."

- Gandalf to Frodo,

J.R.R. Tolkien, Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring, Chp. 2

MAX'S VIEW

Political Commentary on Poverty Issues

by Max Biddle

There is a side of the Social Security debate not totally exposed to the public, but it has been around since the days of Social Security's inception. It is that to the right-wing Republicans and Libertarians, Social Security is nothing more than a Socialist or Communist program. Because of the ideological point of view of these people, they want Social Security to be destroyed. Today, add to those groups the Wall Street money-men, eyeing with greed the Social Security funds, desiring to get their hands on it.

These are the most formidable groups ever, bound and determined to eliminate Social Security as we know it today. They now have the total support of the Bush Administration backing their goals and gaining strength daily.

The pie-in-the-sky propaganda told to young people, that private stock investment accounts would make their retirements secure, is pure nonsense. Simply because investing in Wall Street is pure gambling. And with the current scandals involving corporate America, you can get better odds wasting your money in Las Vegas.

The disaster this would bring to millions of elderly people living on fixed Social Security incomes of \$1,000.00 a month or less would add to a whole new homeless population of people aged 62 and over.

Then there is the risk to the economy. Since the 1950's, most economists have pointed out that during economic recessions, the Social Security funds

pumped into the economy during those economic slowdowns have prevented recessions from happening like in the 1930's. That makes it essential to keep Social Security funds out of the speculators' hands.

One thing needs to be perfectly clear about the Republican party since the Reagan years - it is dominated by right-wing ideologists who seem to have abandoned any social conscience. The truth is, and make no mistake, these right-wingers have bought into an economic theory, often called Darwin social theory, which is, simply put, survival of the fittest. They really don't care how many homeless are created by their theories, as long as their beliefs are put into place.

The irony of this is how many right-wing Christians have adopted Darwin's survival theories, but condemn his over-all philosophy as anti-Christian. They have also abandoned Christ's teachings against greed, and find every excuse to abandon the poor, whom their policies helped to create.

There is the other way of destroying Social Security, and that is to spend all its funds. Reagan paid for his wasteful military build-up, and huge tax cuts for the rich, by raiding Social Security funds, nearly destroying the system. The Bush agenda has become a carbon copy of Reagan's first years in office.

In the coming Congressional elections this year, the very survival of Social Security - the very survival of the only anti-poverty program that has worked for over this last half century - will be the main issue. Never before have the forces out to destroy Social Security been stronger.

Shelter cont. from page 1

The meeting began with the presentation of the City-County Board on Homelessness "Five Year Plan to Mitigate Homelessness in Sacramento" report. It was the recommendation of the committee that the county build housing for at least 1200 low-income people over a five year period, at a little over 300 per year.

The Supervisors then listened to comments from those in attendance, first about the Committee report, then about the shelter situation.

When queried about the shelter extension costs, Cheryl Davis countered that the Supervisors had not voted on any specific situation she should consider, and gave some estimates for different responses, from keeping the Overflow going for all until the State Fair, to various limited extensions.

The discussion dragged on for some time. Eventually the Board of Supervisors accepted the recommendation of the City-County Board on Homelessness to build additional housing units, but no vote was taken on the shelter, leaving the situation in limbo until it could be decided at a third meeting.

At the third meeting on Tuesday, April 2nd, the Board finally voted to extend the Overflow for women and children until May 1st - only a 13 day reprieve. It should have read women with children: Single women will still be out on April 17th.

The funding for the extension was an 95,000 dollar federal emergency grant for women and children, so the extension will cost the county nothing. The excess in the grant above the actual shelter costs supposedly will be spent on direct

aid to families in transitional housing programs to obtain regular housing, thereby making space available to those in emergency shelters, if they qualify.

