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# HOMeward

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## Homeless Hate Crimes Bill Introduced in State Legislature

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SACRAMENTO, CA: California State Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal introduced a bill to help protect homeless people from hate crimes.

Assembly Bill 312 would put homeless people into a protected class, and would allow homeless victims of hate crimes to sue perpetrators for more money than would otherwise be allowed, but does not include any extra criminal penalties.

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee's Paula Lomazzi and John Kraitz testified at the State Assembly Judiciary Committee in support of the bill, relaying some personal experiences as victims of homeless hate crimes. These crimes are believed to be motivated by the perpetrators' bias against homeless individuals or their ability to target homeless people with relative ease.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless' 2010 report "Hate Crimes Against the Homeless: America's Growing Tide of Violence";

- One in three violent attacks against homeless people by housed people in 2009 resulted in death.
- Perpetrators of these attacks tend to be young men and teenaged boys.
- Violent attacks on homeless Americans outnumber all other categories of hate crimes combined.
- Florida and California are the states where violence against homeless people occurs most frequently.

The report says that "Complicating the hate crimes issue and adding to its growth is that young teens are continually being exposed to homeless people being dehumanized in popular media while cities continue to create policies that criminalize the benign daily activities of homeless individuals."

AB 312 passed the Assembly Judiciary Committee and must go through the State Senate, also, before going before Governor Brown. During Governor Schwarzenegger's term, a similar bill passed Assembly and Senate, but was vetoed by the governor. There seems to be a better chance that this bill will make it past Governor Brown's desk unvetoed.

HW Staff Report

## Homeless Sacramentans Take the City to Court

People who have lost property when they were homeless from Sacramento City Police and other city personnel, are going to Federal Court starting May 9, 2011. This is the continuation of the Class Action Lawsuit "Lehr, et al vs. City of Sacramento and County of Sacramento". This case was brought against the City and County of Sacramento because they had made it a habit of disposing of homeless peoples' property without notifying them beforehand, and without storing the confiscated property for later retrieval. To be a member of the class this had to have happened to them after August 2, 2005.

In 2009 Plaintiffs and Defendants entered into Mediation to help resolve the claim. Out of the mediation process the County of Sacramento and the Plaintiffs reached a settlement agreement. \$200,000 was distributed to people who had their possessions taken and destroyed by County personnel, mostly from County Sheriff's

work crews and County Park Rangers. The County also agreed to certain procedures when dealing with a homeless person's property, such as giving a 48 hour notice, and notice where they can pick up their possessions at a nearby location. That portion of the case is now closed.

The City of Sacramento did not reach a settlement agreement during the mediation process, so the case will continue in Federal Court starting May 9, 2011. The hearings are scheduled to take place every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for three weeks, from 9am to 5pm. The Law Offices of Mark Merin are the attorneys for the Plaintiffs, with Cathleen Williams as the attorney representing the plaintiffs in court.

Many homeless witnesses will be called and the public is encouraged to attend to show support. It should prove to be very interesting.

Lehr, et al. vs City of Sacramento, et al.  
May 9-11, 16-28, 23-25  
Federal Court Building  
501 I Street  
Court Room 7, 14th Floor

# The Invisible People

by The Big Issue South Africa

Since psychiatric care was decentralised last year, in South Africa, patients have been moved from hospitals into community day hospitals that don't have the appropriate resources to deal with mental illnesses. As a result, many of society's most vulnerable have slipped through the cracks in the system and now walk the streets like invisible people.

You see some walking the verge of highways, muttering and gesticulating to themselves, while others crouch on the pavements outside busy eateries, unseen by the well-heeled patrons. The invisible are not ghosts of souls passed over, they are people who live among us, with beating hearts and blood flowing through their veins, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, each with a unique story to be told.

Nosipho\* is a 36-year-old woman who hails from the Eastern Cape. Although she grew up under apartheid, she was able to attend a local convent school where she thrived under the tutelage of a benevolent English teacher. She was a bright student who enjoyed writing stories in which she fantasised of escape from her small, poor community.

