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# HOMeward

## Street Journal

**Volume 18, No. 4**

**Member INSP**  
Street News Service

**July / August, 2014**

## Health Care for the Homeless National Conference in New Orleans

By Paula Lomazzi

The National Health Care for the Homeless held its annual conference in New Orleans this year from May 27 through May 30<sup>th</sup>. I have been a member of our local Health Care for the Homeless Advisory Committee (recently transitioned to a Co-Applicant Board) since when I was homeless in the early 2000's, so am considered a consumer member. Being a "consumer" member of the National group qualified me for a scholarship to attend the conference.

Marriott's welcomed me into its well appointed abode on Tuesday evening, where insomnia gripped me from the excitement of being in a strange and exciting new city at a conference where I know I'd make new acquaintances and learn I did not know what.

There is a special dynamic to health care for people experiencing homelessness. People

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Medicaid Expansion Rally at Duncan Plaza

## New Fracking Rules Let Big Oil Hide Toxic Chemical Use

By Dan Bacher

Fracking is a process to release and extract oil and gas by blasting water, toxic chemicals, and sand at extreme pressure into deep underground

rock. Fracking is taking place in counties from the Sacramento Valley to Los Angeles. Companies have targeted the Monterey Shale, a massive rock formation that stretches from the San Francisco Bay Area to Los Angeles County.

The oil industry in California has constantly claimed that fracking (hydraulic fracturing) for oil and natural gas is safe and doesn't harm the environment.

However, proposed new regulations governing fracking and other dangerous oil well stimulation techniques in California would "do little" to protect the state's air, water and public health, according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

"Governor Brown's weak fracking rules are a huge gift to oil companies using dangerous chemicals in California communities," said Hollin Kretzmann of the Center for Biological Diversity. "State officials are simply refusing to protect people from fracking pollution or even ensure we know what hazardous substances are used in our neighborhoods. That's why cities and counties are moving to safeguard their residents by halting fracking and other risky extraction methods."

The proposed regulations would go into effect Jan. 1, 2015, replacing temporary fracking rules now in place. Among the draft regulations' biggest flaws:

- No protection for the air and climate: "The state's draft regulations don't require operators to capture methane, a potent greenhouse gas," the Center stated. "They don't protect people living near fracked wells from air pollutants that cause cancer and respiratory illness. A recent



Tribal Leaders Protesting Fracking at California State Capitol

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# Stop Punishing the Children!

By Regina Range

Nearly one out of every three American black men in their twenties are in jail or prison, on probation or parole, or otherwise under criminal justice control. Black men are eight times more likely to be incarcerated.

These are the realities that plague my thoughts daily. I have two sons in their twenties and the oldest is a two time felon at the age of 24, the single father of a six year old son. He also has three other children – two of them are boys. I've been a single mother since escaping a violent relationship that lasted 15 years, and a near-death divorce in 1997.

Currently, my son is not eligible for Food Stamps (CalFresh) or welfare (TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) because California has passed laws that deny people who have been convicted of certain drug felonies from receiving these benefits. As we go to press, the Governor and the California legislature are looking at lifting these bans as part of the Budget Act.

Due to the ban on services, my son is limited in becoming successful human in society: he doesn't qualify for low income housing, TANF benefits for his 6 year old son who has special needs, or Food Stamps. Under federal law, his eligibility for student loans is limited, and he cannot vote, serve on a jury, or join the military.

These collateral consequences of a criminal conviction would be difficult to manage under any circumstances, but for people who are trying to reenter society after a period of

incarceration they are particularly damaging. Most people returning home from jail have been struggling in some significant way prior to their involvement with the criminal justice system. Surveys consistently show that substantial proportion of people who are incarcerated have histories of substance abuse, mental health issues, homelessness or physical or sexual abuse. Without proper support, these individuals may continue to struggle with similar issues upon their release from jail or prison.

When I left my abusive marriage, and the WEAVE (Women Escaping a Violent Environment) shelter, I noticed my oldest son in particular took on a different attitude -- not only the anger at being a child of divorce, but also at the loss of the father he cherished, who vanished into the air. We began a new family with a different culture. I was haunted by pain and the feeling, "Did I let my son down by moving on to provide a better lifestyle for him and his siblings?" As my son's teen years passed, I saw and felt his resentment toward me and his sisters. By then he was doing petty thefts for clothing, even for food items my Food Stamps couldn't afford. Once he took porterhouse steaks from a local Albertsons and fought security to get away. Once the officers showed up at my house, they understood somehow the actions of his petty crime and let it go that time.

My son was into the flashy clothes like all of his peers also struggling in poverty. I was off/on welfare and temping at various customer service jobs while still completing all the training I could. There was no room for anything flashy in our lives of poverty.

My son graduated with a football championship ring from Grant High School but my dreams of the NFL soon fled my soul. He was hanging out on the corners; soon talks of college and joining the service became only talks, and then became memories. I saw the light switch go off in my son. He began to glorify becoming a criminal -- like a knuckle head, as my mother used to say. When he was convicted, I gathered information about resources for felons -- I even got connected with Prison Ministries after he had two felonies within a year and a half.

After he was released, there were a few job opportunities but without sufficient transportation to the remote locations. He turned to another life as an outlet. I'd stay up countless hours at night praying and wondering "how did this happen?"

When he was released from 8 months in Rio Consumes Correctional Center, he came home only to fall into a depression. He became numb to the job world. He only spoke of his resume once to me. I prayed silently, while staring in my son's eyes, looking at the goodness in him, only to feel overwhelmed by the reality of his struggle.

In the end it is the children of offenders like my son who will suffer drastically. The cycle has to be broken; we must begin a new journey. Right now, today, there are children in approximately 6,000 very poor families which are headed by an adult with a former drug related felony conviction. These are thousands of California's poorest children without access to the quality early learning and child care they need to escape the vicious

cycle of poverty. They are 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime before they are 18.

Now I have seven grandchildren ages (1-6 years old). They are all pre-labeled for destruction in life. It's time to wake up, folks! Let's come together so that we can count our numbers as people who care, not numbers of victims. Just like my son.