In response to the County's disregard, on March 18th advocates began a fast in the waiting room of the County Supervisor's offices. Participants are fasting for one day or up to three days, sitting in the waiting room, as a reminder to all who enter of Sacramento's homeless problem. The first group fasted for three days and included L&F executive director Tim Brown, Dan and Chris Delaney, co-founders of Loaves & Fishes, Sister Libby Fernandez, Sister Maria Fitzgerald, Very Rev. Donald Brown of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, and businessman Norm Fadness. There have been many volunteers, and it is their intention to continue the fast until the County Supervisors change their minds, or until Overflow opens again next year.



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 at our office or by mail or given to Brite in the library at Loaves & 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 s/he should so state, but the letter must still be signed.

Poetry and graphics will not be edited, unless 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/shocho

Another Story from Middle Class America

by Cliff Crooks
President, S.H.O.C.

Let's begin at the top where the problem starts: The New World Order is changing all our lives, the cause and affect is creating a real problem that our government doesn't want us to know about - "homelessness".

Layoffs are skyrocketing. Nationally the numbers are totaling in the hundreds of thousands, even in California alone the numbers have passed the hundred thousand mark. If you ask where these unemployed go, people will tell you "NOT TRUE. You hear of big time layoffs in the news almost weekly, but you seldom hear of big time hiring. That's because there isn't any. I recently heard on the news that unemployment has jumped from six million to eight million in the USA. Thousands are becoming homeless monthly, nationwide. The New World Order is creating some good things, but there are also some big problems. It's up to The New World Order to make provisions and find realistic solutions now while it's coming into being.

The New Homeless is you, Mr. & Mrs. Middle Class America.

Now that we all know where the root of the problem is coming from lets move down the governmental ladder. Move down past Federal, past State government and go straight to City government. Although I'll be talking about Sacramento, this problem is happening throughout the Nation.

For decades now our cities have dealt with the homeless in the same way, forcing them out of town or putting them in jail. That has never worked, the homeless are still here and in greater numbers than ever before. The faces I see on the streets have changed big time in the eight years that I've been here. Oh yea, the alcoholics

and drug addicts are still here but they are greatly outnumbered by new faces. Families with children are filling up the shelters and those that found "no room at the Inn" are forced to sleep outside where they are vulnerable to arrest and jail - C.P.S. may even take their children away.

This city is closing down the SRO's (single room occupancy), and running the working poor out of the city. The landlords are evicting those in low rent apartments and renting the rooms out for high market rates, leaving more people homeless. Where are they to go when there is "no room at the Inn"?

I'll tell you where they should go. Camping. It's the only thing that makes any sense. The Government says it wants to keep track of the homeless but can't seem to figure out how. What better place than the campgrounds and shelters, and most of the shelter system is already in place, until there is housing for everyone. What other choice do we have?

Now it's story time. If you are a fan of Steven King or one of the other horror story authors then you will love these short stories. But first let me emphasize this, the brutality that I will speak of is not coming from the police force, most cops (not all) I interviewed have heart and don't like what they are forced to do - their orders come from the City.

Three months has past since John & Terry hit the streets. They slept in their car until the Salvation Army had room in the shelter for them. All this time John was looking for work and he finally found some. Well, a month or so before he found work his car broke down, all he needed to get it going was a battery. Because of the parking laws he had to constantly push it to a new spot to avoid a ticket. The cops were always around to make sure he was in com-

pliance with the law. One day John was happy to report to the police that he was now working and would be getting his first check on Thursday and his car would be running and legally back on the streets.

That Wednesday his car was towed away. John took off work to get his car out of impound, he hadn't worked a full week so his check was small, not enough to get his car out. Now John and Terry have no car and no job, because he was fired for taking off work so soon after employment. John is still unemployed and finding it harder to get a job, or an apartment, because he now has a police record, a police record for camping.

On August 5th, 2001 Georgia was arrested at 9:00 AM and spent three days in jail for camping paraphernalia. She had a tent rolled up on her car. I couldn't believe this charge but sure enough this law is on the books, Camping Ordinance 44.03.06 Definitions (C).