In her stories she was a gospel singer who would travel the world and sleep on soft beds with many clean

crisp sheets which would keep her warm and safe. Even at 15 she knew that she wasn't going to be famous, that she would probably have to drop out of school soon in order to look after her small sister because her grandmother was ailing fast, but the fantasy lingered and soon she began to discover the signs.

At first, the signs were few and far between; a stone turned over in the dust was a clue to be followed. Nosipho heard her name mentioned on the radio whenever she came into her grandmother's room and seemingly random events began to appear linked. Soon the signs multiplied, one upturned stone led to another. She would hear her name whispered on the wind and yet, when she turned around, no-one was there.

Her friends began asking her if she was smoking isango [cannabis] because she appeared entangled in a dream-like stupor. A grin became the mask she wore to fend off the constant questioning of her peers, a grin she wore to trap the tears at her grandmother's grave. After the funeral, her mother returned to Cape Town to look for work, leaving Nosipho with her eight-year-old sister. It was hard to be a mother when she was still just a child herself.

The days were long and difficult and when she could finally rest, the cacophony of voices would begin

their weaving dance. The voices she heard sounded as if they came from the space outside of her: sometimes they would shout incoherent nonsense right next to her ear, at other times the voices would sound as if they came from far over the barren horizon. One of the voices was recognisable - it was her grandmother who told her that she had been bewitched by an inyanga [medicine-man] and that if Nosipho did not go and find her mother in Cape Town soon, her sister would die. Every day the voices grew in strength and soon Nosipho would not leave the house for fear of being attacked by spirits sent by the inyanga.

She would leave the house just before dawn, when the voices were still asleep, to arrange small piles of stones around the home to protect the sisters. Soon she forgot to wash or get food and her worried sister brought shuffling, concerned elders into their cluttered room where they found Nosipho muttering into her tattered shawl. People in the village began to look at her strangely and whispered behind their hands when she passed. One night, after a particularly harrowing day during which she had been viciously beaten by other children who had called her cursed, she fled to Cape Town to find her mother. That night was some 20 years ago.

Today Nosipho is still searching for her mother. Miraculously she has managed to eke out a thin ex-

istence living on the baking streets or in caves scattered through the rain-soaked mountains of Cape Town. For the past month she has sought shelter behind the blazing red bougainvillea beneath my balcony where she laboriously wraps black plastic bags around her head to fend off the razor sharp voices that continually torment her, even in her sleep. A week ago I went with Nosipho to the day hospital to see the psychiatric sister in order to get her antipsychotic medication, which could radically change Nosipho's quality of life. But after three hours of waiting in line - with no identification documents - I had to return to work and Nosipho fled soon after, citing the accusatory stares of others as the reason.

A 2007 study by the Medical Research Council revealed that one in six South Africans struggle with a mental disorder. Many of us have experienced bouts of mild depression and anxiety in our own lives, but living with severe mental illness requires great courage and the road to recovery is often long and hard. Patients admitted to psychiatric hospitals like Valkenberg, in Cape Town, often come from disadvantaged communities where there are insufficient resources to provide the necessary support. Many families and communities are overwhelmed by the strain of caring for a person with a severe mental illness.

Thankfully, there are small groups of volunteers who work diligently to offer people like Nosipho some measure of support. Organisations such as The Friends of Valkenberg Trust and Cape Mental Health are always in need of volunteers and donations of any kind. South Africans have overcome a lot in their own troubled history. Support groups like Friends of the Valkenberg Trust believe that if anything, this should be more reason for South Africans to open their hearts and find their compassion for those who are in such desperate need for help.

As Mahatma Ghandi said: "You can judge a society by how they treat their weakest members."

\* The story of Nosipho is a construct, a semi-biographical montage of two women's stories in order to protect both their identities. The images and information were obtained with informed consent. The writer, clinical psychologist Jamie Elkon, and the photographer, Charlie Sperling, would like to thank Anton White at Kinetic for his support in bringing awareness to those with no voice.

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## Discharged from Hospital ...

By The Contributor  
(Nashville)

When most people get out of hospital, they are sent home where they are able to rest and recover for as long as they need. But where do you go after surgery when you have no 'home' to return to? One Nashville organization cares for homeless patients when they need it the most.