It could be your son, your neighbor's son, the son of the man who just said hello, the depressed son of the woman who's at the welfare office. Start coming out -- shake off your worry and your homes. Start showing up at the California Senate and Assembly; call upon our leaders, join and contribute in lifting these detrimental bans. For more information, contact the Western Center on Law and Poverty in Sacramento.

## Update!

In June 2014, California's legislative leaders and Governor Brown repealed the optional ban for people with prior drug-related convictions from receiving CalFresh (food stamps) benefits and CalWORKs (basic needs support and job training) with the passage of The Budget Act of 2015. Those with prior drug-related convictions will now qualify for benefits as long as they are complying with the conditions of their probation or parole. The new law will be enacted April 1, 2015.

# Trust Act Compliance Becomes a Reality in Sacramento

by Kathleen Williams

The little girl in the turquoise dress takes a break on her mom's shoulder, curling against it as she rests. The boy in shorts, a few years older, stands with a serious expression next to his father, Martin Del Agua, a local landscaper who was wrongfully detained on an "immigration hold" in the Sacramento Jail this past February.

Julie Del Agua, a local teacher and Martin's wife, is a U.S. citizen, as are their children. Martin is not. They are speaking at a press conference held June 11, 2014 outside the Sheriff's Headquarters in downtown Sacramento, publicizing the Sheriff's violation of the recently enacted "Trust Act," which limits local jails from holding minor criminal offenders for extra time solely for deportation purposes. With Angela Chan, their attorney from Advancing Justice -- Asian Law Caucus, they will soon push open the doors of the headquarters to make a complaint.

Both parents move to the microphone, and each, in different ways, fights against tears. Julie can't go on for a moment after she describes the terror she felt when Martin was slammed against a car by deputies and arrested in February; a neighbor had complained that he was playing loud music in the garage, and he was taken to jail to be held for federal immigration agents. "Nicholas and Emma -- our kids -- they're used to Dad putting them to bed. They didn't understand

what they had just witnessed. I didn't know what to tell them," she says. Martin's emotion is more controlled, but as he speaks his eyes gleam with tears.

The Trust Act, effective January, 2014, was introduced by San Francisco Assemblyman Tom Ammiano. It sets a minimum standard across the state to limit immigration "holds" -- non --mandatory "requests" from federal immigration authorities to detain non-citizens for an additional 48 hours (and more) after he or she is eligible for release (for example, eligible because bail is posted or charges dismissed).

The Trust Act ensures that people with most low-level, non-violent offenses are not held solely for deportation, and at the same time allows optional holds for most felony convictions and also for those accused of felonies under certain circumstances, along with a number of higher level misdemeanor convictions within five years or for certain federal convictions. (See, [catrustact.org](http://catrustact.org).)

Until now, California has accounted for a third of deportations under the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) "Secure Communities" program, which screens the finger prints of arrestees in jail for potential immigration violations. Some 300,000 people - 108,000 of them in California - have been deported through this program since 2008.

However, according to recent reports, two

thirds of all deportations under the Obama administration -- two million total -- involve people picked up for minor infractions, including traffic violations, or for no criminal violation at all. "It suggests that before the Trust Act went into effect, at least in California, "Secure Communities" was having the most significant impact on relatively minor criminal offenders," says one immigration expert. (AP, 4/6/14)

For example, in California, domestic violence victims; workers complaining of unpaid wages; drivers not at fault in fender benders; food vendors; and owners of barking dogs have all been arrested and held under this program. (See, [catrustact.org](http://catrustact.org).) Here in Sacramento, Angel Mendoza was arrested for a minor offense and is now in a detention center in New Mexico while his family, unable to contact him, waits anxiously for his release.

As a result of the Trust Act, a survey of California counties indicates that such deportations have plummeted -- in San Francisco, they have dropped by 93%; in Los Angeles, by 28%.

In the wake of the Del Agua case and protests from community groups, the Sacramento Sheriff's Department announced in February that it would comply with the Trust Act, and in May, that it would temporarily end immigration holds entirely, following a federal court ruling in Oregon that the holds were unconstitutional.

In addition to Constitutional concerns, because of the lack of due process, immigration holds have come under severe fire for undermining community confidence in local law enforcement and wasting local resources. Its impact upon families -- and upon people who, like Martin Del Agua, are part of the fabric of our community -- is devastating.

"We felt it was our moral and ethical duty to stand up and tell our story. We want to set an example for families, other parents, kids, everyone," says Julie in her closing words, holding her daughter in her arms.





## Homeward Stakedown

This year's annual Stakedown highlighted Homeward Street Journal. This May 1st through May 3<sup>rd</sup> urban campout and festival at 12<sup>th</sup> and C Streets Downtown Sacramento, also featured the Safe Ground sleeping cabin model, social justice, art projects, musical and theatrical performances, workshops, food and fun! Though organized mostly by SHOC's Homeless Action Committee, Loaves & Fishes, Good Cause Inc, and Green Hands, the event was built on many from the community who contributed their special parts, sharing their special gifts with the homeless and housed festival goers.



Mark Merin, the landowner/civil rights attorney, speaking to an evening gathering before dinner.

On Right: Tracie Rice taught Tie-Die



Above: David at the Clay Workshop

Above:  
Neighboring Business  
Owner Benne't Hogg of  
*Hoggs Stepping Stones*,  
stopped by to bring  
hotdogs and chili for  
everyone.

On Right:  
An impromptu jam  
session: Jeannie Keltner  
of Soap Box, John  
Malcolm, and G.P. Bailey.



Tammy Drammer at Organize  
Sacramento workshop



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# Why Are People With Mental Illness Homeless?

By Cathleen Williams

At a place not far from the Capitol, geographically -- but you're on the other side of the tracks, now -- low warehouses and shops crouch on both sides of the wide, treeless boulevard that rises to a ramp over the American River, leaving the old city behind.

The light rail hums past, clanging, heading south to the station on Twelfth Street or north to the suburbs; on the corner, tucked against the railway levee, screened by a chain link fence and a few straggling trees, trucks grind through a vast pile of metal scrap. For those driving past, there's a glimpse of a multitude shouldering their burdens, pushing strollers and shopping carts, waiting to cross at the light, or surging through the traffic as if it wasn't there and didn't matter.