On March 19th, 2002, at the Board of Supervisors meeting Supervisor Roger Dickinson mentioned the city has to crack down on the transients.

The way this city handles the transients is to run them out of town or arrest them and tow their cars away, effectively trapping them here. Then keep arresting them for camping when they are unable to leave town.

The transients he is now speaking about are the New Homeless. These "transients" are here and in every other city looking for a new life. When you can't find work, or you have fallen victim to some other tragedy in your life, you must look elsewhere. But what is worse than going to jail for being a "transient" is the way our city leaders have trampled all over our United States Constitution by refusing us the right to travel freely in our own country.

In the Monday, March 18, 2002, Metro section of the Sacramento Bee, County

Supervisor Roger Dickinson was reported to have said that spending money on additional emergency beds would leave less funding for other essential programs, including a system to track clients and collect reliable data on homelessness.

With the shelter system on line the afor mentioned programs could be part of the administrative process with just a marginal added cost. The shelter system is the ideal place to start keeping accurate records. And until there are enough shelter beds for everyone camping is needed. Sending a person to jail is not the answer! Take a lesson from Stockton, when a person is found sleeping on the streets the police take him to the shelter, not jail.

In the next edition of Homeward I will write about the real truth behind "Those Lazy Homeless People". Are they really too lazy to work or are you being fed some more negative propaganda?

What can you do to stop this brutality on the people? Write to your County Board of Supervisors, City Council and Mayor.

To learn more on this subject contact the homeless advocates in your area or subscribe to one of the many Street Newspapers. To get a list of the street papers contact:

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee at, PO Box 2430 Sacramento Ca. 95812 (916) 442-2156

San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness 488 Turk St. San Francisco Ca. 94102 (415) 346-3740

National Coalition for the Homeless 1012 14th St. NW, suite 600 Washington DC. 20005-3406 (202) 737-6444 x 311

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

"Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." - Cesar Chavez, 1984

Member of Homeward Staff Joins N.A.S.N.A. Executive Committee

Lee Parks, graphic designer and story editor for the Homeward Street Journal has joined the Executive Committee of the North American Street Newspaper Association to replace a member who resigned.

Mr. Parks joined Homeward in mid-1997 as a political cartoonist. He then began assisting the founder of the street paper, Christina Stock, in editing submissions to the paper. When Miss Stock left the paper in 1999, Mr. Parks took over doing the graphic

layout for the paper. Homeward Street Journal has been a member of NASNA since its inception in 1997. The position on the Executive Committee involves working as liaison with several other street papers, as well as working on NASNA projects. Currently NASNA is involved in setting up a wire service for member papers to improve national news coverage of homeless issues, and deciding whether or not to be involved with the International Street Newspaper Association, among other issues.

John Stuart Mill excerpt from *On Liberty*

(or...Another Reason Why All Citizens Need Civil Rights...HWed.)

...But the strongest of all the arguments against the interference of the public with purely personal conduct, is that when it does interfere, the odds are that it interferes wrongly, and in the wrong place. On questions of social morality, of duty to others, the opinion of the public, that is, of an overruling majority, though often wrong, is likely to be still oftener right, because on such questions they are only required to judge of their own interests; of the manner in which some mode of conduct, if allowed to be practised, would affect themselves. But the opinion of a similar majority, imposed as a law on the minority, on questions of self-regarding conduct, is quite as likely to be wrong as right; for in these cases public opinion means, at the best, some people's opinion of what is good or bad for other people, while very often it does not even mean that the public, with the most perfect indifference, passing over the pleasure or convenience of those whose conduct they censure, and considering only their own preference. There are many who consider as an injury to themselves any conduct which they have a distaste for, and resent it as an outrage to their feelings; as a religious bigot, when charged with disregarding the religious feelings of others, has been known to retort that they disregard his feelings, by persisting in their abominable worship or creed. But there is no parity between the feeling of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it; no more than between the desire of a more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse, and the desire of the right owner to keep it. And a person's taste is as much his own peculiar concern as his opinion or his purse. It is easy for any one to imagine an ideal public, which