Two years ago, a man showed up at Nashville's Room In The Inn looking for a place to stay. When a volunteer doctor performed a routine check-up, he found surgical marks on each of the man's toes.

The homeless man suffered from a vascular disease, and a hospital had determined that his toes needed to be amputated. However, the hospital decided that the best option was to release him to the streets in order

to let his toes self-amputate.

"It seems to us - not just it seems to us, it is - very Third World to think that in Nashville, Tenn., someone is released to the streets so that their toes can fall off," said Lisa Stetar, project manager for Room In The Inn's recent expansion of the Guest House. "That doesn't make sense to me since I live in the city that claims to be one of the healthcare capitals of the world."

Room In The Inn was able to offer this man a place to stay, arrange for his surgery to take place and provide him with prosthetic toes.

"He literally left dancing," said Rachel Hester, executive director of Room In The Inn.

Respite care for Nashville's homeless community

Room In The Inn operates Nashville's only recuperative-care facility for the homeless community, and now it's getting a facelift.

In 1991, the organization started a division called the Guest House as a partnership with Metro Police to offer intoxicated homeless people a place to sober up instead of being jailed.

The initiative would save the city time and money by preventing a booking and offer homeless people access to various services. It was done, as Stetar said, as a medical and social issue, not a criminal issue - a "win-win" for the community.

She explained that the respite program grew out of the Guest House.

"We've always taken care of people who are part of our com-

munity, going out to Room In The Inn, people who are under the weather and needed extra care. Then we started getting referrals from the hospitals," she said.

The organization has now been taking referrals from hospitals for 20 years to provide respite care for the growing number of homeless persons being discharged with no place to go. Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010, the Guest House provided recuperative care, similar to home health care, for 319 people, 220 of whom were referred directly from a hospital.

While the typical stay is 14 days, some stay for a few days, others for a few months.

"For the homeless individuals, the streets are not a place that you can take care of your medical needs," Stetar said.

The facility is being renovated in the second phase of Room In The Inn's recent expansion. The number of beds will be increased from nine to almost 20.

The new facility better assists the care for people coming out of the hospitals, individuals who aren't healthy enough for Room In The Inn, people stabilizing on mental health medications and homeless people who need a place to sober up. Its expansion allows caregivers to see to individual's health issues, then move them into other programs or even housing.

"Really, it creates a continuum of care that they wouldn't have if we just treated it as a transaction," Hester said. "So we really try to look at the whole person as we go on that journey with them."

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# ... Admitted to the Streets

continued from Page 2

Part of the overall goal is to prevent unnecessary hospitalization. Nashville General estimates in the last two years they've spent \$6 million dollars treating the homeless.

"Somebody who gets discharged from the hospital, if they go to the street, they can't take care of their wounds, they can't necessarily get the prescriptions filled," Stetar said. "The chances are very high that they'll end up back in the hospital. So from a healthcare perspective, it's much more cost effective for us to take care of them. Obviously, they're in much better hands. I think the fact that we're also able to address other needs really increases the effectiveness of recuperative care," she said, describing such things as filling prescriptions, arranging doctors' appointments and handling patients' follow-up care.

One issue the Guest House and hospitals have faced, however, is homeless individuals who check themselves out of the hospital prematurely.

Jennifer Hamilton, director of case management at Nashville General Hospital at Meharry, said that there's not a lot the hospital can do when homeless patients check themselves out before being discharged.

"It ties your hands when a patient leaves the hospital against medical advice," she said. "When a patient chooses to leave, they usually sign paperwork that says, 'I don't wish to be treated any longer.' It's unfortunate because it does sever that. Oftentimes you see those patients return within a few days because they've become so sick they didn't complete their treatment, and we start all over. When they come back, unfortunately, that's when we have the talks about 'this is going to continue happening unless you let us complete what needs to happen.'"

"That's not just a homeless thing though," she added. "Patients leave hospitals all the time for different reasons; I guess no one wants to be in the hospital."

Once out the door, Larry Prisco says it's nearly impossible to ensure anyone a safe recuperation. Prisco is a social work director

at Vanderbilt Medical Center. He says every patient leaves with a discharge plan and referrals for follow up care. Still, it can be hard to meet every individuals' needs.