Here, at a place scorned by some boosters of Sacramento, lies the campus of Loaves & Fishes, a cluster of warehouses offering homeless services, a small park with benches and lawns, a library, a sunny lunchroom where 500, 600, even 700 people sit down to eat lunch together each day.

It was just a few months ago that a homeless woman who had been expelled from the County's "overflow" program -- which, during the winter, buses hundreds to area churches for dinner and one night's shelter on pads or cots -- reached her wits' end, according to Sister Libby Fernandez, the director of Loaves & Fishes.

"She had reached the point of total despair at being without a place to live. She wanted to give up -- she ran out into the middle of Twelfth Street and threw herself down. Someone called 911; guests diverted traffic. At first she was despondent, wouldn't talk. Engine 14

from the fire station responded and the paramedics tried to persuade her to get up. She wouldn't talk to them.

"There was nowhere for her to go. By the time the police arrived, a half an hour later, she had gone from despondent to suicidal. She got aggressive, out of control.

"So the police took her off to jail. I don't know what happened from there. The shelters are full. They don't take the mentally ill. It can take a couple of months to be seen by a psychiatrist, get medications.

"Who do we see here, in Friendship Park? Of our homeless guests, 65% on any given day have mental health issues: Depression; Post-traumatic Stress Disorder; Paranoia; Schizophrenia.

"We need permanent supportive housing. There're just too few openings." She concluded.

Just three years ago, in 2011, a California Senate report estimated that 133,000 Californians "have no place to call home," living outside "in doorways, under bridges, and on riverbanks" or in short term shelters. Of these Californians, roughly 33,000 are considered "chronically" homeless, without housing for a year or more, or repeatedly homeless over the past three years; at least one third, or some 11,000, suffer from severe mental illness -- untreated. (Housing the Mentally Ill," Senate Rules Committee Report, August 2011; "More Mentally Ill Becoming Homeless Because States Won't Help," Truthout, May 5, 2013.)

In Sacramento, the official (and generally underestimated) count for 2013 found 677 severely mentally ill homeless residents, and 993 homeless residents with chronic substance abuse issues. "You can tell these folks are

mentally ill," says one activist member of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, Tracie Rice Bailey. "In December, during the cold spell, you see them dressed only in light clothes. One woman, she was talking to people who weren't there, huddling in the warming center where she couldn't lie down. Or the lady in the hospital gown at Salvation Army, totally out of it."

"They don't know what's going on," says James Little, who's lived outside for decades. "It's dangerous for them. It's not easy to survive out here, especially if you can't take care of yourself."

The alternative to homelessness for these hundreds of mentally disabled residents is not rocket science: as Sister Libby Fernandez says, it's called permanent supportive housing.

"Give chronically homeless, mentally ill people a secure place to live with support and services, and most will stay housed and move closer to recovery, than if they are given treatment with no housing or temporary housing." (Senate Rules Committee Report, August 2011.)

Developing such housing is not just a question of funding, of resources, because it's undeniable that we are already spending the money to house the mentally ill temporarily in jails, in prisons, in hospitals and in emergency rooms, where the costs range from over a hundred dollars a day (in the jail) to thousands of dollars a day (in hospital emergency rooms). (See, Truthout, May 5, 2013.)

In Sacramento, the number of mentally ill inmates in jail has doubled, over the past few years, as more low-level offenders are detained locally rather than being sentenced to state prison. "As funds and services have disappeared, the number of people with mental illness landing behind bars has surged." (Sacramento Bee 5/27/12.)

While an expansion of facilities is projected to become a reality by 2019, Sacramento jails have drastically limited treatment options -- including a psychiatric unit with just 18 beds. The jail operates as a front-line receiving center and temporary facility for thousands of mentally ill arrestees per year -- it is the "go to" place for such cases, housing 750 mentally ill inmates at the Rio Consumnes Correctional Center on a daily basis in 2013; the main jail, downtown, receives all the mentally ill arrestees, hundreds per year. (Sacramento Jail Finally Addresses Mental-Health Needs" Sacramento News and Review 11/7/13). And there is little or no placement, planning,

or medication provided on discharge because the funding has been cut.

James Herrera, who is schizophrenic, spent the years 2012 through 2013 in a shattering pin-ball like tumble through stays at the jail, where he was held for 128 days in isolation on a tier reserved for mentally ill inmates, short stints at the County's 50-bed Mental Health Treatment Center, placement at Turning Point Community Programs, which offers some short-term housing, a few weeks in a board and care home, and disastrous returns to living with his mother, then back to jail and the emergency room. "When he gets out of jail or locked wards," observed the Sacramento Bee, "he uses street drugs, which let loose his demons." And then he's arrested yet again. (Sacramento Bee, 11/4/13, 12/29/13.)

Local emergency rooms also routinely operate as inpatient facilities, holding mentally ill for days because there is nowhere for them to go. While Sacramento County does currently fund some alternatives, including the recently opened TLCS Mental Health Crisis Respite Center, which offers shelter for up to 23 hours and non-medical support, and the Mental Health Treatment Center, which has a 50-bed hospitalization unit, the underlying problem -- lack of permanent supportive housing -- means that an ever increasing number of people return again and again to emergency rooms and jails. ("Mentally Ill Patients Monopolizing ER Services in Sac" KCRA.com 5/14/14.)

At Guest House, the county funded homeless intake facility, tucked away on a side street near Loaves & Fishes, the dedicated staff does everything it can to provide support for the 900 severely mentally ill, homeless clients it sees each year; it carries a case load of 400 people at any one time. The average wait time for services, according to the County, is around 2 months, although in emergencies Guest House can respond quickly, within days or weeks.