leaves the freedom and choice of individuals in all uncertain matters undisturbed, and only requires them to abstain from modes of conduct which universal experience has condemned. But where has there been seen a public which set any such limit to its censorship? or when does the public trouble itself about universal experience. In its interferences with personal conduct it is seldom thinking of anything but the enormity of acting or feeling differently from itself, and this standard of judgment, thinly disguised, is held up to mankind as the dictate of religion and philosophy, by nine tenths of all moralists and speculative writers. These teach that things are right because they are right, because we feel them to be so. They tell us to search in our own minds and hearts for laws of conduct binding on ourselves and on all others. What can the poor public do but apply these instructions, and make their own personal feelings of good and evil, if they are tolerably unanimous in them, obligatory on all the world?

A Reply to the Bee

by Lynda Willis

A few weeks ago the Sacramento Bee printed a story about Sacramento's homeless. On the front of the "Metro" section was a big color picture supposedly representing someone's camp.

To this picture they put an article. Some of it was true, but the gaps in their story couldn't help but show their attitude towards the homeless.

The article pointed out that the person pictured had lived on the river seventeen years, but the writer neglected to say that that particular camp was totally trashed before he arrived.

The Bee also showed a picture of a clean camp, not on the front page but on the rear page. The article neglected to say that the homeless in that particular camp had picked up their own garbage.

For those of you who will read this with an open mind and heart, the following is pretty much the life of homeless people.

Most are out here due to circumstances beyond their control. An example is myself. Last year I fell on the job, was injured, and couldn't work. Then the woman we rented

from told us to move, because she wanted her house back, not because we were late paying rent or anything like that. Our funds were barely enough to get by under normal circumstances... So here we are - outside!

This is our life - daily:

Just at dusk, we gather our gear and find a spot to pitch a tent, if lucky enough to have one. We go to bed with the sun, get up before the sun, roll up our gear and try to get out before the rangers find us. Being found by the rangers means being given a ticket they know we can't afford and can't pay. For some it results in going to jail and the confiscation of all their gear.

Then there are the ones seeking employment, who have to find a place to get cleaned up, have a message number, etc. Unfortunately, I've learned most employers don't hire the homeless. I even know a few that were employed and let go when the employer found out about them being homeless.

Once a person becomes homeless, they a very lucky to make a come back. There are

far too many things, reasons, and excuses, to keep a person down

My husband is still employed, but not many hours, about 25 hours a week. That barely even feeds us! Then there is not only the high (very high) rent, but first comes the credit check money that the landlords think you have to give away - because they will find a reason to turn you down and keep the money!

Then there is affordable housing in Sacramento. Next month we will have been on the list for 18 months. What a joke!

On top of all this, the stress and daily drama start taking a toll on your relationship with your spouse. All the trails and tribulations of just trying to exist adds emotional stress to a marriage or relationship. In the end, the questions are: Will you ever be lucky enough to get off the streets? Will your relationship survive?

To those who always put the homeless down, who close their eyes, turn their backs and think the problem will just go away - I ask you, how many of you could handle our lives?

Top Ten Countdown by Paula

The top ten early warning symptoms that you've been living outdoors too long are when:

10. You consider it "affordable housing" when you find a sale on tarps at the 98 cent Store.
9. You find you enjoy waiting in long lines. It's a great opportunity to get reacquainted with others who have been living outdoors too long.
8. You finally get an apartment, you pitch a tent in your bedroom, first off. You don't consider buying light bulbs since you have a flashlight with batteries and a candle for backup. You remove the screens from the windows.
7. You can't go anywhere without seeing someone you know or have gone to lunch with.
6. The cops no longer have to ask you for your ID.
5. You regularly pretend to be drunk when the paddywagon comes around, just for a place to stay for the night.
4. You don't need an address book because none of your friends have an address.
3. You don't check into the shelter anymore because you've already stayed there for their maximum two weeks this year (back before the rains started).
2. The "fresh scent" of pine-sol makes you vomit.
1. Sprinklerphobia

Sacramento Streets by Streetpeople

A traveling exhibit of poetry and photography
about our city that
"goes where the people go".