"If someone is ready for discharge from any hospital because they no longer need that level of care, it does not mean that they can go to respite," Prisco says. "So, as with any patient, if a person has no insurance but needs a certain kind of care beyond that acute hospital, it is often very difficult to arrange that next level of care."

## Room for improvement

Room In The Inn staff acknowledges there is much room in Nashville to improve recuperative care for homeless people.

"Our hopes are that we all come to the table with the hospitals and we really talk about systematically how do we really serve the homeless," Hester said. "It can't be just 'transactions,' and it can't be the same way you deal with people from East Nashville or Brentwood. This is a different culture. Father Strobel has often said, 'This is a Third World country in the middle of a First World city': you have to understand first how it operates before you respond to it."

Stetar said that one of the things Room In The Inn wants to work closely with hospitals on is discharge planning.

"For the homeless individual, discharge planning needs to start the day you hit the door, not the day they decide they're ready to release you," Stetar said. "That's one of the difficulties—they don't necessarily recognize that that patient is homeless. You can't go to the hospital and ask, 'How many homeless people do you serve?' They can't track that because they don't code people that way."

According to Stetar, because hospitals don't keep track of who's homeless, when the time comes for a homeless patient to be discharged, it is often too late.

"We really want to get [hospitals] to work with us really from the front end, not waiting 'til the day they're ready to release

them and calling us and we say, 'Well, we don't have a bed.'"

Hester said that the social workers at the hospitals have been extremely helpful.

"They really work hard to get their patients somewhere safe if they can do it, and that's their intention, so they call us and we really try to accommodate them if we can," Hester said. "It's a good working relationship, but I think, in general, the system of the hospitals and the whole system of care for the homeless needs some serious tuning up."

Sabrina Edgington, a program and policy specialist with the Nashville-based National Health Care for the Homeless Council, agreed that a key step for Nashville is moving patients out of the hospital and emergency-care system into "health stability."

"[This involves] connecting somebody with a primary care provider in order to better coordinate their care," she said, stressing the importance of "health education to help patients really understand when to see your primary care provider and when to go to the emergency room.

"If the best practices are really implemented well, [patients transition] out of that emergency care and [have] more knowledge and better resources hopefully to manage their disease."

Edgington said her council is pushing for a stronger discharge planning program. To that end, the council recently applied for a grant with the Baptist Healing Trust that would enable them to train discharge planners in motivational interviewing, goal setting, referrals to respite and housing, and more.

Another gap, she said, is data collection and tracking by hospitals.

"Right now, they're not consistently tracking housing status," she said. "That's part of our discharge planning program [that] would help them track that so they can see whether or not these new efforts are actually reducing readmissions."

## One hospital's perspective

Jennifer Hamilton of Nashville General Hospital said that her team's protocol is to see and assess each potential patient regardless of social or insurance status. As a result, she sees a lot of needs.

"For all patients, we try to formulate a good, safe discharge. We try to look at everyone's situation and say, 'OK, what needs are they going to need to continue recuperating?'" For homeless patients, Hamilton said her hospital does several things.

"If we identify that someone has a social issue such as homelessness, we bring in a social worker to help complete a more detailed assessment of that patient to find out where they have been receiving health care, what are their barriers, have they joined up with the resources out there such as the Campus for Human Development," she said.

If she sees that patients need a place for further recuperation, she refers them to the Guest House.

"The hospital, the case management social services department, we work with them, we talk with them and make referrals," she said. "If we get patients that come from them, we might call to see if their doctor can give us any information.

"It might just be a couple days extra, it could be that the patient needs a week or two weeks more," Hamilton said. "I try to make sure medications are addressed. I know that my homeless population oftentimes don't have the resources to purchase their medication, so we work with them on that.

"So we try to reach out and create a safe discharge plan that would mimic that of someone with insurance so that those patients don't leave here without all the things they need to continue getting better, even though they are discharging into a far different environment."

Hamilton said that one thing Meharry has started doing is getting a home health agency to go in to the Mission to follow a homeless patient it has discharged, which she described as "huge."

She also networks with organizations willing to donate medical items.