On site, a variety of assistance is available -- referral to specialists from the County Department of Human Assistance to help with Medi-Cal eligibility so that medical care costs can be reimbursed; a special streamlined program (called SMART) for determining eligibility for federal SSI/SSD, which provides up to \$875 per month to those who are medically disabled and unemployable; referrals to services and housing resources; a public health nurse; psychiatrists and a psychiatric nurse practitioner for those

*I would like your audience to know that the populations of psychiatric hospitals are comprised of people born with mental disabilities, people who've suffered traumatic brain injuries; there are mothers and fathers and grandparents, people who for all intents and purposes have led ordinary lives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, veterans with PTSD, people who are there because of some triggering event, or, as in my case, the cumulative affect of numerous events over the course of a lifetime, people suffering from clinical depression, anxiety disorder, bi-polar; there are children as young as six years old in some of these facilities, kids with autism. I have had wonderful, meaningful conversations and interactions with individuals who were brought into the hospital in the midst of a full-on psychotic episode and, within hours, and with medication stabilization, are normal and amiable and apologetic. I have met countless patients in my capacity as a mental health technician and later as a patient who I would be proud to count among my friends. Mental health patients are not "Them" . . . they are "Us."*

W.S.

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# Health Care for the Homeless National Conference

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experiencing homelessness die an average of 30 years earlier than housed individuals (mid-50s), and experience illness and injury three to six times more. That leaves the inevitable conclusion that housing is a prerequisite to ensuring good health outcomes. “Housing is Health Care” is the mantra I heard over and over throughout the conference, which was reinforced by the National Health Care for the Homeless mission of ending homelessness through, first and foremost, the provision of housing. I heard in the conference that you can’t end homelessness by ending homelessness—so it’s also necessary to address the systemic causes of homelessness, such as poverty creation through bad policies, income inequity, and defunding and devaluing of safety net programs, nationally and locally.

Of course, the main focus of the conference was health care for homeless people. There was much discussion about the changes that the Affordable Care Act has brought to people experiencing homelessness throughout our nation. Though there are reports of transitioning homeless patients to Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) hitting some rough spots, the road ahead is clear and hopeful for the previously uninsured multitudes. There are 27 States, including DC, that are implementing Medicaid expansion for 2014, with three states still debating the subject, leaving 21 states not seeming

to welcome this Federal funding source. Though some of these states opting out of “Obama Care” are accessing other revenue sources to somewhat fill the gap, for the most part these States are choosing to leave many of our nation’s homeless population uninsured and untreated until that patient is forced through illness crisis to access the emergency room at an exorbitant and preventable cost to their communities. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council is greatly supportive of the Affordable Care Act, but they still continue to advocate for the Universal Health Care concept in a single payer system, which would allow the insured to access the health care providers of their choice.

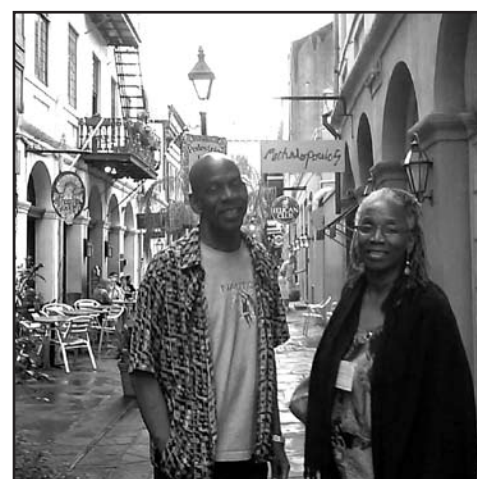
Though New Orleans Mayor Landrieu spoke of his support for the Medicaid reform, Louisiana is one of those states that have not adopted the Affordable Care Act expansion. Thursday after all the day’s workshops, attendees gathered in the hotel lobby for a march through town ending in a spirited rally at Duncan plaza to extol the importance of LA getting on board with the ACA! We all got stuck in a torrential rain storm but the rally location just so happened to have the protection of a crowd-sized gazebo.

Though a great majority of the workshops offered over the three days were designed more for the further education of health practitioners and

other service providers, there were too many great sessions left for me to easily select which ones to attend. I had to take a class about Consumer Advisory Boards so I could take that information back to my Sacramento group. Next, Rumors of the Decline of Homelessness are Greatly Exaggerated shared a great history of homelessness, talked about the homeless counts and warned that we shouldn’t celebrate reduced numbers as much as be outraged at the current number of homeless people. I attended the National Consumer Advocacy Board meeting (a scholarship requirement and an honor) to vote for representatives and guidelines through consensus, and then we barely made it to the big jazz mixer on the top floor late that evening. Thursday morning I took a twitter class to brush up on my skills and strategies. Then a workshop on Civil Rights, presented by Houston’s Joseph Beason, and Sacramento’s own Bob Erlenbusch, about the criminalization of homelessness and the Homeless Bill of Rights. The next workshop I attended, Homelessness, Racism and Social Justice, uncovered the deliberate government policies of redlining and other structural racism, and the disproportional amount of people of color in the homeless population, in prisons, and excluded from economic prosperity. Friday morning I went to the workshop on Speakers Bureaus, presented by

formerly homeless advocates. The last workshop on Friday was about advocacy campaigns that included some great models to emulate.

I was enriched by the many workshops, events, sightseeing (only did a little), delicious meals!, but was most appreciative of what we were referring to as the “Choir” (as in “Preaching to the Choir”). It was a hopeful experience to meet and hear from so many people from across our country that understand the importance of not only health care for homeless people, but also all the other kinds of dignified treatment and respect all humans should be able to expect.



NCAB members from Los Angeles (Bruce & my mentor, Sukari, on the right) in the French Quarter.

## People With Mental Illness continued from page 4

who need medication; and referrals to counseling with the program and to community agencies. But when it comes to permanent housing, Program Director Robert Kesselring acknowledges, if you can’t afford rent or don’t have an income, and especially if your mental illness makes it difficult for you live in a group home, “there just isn’t that much available.” “Their need for housing is extreme, but they just can’t afford it,” says an outreach worker.

The County reports that 160 permanent housing units were set aside in a one-time program for the mentally ill, funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) which was enacted by voters in 2004 specifically to create services for this population. Additionally, there are 325 vouchers that subsidize permanent housing, funded by the federal (HUD) Shelter Plus Care Program, reserved for people who are homeless with a disability due to serious mental illness, chronic drug/alcohol dependence, or HIV/AIDS. An unknown number of mentally ill also qualify for the 2,000-plus units of public housing available to

low income families.