June: The South Natomas Library
2901 Truxel Road (at Bannon
Creek Dr.)
Hours: M/W 1-8; Tues. 11-8;
Friday 1-5; Saturday 10-5

July: Capitol Yogurt
1121 Alhambra Blvd. (corner
of Granada)
Hours: Mon-Fri 11:30-10; Sat-
Sun 12-10

**NEW
WORKS**

CAVEAT EMPTOR



Nothing is impossible for those who don't have to do it.

- From Murphy's Laws of Combat

If money be not thy servant, it will be thy master. The covetous man cannot so properly be said to possess wealth, as that may be said to possess him.

--- Francis Bacon

Obituary

Kenneth Masse
d. 2/15/02
shot to death by unknown assailant in camp by river

Mark Flowers
d. 2/19/02
shot to death by unknown assailant on 4th Ave.

Robert Blake
d. 2/10/02
injuries from hit-and-run car

Delora Bentley
d. 3/05/02
of natural causes at Sutter Hospital

Jack Whitehead
d. 3/27/02
from burn injuries suffered in a fire at his camp

Gary Godinez
d. 3/28/02
accidently run over by truck he was sleeping under on North B St

Jose Garcia
d. 4/01/02
from liver cancer

Hello, Old Friend

reprinted at a reader's request

Hello, old friend, I've come to visit once again. I love to see you suffer mentally, spiritually, and socially. I want to make you restless so you can never relax. I want you to be jumpy, nervous, and anxious. I want to make you agitated and irritable so everything and everybody makes you uncomfortable. I want you to be confused and depressed, so that you can't think clearly and positively. I want to make you hate everything and everybody, especially yourself. I want you to feel guilty and remorseful for the thing you have done in the past, that you will never be able to let go. I want to make you angry and hateful toward the world, for the way it is and the way you are. I want you to feel sorry for yourself and blame everything but your addiction for the way things are. I want you to be deceitful and untrustworthy, and to manipulate and con as many people as possible. I want to make you fearful and paranoid for no reason at all. I want you to wake up during all hours of the night and scream for me. You know you can't sleep without me! I'm even in your dreams.

I want to be the first thing you wake up to every morning and the last thing you touch before you pass out. I would rather kill you, but I'll be happy enough to put you back in the hospital, another institution, or jail. But you know that I will be waiting for you when you get out. I love to watch you slowly going insane. I love the physical damage that I am causing you. I can't help sneer and chuckle when

you shiver and shake, when you freeze and sweat at the same time, and when you wake with your sheets and blankets soaking wet. It's amusing to watch you make love to the toilet bowl, retching and not being able to hold me down. It's amazing how much destruction I can do to your internal organs, while at the same time I am destroying your brain bit by bit.



I deeply appreciate how much you sacrifice for me. The countless jobs, all the fine friends that you deeply cared for - you gave up for me. I am even more grateful for the friends you turned against yourself because of your inexcusable actions. I mean who could be more generous to me than you, you who gave up for me the most precious and important thing in your life - your loved ones and your family. I mean you threw them away for little old me.

I cannot express in words how deeply grateful I am for the loyalty and respect you have for me, you sacrificed all these beautiful things in life just to devote yourself completely to me. But, do not despair my friend, for on me you can always depend! In fact, after you have lost all these things, you can depend on me to take even more! You can depend on me to keep you living in hell, to keep your mind, body, and soul to the very end - because I will not be satisfied until you are dead, my friend. My name is addiction.