"I've had oxygen companies donate oxygen, for those that need to be on oxygen and they don't have the resources. Goodwill is great about calling us when they have medical equipment, because some of my homeless population have insurance, but not all of them, so a safe discharge plan might mean they need a walker or might mean they need a wheelchair."

Hamilton said she recently attended a meeting at Room In The Inn that addressed a collaborative effort among Nashville's hospitals.

"We are looking at, is there something we can do as a city?" she said. "This is an area that impacts all of us; it impacts all of the hospitals in the area. It also impacts the patient because they feel they have to use the emergency department as a doctor's office, and we don't want health care to be approached that way from anyone."

Hamilton said she would love to see the Guest House have at least 20 respite beds and then devote beds to other-than-medical needs.

"Offer the respite a little more support with physical therapy and things like that," she said. "I think we're trying to go in the right direction of creating more beds and having more opportunity for these patients."

Lisa Stetar, with the Guest House, acknowledged that a need will always exist.

"Even after the renovation, we can serve a significant larger number of people, but there's always going to be a need that exceeds what we can provide."

David Adams, Julie Williams and Allison Woods are senior communication majors at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

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## Tunisian Leaders Speak About Revolution at Labor Dinner

Leaders of the Tunisian Federation of Labor came to Sacramento on March 20 and spoke at a dinner event held by the Sacramento Central Labor Council and the California Labor Federation. This group were main organizers for the recent peaceful people's revolution in Tunisia, that, by constant vigilance, overthrew the Tunisian Dictator, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. This success has spread hope to people's throughout the Middle East and has inspired six other nations to rise up to demand their country's dictators step down and to establish Democracy.

The revolution did not just one day en-mass all the people together to take over the country. It was a long road to get to that point. It was an accumulation of many years of oppression. There was no space or margin of freedom. There was deep corruption in the government. The elections were rigged for decades, on all levels, national and local elections, with only one political party. There were no free media. Protest was met with brutal security. There were killings and harsh judgments for political opposition and dissent.

Marlene Mansour, a Sacramento resident who lived in Tunisia several years ago for a year, said "Every single place you went, there was at least (it was the law) a 10x13 picture of Ben Ali in the shop. You couldn't say anything bad about him, because people

would tell on each other. There was secret police. They were really afraid of their government."

The unrest started in regions forgotten for decades by an age group that was ignored. The youth had no hopes for the future. The young people were educated but unemployed. They had been pushed too hard and were ready to do whatever it takes to bring about democracy. They had three demands that became the themes of the December 2010 protests: 1) Employment, 2) Dignity, and 3) Freedom.

Those same demands are also what the Tunisian Union stands for. The labor union's role was fundamental. Most of the protests started at the regional headquarters. For many years before the revolution, union leaders had tried to free political prisoners and there were a number of strikes and protests. The union activated international contacts through the internet and other means, and gave all other means towards the protests.

On January 14, they held a general strike in Tunis and went from the union office to the Ministry of Police, where the protest took place. The youth were a driving force of the revolution, who used the internet extensively to help organize self and support from outside the country. Women, also, played a big role in helping advance the cause.

Tunisia is undergoing a



Panel of speakers at the dinner.

Democratic transition - the union, political and civil arenas. The transitional government will oversee a constitution and democratic process, human rights and freedom. All people will have a voice. There will be an election code.

Since January 14 and the tyrant leaving, they haven't celebrated. The militias and supporters of the old party tried to bring down the revolution with terror.

There were two things these labor leaders were traveling across our country to ask of us. First, for us to ask our representatives to put pressure on the IMF and World Bank to hold off on collecting foreign debt payments for a temporary time period, so that the Tunisians can have time to solidify their new democracy and recover from the changes taking place in their country. The IMF and World Bank have gone to the other extreme and have derated their scores that raised the interest rates on these loans. Other financial problems have beset the country,

such as the closing of several foreign companies in Tunis.