So how did we come to this pass, trying to cope with a system that wastes public resources so systematically at the same time that it neglects, and fragments, equally systematically, the essentials for the survival of this vulnerable population?

Certainly, the process of de-institutionalizing the mentally ill, which began in the 1950’s and continued into the 1980’s, closing the prison-like mental hospitals where the majority of patients spent useless lives in locked wards, marks an historical starting point.

But perhaps more significant, politically, was the repeal in 1981 of the short-lived Mental Health Systems Act, federal legislation which promised to build upon the policies of the earlier Community Support Program, a small federal initiative. This program envisioned an approach that recognized the need to address, in addition to clinical treatment, “a host of other issues...including housing, income support, medical care, employment, basic living supports

(such as food stamps), employment, transportation, and education.” (Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, “Learning From History: Deinstitutionalization of People with Mental Illness As Precursor to Long-Term Care Reform” August 2011)

As the Kaiser Commission observes, however, the hard reality of poverty for the mentally ill has been a constant since they were thrust from abusive institutions into the dangers of the streets: “...the funding streams for support services, such as SSI and public housing, are means-tested programs that provide minimal support. People with serious mental illness [remain] extremely poor, which [creates] further obstacles to meeting their needs...SSI condemns recipients to live with incomes at about 75 percent of the federal poverty level. As a result, in 2004, they would have needed 110 percent of their entire monthly income to rent a modest one-bedroom unit.”

Up to the present day, comprehensive, coordinated programs, which will protect this vulnerable population from poverty,

have been swept away by the relentless assault on the social safety net.

Yet public support for the protection of the mentally ill can be strong. For example, in 2004, the voters of California passed Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, to augment funding of mental health programs by up to one billion a year. Since then, however, MHSA funds have been widely used as a substitute for other sources of funding, as overall support at every level – county, state and federal – has been cut in various ways by 25% to 40%.

The mentally ill are part of a population of homeless people who are themselves canaries in the mine, signaling that people struggling with poverty are on their own. This is the challenge of the future. It’s self-defeating to start programs where mentally ill people are competing against other low income and homeless residents for scarce funding, and, indeed, against each other. We must, and we are, building a movement that calls for housing as a fundamental human right.



# MOB AT THE GATES

[www.chongonation.com](http://www.chongonation.com)

by Chongo

“Science is a way to keep us from fooling ourselves; and each other.” –Neal DeGrass Tyson, in the closing of the final 2014 National Geographic episode of “Cosmos, A Space Time Odyssey,” a truly great production that no one should miss seeing.

Imagine that you had a choice between two life paths. One choice is to become a wealthy professional NBA player, very likely a star, because additionally, you happen to be a champion wrestler, or, you could forgo altogether any career whatsoever in sports, along with the wealth, fame, and other benefits that come with being a professional in the most lucrative professional sport in the country, and instead, become an astrophysicist. What would you choose, a career in professional sports, or in its place, a life spent exploring science?

Your choice would depend upon what you valued, in particular, upon the value that you attached to material wealth and fame. Imagine now someone who faced that very choice himself, and who chose the latter, forgoing great wealth and fame, because, besides having a great mind matching his athletic gifts, he had also great insight, genuine courage, and most importantly, sincere compassion for his fellow human. That someone is Neal DeGrasse Tyson, from Harlem, host of the latest – the 2014 version – remake of Cosmos. He could have been an NBA star, but he chose science instead, and with no regrets. He is a hero worth admiring.

In the opening prelude of the final episode, Dr. Tyson asked a question. The question was with respect to the events that led to the destruction of the greatest library that ever existed in the ancient world. It was, “What will happen the next time the mob comes?” This article addresses that very question he asked, in light of what the show, itself, revealed.

Around fifteen hundred years ago, a mob burned the great library in Alexandria, Egypt, raising it to the ground, destroying its contents for all posterity, and murdering its chief librarian, a young woman, in the process. It may seem senseless, but there may exist a very real and a

very clear reason why a mob could be organized for such a destructive and violent enterprise, which is this: the members of the mob (though, perhaps not necessarily its leaders – all mobs seem to have them: leaders – considering that, conveniently, the library contained original documents from which the Christian bible was initially composed, gone forever, afterward) were unaware of the value of the treasure that they were embarking to destroy. But how could they have known? They were wholly excluded from access to it. Access was limited to an “elite” few, which, in those declining times, could have meant what was left then of a literate few, in what was left of a world that once did not repress the liberty of free thinking, but now did so everywhere, except in this tiny library island, again, to the apparent exclusion of so many others finding themselves locked in illiteracy, outside.

Literacy was once common in the Roman world. But, as Roman culture evolved into an autocratic, religious structure, widespread literacy progressively became lost, remaining a powerful tool possessed by a small handful of elite, and no one else. The western world became mostly illiterate, and as a result, moved toward hundreds of years of what would become the dark ages, a time when lives were short, rife with misery, and what little literacy there was, was monopolized by an unyielding, ever-present authority that limited all reading to a single book, to the forced exclusion of any and all others (and in this way, removing any sensible reason, like, for example, critical inquiry, for learning how to read, in what was then, an empire of illiterates). Writing served either the singular end of being a means for controlling subjugated peasants, or if not, then that of making copies of the book that was the instrument for their subjugation. Any other book, or for that matter, any proposal of change whatsoever, was prohibited, by penalty of death, in unimaginable torment and torture. The notion of “improvement” flatly did not exist, nor was there a word for it. Always subject to the presence of an absolute, uncompromising intolerance to the introduction of innovation, none existed, nor could it. Under these conditions, illiteracy was surely obvious as a more practical choice, even though no real choice actually existed. The knowledge of

the literate few, accumulated from the dawn of western civilization, was gone, irrecoverably, from what was to become modern Western culture (because luckily, Islam was spared), for over a thousand long years afterward. Even more so than is the case today, not reading meant not knowing.