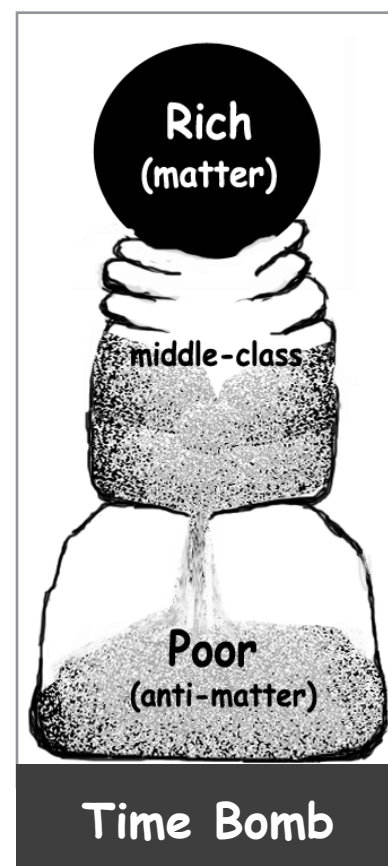
Bill Camp, MC of the event, said that the Tyrant and his supporters stole hundreds of millions of dollars from Tunisia. The Tunisians were also asking our country to freeze assets of the Tyrant in the US, and not to honor his money.

One of the Tunisia labor leaders declared that "All people on earth deserve to be free."

The visiting labor leaders were Abdelatif Hamrouni, Secretary General, Federation of Public Sector and Housing Workers, Najoua Makhlouf Ep Gheni, President, National Women's Committee, UGTT, Sami Aquadi, Secretary General, Higher Education Union

UGTT leaders Abdellatif (Lotfi) Hamrouni, the Secretary General of the Union of Public Sector and Housing Workers, Dr. Najoua Makhlouf, the chairwoman of the Committee on Women Workers at the UGTT and Sami Aouadi, the Secretary-General of the Federation of University Professors and Teachers of Tunisia.

### HW Staff Report



# Overcoming Adversity: Using Failure as a Stepping Stone to Success

by Ireland's Big Issue

It is easy to become disillusioned with life and it's even easier to simply give up, there are however many examples of people who have overcome extreme adversity to become successful.

We're having it hard in Ireland. The Celtic Tiger has disappeared and left debris of unemployment, uncertainty and fear. We all know at least a handful of family and friends who are just about ready to give up on the job search as their self esteem sinks in correlation with the rejection letters they receive. It is easy to become disillusioned with life and it's even easier to simply give up, but just remember, if some of the great men and women of history had 'thrown in the towel' when the going got tough we as a nation would have lost out to some amazing inventions, sport stars, presidents and human rights activists, to name but a few.

Let's look at just a handful of people who forged on despite their hardships and made the metaphorical lemonade when life handed them lemons!

Abraham Lincoln who is considered by many as the greatest American President was born in a log cabin in Kentucky to poverty-stricken parents. His father was a migratory carpenter and his mother passed away when he was 9 years old.

Abraham barely had any formal schooling having amassed less than one year of school attendance to his name, nevertheless he taught himself to read by reading and re-reading the same tiny bundle of books he had amassed.

When he became a man he became a partner in a grocery store that failed and left him with a huge burden of debt. Did he give up? No, he took a variety of odd jobs as they came along including rail splitting and working as a village postmaster, all the time continuing in education.

The rest as they say is history. Perhaps what we gleam from Lincoln's life and experience is, whether or not you get the best financial and educational start in life doesn't really matter. If you fail, fear not, failure doesn't define you; it is just something that happens.

Perhaps how you deal with the failure is what will refine you. Feeling sorry for ourselves is often our 'default' emotion, but just think, if Abraham Lincoln had simply given up we would not have had "the unfaltering commander in chief" during the Civil War (which preserved the United States as one nation) or the Emancipation Proclamation (which began the process of freedom for America's slaves).

Abraham Lincoln set an example of strong character, leadership, and honesty which succeeding presidents tried to emulate. Barack Obama is the latest to look to Lincoln as a model. If Abraham had stayed down when life hit him with his first big failure, just imagine what society would have lost

out on.

British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli had numerous businesses fail, he was crushed by overwhelming debts, he had a breakdown and suffered dreadful religious prejudice but had he simply given up he would not have been Britain's first Jewish Prime Minister and he would not have been able to change the laws to improve housing and working conditions.

What about Albert Einstein, the creator of The Theory of Relativity and Nobel Laureate? His teacher believed he was mentally challenged and lazy and one teacher went as far as saying that he would never amount to anything.

When the young Albert left the education system at 16 he could easily have believed what he had heard throughout his whole schooling career, but he didn't, he had inner belief in his theory that "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the globe." Had Einstein allowed other people's opinions and limitations to depress him, the physics world would not be as advanced as it is today.

Multi-millionaire Michael Jordan the Chicago Bulls basketball player who is deemed the best basketball player of all time could have given up his dream when he was cut from the high school basketball team.

He says "The day the cut list was going up, a friend Leroy Smith and I went to the gym to look together. If you name was on the list, you made the team. Leroy's name was there, and mine wasn't. I went through the day numb. After school, I hurried home, closed the door to my room and cried so hard."

Had the young Michael simply given up we would have missed out on what the professionals deem as the best player of all time, hence his nicknames 'Air Jordan' and 'His Airness' due to his tremendous leaping ability.

Helen Keller was blind and deaf but that didn't stop her becoming a world-famous

author and speaker, and the world's first deaf Bachelor of the Arts.

Itzhak Perlman the Israeli-American musician is said to be one of the finest violin virtuosos to have emerged from the 20th Century, but when he was 4 years old he was diagnosed with Polio and as a result his legs are paralysed. Had he wallowed in self pity the world would not have benefited from his great talent. Perlman has had countless accolades and has performed for royalty and U.S. Presidents.

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery where she was raised under harsh conditions, and subjected to severe whippings even as a tiny child. When she was only 12 years old she was seriously injured by a blow to the head by a white overseer for refusing to help tie up a man who tried to escape. She eventually freed herself from slavery and arrived in Philadelphia.

Had Harriet Tubman have 'thrown in the towel' she would not be the lady of American history who played a major role in freeing millions of slaves (hence her nickname 'Moses'). Not only had Harriet racial discrimination to deal with when she escaped (racial tension was becoming worse in Philadelphia), but the U.S. Congress had also passed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which forced law enforcement officials (even in states which had outlawed slavery) to aid in the capture of fugitive slaves.

This fine lady suffered immeasurable amounts to the racial cruelty of that time yet she didn't stop in her fight for freedom and liberty. She was given a full military funeral when she died, and the U.S. Postal Service honoured her life with a postal stamp, but most importantly, she probably illustrates more than any person the power of self belief.

You may ask, how do I maintain self-esteem when my mornings are spent looking at rejection letters? According to eHow

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## SafeGround Update

### No Place to Run No Place to Hide

Record rain and snowfall have created unusually high river conditions this year. This has made it virtually impossible for homeless people to remain concealed. It seems to embarrass policy makers in the City and County, which results in increased law enforcement activity. Once again, this is just implementing a policy of arresting our way out of homelessness—something that has never worked.

Recently, at a press conference, thanking the churches for their participation in the Winter Sanctuary, Supervisor Phil Serna told everyone how heartbroken he was to see the homeless living in tents and shanties during the homeless count. What he didn't say was that the next morning police were sent out to take even these meager forms of shelter, leaving the homeless to fend off a rain storm with nothing. This is why we need Safe Ground and we need it NOW!!

John Krintz,  
Safe Ground President

## The United Nations Visits Safe Ground

### Concerns over basic human right to water and sanitation addressed in a report.

Catarina de Albuquerque, the United Nations Independent Expert on the right to water and sanitation, visited Safe Ground in Sacramento in February 2011 as part of her mission to the United States. The human right to water and sanitation entitles everyone to water and sanitation that is available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and safe without discrimination. However, Safe Ground members and other unsheltered homeless persons live outdoors under conditions more commonly associated with the poor in developing countries, with no toilets, running water, garbage pick-up or showers. After listening to testimony from Safe Ground members, the expert said in her report to the US government, "the fact [that homeless people are left without sanitary facilities or potable water] is unacceptable, an affront to human dignity and a violation of human rights that may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment." Safe Ground is eager to work with local governments to create outdoor communities that recognize and respect the human right to water and sanitation.