When the accumulated knowledge of all lies in the possession of a few merely by virtue of their mastery of literacy and the benefits of such knowledge serve only the ends of these few to subjugating the many, then such knowledge can easily become perceived as a threat, and justifiably so. Knowing of knowledge and not having access to it, and further, perhaps having seen the advantage that such knowledge seems to render to its enfranchised possessors, those disenfranchised can readily justify resentment to knowledge and make its removal a source of mystery. This disenfranchisement of the illiterate mob may have been the root cause of the burning of the library in Alexandria, and the violence and loss that was its consequence, a riot being the only means available, with destruction, the only goal imaginable (ignoring plunder), to battle that which was to them at the time unknown.

Powerful and convenient as the Internet might be, it is not the exclusive source of ALL knowledge. It does not and physically cannot ever replace books, which, unlike the Internet, require no power in order to be able to be read. Like the wheel, or like a rope, writing is an ancient invention, and an enduring one. Alone and independently of any complex technology, just as nothing can do what a wheel or rope does except another wheel or rope, nothing else can do what a written book can do except another book, even if that book is made of clay.

Books can be copied and reproduced, their essence preserved far beyond their immediate media. Books can last for hundreds of years, even millennia, and are often capable of enduring the upheavals of culture by a mob (in the case of the Internet, even the ambitions of a mob of as few as one). But, that is provided that such upheavals allow the content of their great treasure to remain, by no mob, however few its number, ever being

made powerful enough to destroy the great treasure, by, if not burning it, then tearing it asunder that its parts and pieces might be misused instead. This is what may very well have happened, about fifteen hundred years ago, at a great library, in a warm, tropical land with a peaceful and inquisitive people, living far, far away, yet still nonetheless, culturally, very, very, very near; destroyed perhaps for no other reason than because the precious treasure of humankind’s accumulated knowledge did NOT belong to EVERYBODY. Now it so easily can, if all are provided the liberty and the tools; and oh yes, provided that enough people have the necessary reason and will to put both to use, which can only be achieved through accurate understanding of nature (science) being widespread, everywhere, which ONLY books and the Internet have yet been reliably able to offer, even if comes at the price of sharing it with a malicious mob.

Everyone needs to accurately understand how and why nature operates – starting with its foundations – just as everyone needs to know how to read and write, and equally important, why – if we are to have any lasting hope at all of not someday seeing again, an angry mob poised at the gates of the vault holding our most priceless treasures, the incredible riches of our accumulated knowledge, whole-heartedly determined to bring it to ruin, surely in part, because this priceless treasure was, sadly, either never made available also to them, or some-how withheld or misrepresented when they were children first learning, their parents perhaps fearing obsolescence in the face of an improving and advancing world, to the ultimate disadvantage of all, especially their children, yet again. Except that this time, perhaps, irrecoverably, and so, permanently, all may be lost forever, leaving no hope in the least for those who follow to ever realize what it even is that they have lost, and in this simple, primitive innocence, find no more bliss in ignorance than did those unfortunate souls living and dying in the brutality, exploitation, and filth that is the hallmark of a nightmare called the dark ages.

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**DERELICT 2**

[ SONG-LYRICS ]

The news just reached my building  
The landlord just raised the cost  
Of my staying here month to month----  
Into panic, I'm tossed

I'm forced to make a tough choice  
Between food and rent  
There's no harm in needing to eat----  
Into the cold, I'm sent

Expelled from refuge, when I walked out that door  
Seeking shelter, I've been there before

Return to a life I dread  
Wandering the city streets  
Return to being a hated pariah  
Everyone mistreats

Return to splitting life in half  
Between streets & rooms of friends  
This longing for space to call my own  
Never fucking ends

Stable living not found, this I can't ignore  
Missing shelter, I've been there before

A derelict again (repeat twice)

**By Dee Allen W: 6.6.14**

[ Inspired by the music of Unwoman. ]

*Consider this new song the first ever about formerly houseless people forced back into houselessness again. Something I'd feared since my own building in the Mission District received news of eviction back in November 2013. Most people in S.F. are experiencing this problem. And that's just the people who'd never experienced houselessness before.*

**Clear Gold**

Seventy-one percent of Earth.  
Sixty percent of us.

Gathering grey clouds  
Streaks of lightning  
Followed by thunder-roll----  
Gaia takes another shower  
Cleansed each time, refreshed by this----

Absorbing into leaves from rain  
Deer lapping it up from woodland streams  
Pathway to the safety of the river bottom  
for swimming fish  
Cities' steel veins flow it through our faucets  
Matrix of life, sated by this----

Corporations  
Monopolise  
Keep private  
What was formerly free----  
Sold back to us, plastic bottles of this----

Fear lingers in hearts  
In some who care  
That in future wars,  
Soldiers or drones will fight  
To the death, final prize: this----

Clear gold.

Seventy-one percent of Earth.  
Sixty percent of us.

**By Dee Allen  
Mother's Day 2014**

**Coyote's Three-thousand  
Mile Dental Appointment**

**By Bill Mash of Withouta Roof**

"All I want to do is sit by the window and drink a beer." --  
Coyote relishing his train ride north to Tacoma Washington.

I caught my first glimpse of Coyote, a barrel chested man of short stature and freckles, lumbering up to the wall in front of Rays Grocery, Garberville California. He was laboring under the heat of a mid-afternoon sun amid the weight of a massive seabag style backpack and two travel bags.

A quick hello is reciprocated with a smile-less nod. I see Coyote the next day, from a distance, once again laboring under the weight of a heavy load, the heat of the day beating down on him. He is tired and restless, as if he had some place to be.

The third time I see Coyote he's sitting in the shade near a downtown hotel. I wave to him from Debra Carey's car as a broad smile consumes his sun burnt face. It was a content, first of the month, check in hand, inviting kind of smile.

Coyote smartly tells of purchasing his german navy seabag about a decade ago for \$17.50, and how he lovingly stitches up the holes and tears the bag incurs on the road. This bag is his companion, his travel dog.

Coyote is going to Alaska, where he is a resident, to get his teeth fixed. California pulls teeth, Alaska knows better than that. He says Alaska will cap and fill teeth although you have to accept silver fillings. The disparity in humanness, and medical care smarts, is glaring. This man is traveling thousands of miles ostensibly for dental work. Think about that.

He lifts his crooked left arm, remnants of a break when he was eight that never did set right. The crooked arm kept him out of the military because he couldn't pass the peripheral view test where he had to put a finger tip to his nose, aka the sobriety test. He gave us a demonstration alternating between the good and bad arm. Sure enough, he was having trouble on the left side. He remembers them callously telling him, "Hey crooked arm you failed, your out of here."

Coyote's on full social security disability, for reasons far removed from a crooked arm and a few bad teeth. We all have demons, Coyote is no exception.

He squats telling tales of hiding in the shadows, low to the ground, head darting back and forth mimicking the bagging of soiled toilet paper while evading being spotted by passengers in a car that had suddenly driven by.

Walking away I turn back towards Coyote admiring how he doesn't look, nor act, like a man hauling his life's possessions about his torso, heading three-thousand miles for dental work. Coyote's a survivor, and a pleasant one at that.

**New Fracking Rules** continued from page 1

Center analysis found that oil companies used more than 45 million pounds of dangerous 'air toxic' chemicals in fracking, acidizing and gravel packing over the past year in Los Angeles and Orange counties."

- "Well-maintenance" loophole continues to let companies avoid disclosure: "The draft regulations allow companies to avoid disclosing dangerous chemical use to the public by claiming to be using the fracking or acidizing chemicals for "well maintenance" purposes," the Center said.

- Rubber-stamp approval for multiple fracking events: "The regulations' 'single project authorization' provision might be interpreted by oil officials as allowing them to approve many applications with one rubber-stamp approval," the group said.

- Weak water protection: "Testing to collect baseline water quality data and uncover fracking pollution will only be done at the request of people living within 1,500 feet of a fractured well. An apartment building would only receive one notice for all its tenants."

- Rules unlikely to be enforced: "A Center analysis found more than 100 violations of current fracking disclosure requirements in the past several months, making it likely that such violations by state oil officials and oil operators will continue," the group concluded.

"Nearly a third of California's wells are fracked, according to a recent statement from the oil industry," Kretzmann said. "Oil companies have also fracked hundreds of wells off California's coast, and the industry has federal permission to annually dump more than 9 billion gallons of wastewater, including fracking fluid, directly into the waters of the Santa Barbara Channel."

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Executive Director of Restore the Delta (RTD), a group opposed to Governor Brown's peripheral tunnels that would drain the Delta and doom salmon and other Pacific fisheries, asked, "If Kern County ruins its ground water supply fracking, how much more water are they going to expect from the Delta?"

That's a very good question - one that needs to be brought up in both discussions of fracking in California and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDGP) to build the twin tunnels.

Governor Jerry Brown's signing of the green light to fracking bill that authorized the weak new regulations, as well as the recent defeat of a fracking moratorium bill on the State Senate Floor, are the result of the power and influence that the oil industry wields in Sacramento. Brown signed SB 4 after receiving over \$2 million from fossil fuel interests since his race for Attorney General

in 2006.

The oil industry, represented by the Western States Petroleum Association, is the largest and most powerful corporate lobby in Sacramento. Big Oil wields huge influence over the Legislature, Governor's Office and state agencies through lobbying, campaign contributions and domination of regulatory processes.

Oil and gas companies spend more than \$100 million a year to buy access to lawmakers in Washington and Sacramento, according to Stop Fooling California, an online and social media public education and awareness campaign that highlights oil companies' efforts to mislead and confuse Californians.

The Western States Petroleum Association, the most powerful corporate lobbying group in Sacramento, spent \$123.6 million to lobby elected officials in California from 1999 through 2013. This was an increase of over 400 percent since the 1999-2000 legislative session, when the industry spent \$4.8 million.

In response to fracking's spread, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and other California

communities have begun moving forward with local measures that would halt fracking and other dangerous extraction techniques. Conservation groups, consumer organizations, American Indian Tribal activists and environmental justice advocates are challenging Governor Brown to ban these dangerous oil and gas activities in California.

For more information, contact: 350 [Sacramento.org](http://Sacramento.org), an organization that supports local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and works to engage Sacramento area citizens and local community groups in helping to build a global climate movement, and [californiansagainstfracking.org](http://californiansagainstfracking.org).



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and mail to: PO Box 952 Sacramento, CA 95812

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# HOMELESS RESOURCES

## Night Shelters

Salvation Army: 12th and North B St. 30 days per year: Dormitory living, C&S: Dinner, breakfast clothing for residents: Men/ Women: Sign-up SA patio weekdays at 1PM. 442-0331

St. Johnis Shelter: Women and Children. 4410 Power Inn Rd. Call between 10am & 3pm for space availability. 453-1482

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon St. Beds for Men Only, sign up 6:30pm at mission, Newcomers/Referrals have priority. 7:30pm Chapel Service with meal afterwards, 6am breakfast for residents. Showers / shaves 9-11am & 1-2:45pm. open to all homeless men: 447-3268

Next Move (formerly SAEHC) 24 hr Family Shelter; Families, single adults with children who have no other resource: Women's Refuge; single women, no children: Call for screening/space availability 455-2160

## Day Shelters

Friendship Park: 12th St. & North C: Weekdays 7am - 2:30pm: open to anyone: Many services

## Meals

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon St.: 7 days, Evening meal, Men/Women: Church service 7:00pm required, dinner following 8:30-9:15pm. Sunday 11am service, lunch at noon. 447-3268

Loaves & Fishes: 1321 No. C St.: Lunch every day 11:30am-1pm. Tickets available 7 am- 12:30 pm at Friendship Park weekdays: at 8 am on Saturday and 10am on Sundays.

Women's Civic Improvement Center: Seniors Only: 3555 3rd Ave. 11:30-12:30 lunch M-F 452-2866

Food-not-Bombs: serves free food in Cesar Chavez Plaza, 9th & J St., every Sunday 1:30 pm. All Welcome.

Foundation of Faith Ministries 2721 Dawes St. Rancho Cordova. Every 4th Sat. 3-5 pm All Welcome.

Glory Bound Street Ministry 4527 Parker Ave. Sundays; breakfast 11:30 am after 10 am church service; dinner 6:30 pm after 5 pm church service: Fridays; dinner 7 pm after 6 pm church service. Must attend services. 452-7078

## Women & Children

Maryhouse: 1321 No. C St. suite 32: Breakfast for Women and children 8am-9am. Day shelter 8am-3pm weekdays for women and families.

Wellspring 3414 4th St.: T&Th full breakfast: M-W-F continental breakfast for women and children. 454-9688

see Wind in Youth Services for young adults

## Free Clothing

Sacramento Food Bank: 3333 3rd Ave. (at Broadway) 10am-2pm Mon - Fri. 456-1980

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon St. Men: M-Sat 9-11am or 1-2:45pm: Women and Children: Thurs. 9 am sign up, 9:30-10am bible study, 10 am - 12 shop. 447-3268

Glory Bound Street Ministry 4527 Parker Ave. Clothes Closet, Sundays 11:30 am all welcome. 452-7078

## Medical

Mercy Clinic: For homeless adults, children: Nurse's office in Friendship park 7:30am & 12:30pm. 446-3345

Sacramento Dental Clinic: 4600 Broadway (Primary Care Bldg) Walk-ins 8 am - 12:30 pm 874-8300

## Mental Health

Guest House, 1400 N. A St.: Homeless Mental Health Clinic, M,W,Th,Fri., 8-11:30am Tues 8-11:30am only. Mental Health evaluation, medication if needed. Housing referrals for mentally ill, GA refs, SSI aps, refs to A & D counseling: 443-6972

TLCS Intake Offices: 1400 N. A St. Bldg. A: Adults 18 yrs & up; Referrals to transitional living programs, independent living, mental health support services; SSI/SSDI application assistance; Walk-ins 8-11am M-F 440-1500

Genesis: Professional Counseling for life problems. Referrals. 401 12th St. (DeLaney Center). 699-1536

## Youth Services

Diogenes: youth 16-21 yrs old. Hot Line call 1-800-339-7177

Wind Youth Center: 701 Dixianne Ave. Serves youth ages 12-20. Breakfast and Lunch; Clothing; Laundry and Showers; Case Management. Drop-in Hours: M-F from 8:00am to 4:30pm and Sat 10am to 2pm. 443-8333

## Crisis Intervention

WEAVE: Services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children. Referrals to court mandated battery intervention programs, Safe house, 24 hr. crisis line: 920-2952

## AIDS / HIV

AIDS Housing Alliance provides residential care, transitional housing & permanent housing services to homeless persons living with aids. 329-1093 weekdays.

CARES (Center for AIDS Research, Education and Service): 1500 21st ST. Serves people with HIV and AIDS. Medical care, mental health, case mgmt, health ed and regional prevention/ed classes. 443-3299

Breaking Barriers: Homeless Outreach Program provides direct services to people living with AIDS and HIV. Transportation to social services, medical appointments, job interviews, and housing assistance. 447-2437

Harm Reduction Services: 40001 12 Ave.; High risk outreach; HIV, Hep-C testing; case management for HIV; free medical clinic, needle exchange. 456-4849

Alternative Test Site: Free anonymous testing, Wed /Thurs. Call for appt. 874-7720.

## Legal Aid

Disability Rights, CA: Free legal services for people with disabilities. Call for appt. toll free: TTY:(800)776-5746

Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic: 401 12th St. (DeLaney Center) Free legal assistance and advocacy for problems related to homelessness. 446-0368

Legal Services of Northern California, Inc: 515 12th St. (at E ST.) M-F 8:30am-12pm, 1pm-5pm. Problems with public benefits, landlord / tenant, divorce clinic. Call for appt. 551-2150

Welfare Rights: 1901 Alhambra Blvd. (2nd floor) M-F 9am-5pm: AFDC, Food Stamps, Welfare and Medical rep at hearings. 736-0616

Social Security Disability / SSI Lawyer Free Consultation (916) 658-1880



## About SHA

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

For more info, or if you would like to participate, please call:

**(916) 455-4900**

<http://sachousingalliance.org>

1800 21st Street Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95811

*The SHA does not itself  
provide or manage housing.*

## Veterans

VA Outreach: 1-800-827-1000

Homeless VA Coordinator:(916) 364-6547

Mather VA Social Works: help getting DD-214, any vet. (916) 843-7064

Sacramento Veterans Resource Center  
7270 East Southgate Dr. 393-8387

## Miscellaneous

Francis House Center: 1422 C St. 9:00-noon walk-in - direct services resource counseling, vouchers for IDs, Dvr Licenses, Birth Certs, Transp Assistance; noon-3:00 - appts for in-depth resource counseling; by appt: Senior/Disability/Verteranis advocacy, notary service. Job Development Center open 9am-3pm MTu-W-F and noon-3pm Th. Motel vouchers for qualified families. 443-2646

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services: 3333 3rd Ave. (south of Broadway) Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 10am-1:30pm, and Wed 4pm-7pm. 456-1980.

Social Services: 28th & R ST. M-F 7:30am-5pm. Call for asst. 874-2072

Employment Development Department (EDD): 2901 50th St. (at Broadway) M-F 8am-5pm. Unemployment, job services. 227-0300

Medi-Cal: 1-800-773-6467, 1-888-747-1222. Or see DHA eligibility workers 1725 28th St. 916-874-2256

Social Security Office: 8581 Folsom Blvd (East of College Greens Lite-rail stop) M-F 9am-4:30pm 381-9410: Natl line 1-800-772-1213

## 211 Sacramento

Dial 211  
for tele-info & referral service

**Califorina Youth Crisis Line:**  
1-800-843-5200

**Health Rights Hotline:**  
551-2100

# 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 member 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 homeless people a voice in the public forum. Homeward also informs homeless persons 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 in Friendship Park, or mailed to the address below.

All writing submitted for publication will be edited as necessary, with due respect for the author's 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, 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 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 \$20 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee).

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