*Reprinted with permission from the Sacramento Housing Alliance Newsletter.*

*55,000 Empty Homes in Sacramento -- 2800 Homeless Families and Individuals... I'm just sayin'....*



# NUCLEAR STEAM ENGINES

www.chongonation.com

by the homeless science writer,

## Chongo

Recent events in Japan have wrought tragedy upon humanity, indeed, upon all life there. Such is the character of natural change. It can be abrupt, and clearly uncaring about the consequences upon the living experience of those impacted at the time and place. This is because nature happens according to physical laws that include change as a fundamental necessity. You might say that natural events happen for the sake of themselves, just as the same is true for life, which happens and exists for the sake of itself too.

Natural tragedy is unstoppable. But, luckily for us humans, we can take measures to mitigate the extent of the harm done and sometimes even to avoid altogether certain consequences of many such natural tragedies, that is, if we put our mind and effort to the task. It is this point that introduces the subject of this article. The tidal wave that swept the northern Pacific coast of Japan is past. Nonetheless, bringing things back to the way they were before the disaster in the stricken areas may now be impossible, because there seems no undoing some of the damage that is a consequence of Japan's necessity to use nuclear energy.

Green and beautiful as it might be, the island of Japan itself is poor in natural material resources. To keep the machinery of their vast economy of their island powered, Japan chose the most economical source for producing energy that there is, nuclear; that is, the most economical if you ignore the perpetual expense of now being steward of the deadly and hot nuclear waste that remains afterwards. There's no getting rid of it. Japan bet that it could safely contain it and like at Chernobyl, in Lithuania, or at Three-Mile Island in Pennsylvania, the bet was lost. So now in Japan, the deadly and hot nuclear material is presently escaping into the rest of the world nearby that, to a certain extent, bet

nothing, yet must still suffer the loss as if it had.

Naturally, this begs the question, how can this have happened? Japan's standards for nuclear safety exceed those of the United States (which is natural since they are the only country in the world that has first hand experience of the destructive force of nuclear bombs). To answer how this could happen, we should begin by asking how nuclear power generating plants work, that they cannot be prevented from failing, as Chernobyl and Three-Mile Island, and now three nuclear plants in Japan did? The answer how they can fail lies in the character of the nuclear fuel that powers them. As stated, it is deadly and it is hot. It generates heat with the simple passage of time and nothing else whatsoever. Except for the detail that it is deadly poison, nuclear fuel is a perfect fuel, for the simple reason that it "burns" naturally, by itself.

The principles for harnessing nuclear energy are simple. Nuclear fuel heats water (though it need not be water, other chemicals can be used), which of course, besides becoming hot, also becomes radioactive as a consequence of its effectively direct contact with the radioactive nuclear material heating it. This heated and now radioactive water is usually used to heat yet a second reservoir (though not necessarily), which, in turn, may heat yet another. The final reservoir of water (which again, could be the very first) provides steam that drives turbines that produce electricity. Hence steam, heated from the decay of nuclear material, hot and deadly, powers electrical generators, with the only material input being new fuel. This is how the heat that is the thermal (radiated heat) energy, the output of radioactive material, becomes the electrical energy of electricity and the output of the nuclear power plant.

As described above, aside from the exotic fuel, a nuclear power generating plant is actually no different from a steam engine, in principle,

very similar to a steam-engine locomotive, for example, but without moving. What is however different between the two is that for the steam engine of a locomotive, controlling the "fire" is far less risky than doing the same thing on the steam engine of nuclear plant. The former can even be done by simply doing nothing at all, and letting the fire consume itself. The same is not true for nuclear "fire." Unlike a dying fire that eventually consumes all its fuel, nuclear fuel continues burning, even after it is spent for generating power.

So, in a nuclear power generating plant, there is no "putting out" the nuclear fire. And, although a nuclear fire will eventually "consume itself" just like a combustion fire does, it takes tens of thousands of years to do so. This is the problem with nuclear energy. Once the choice is made to use it, there is no "unchoosing" it. The consequences are, in terms of human lifetimes, permanent.

In very real terms, the "burning" of nuclear fuel cannot be stopped, only mitigated and controlled. For nuclear fuel, burning continues on the scale of human civilizations arising on the surface of planet earth, which is effectively indefinitely, meaning, from the perspective of human existence, forever. So we are compelled, inescapably, to the stewardship and care of any and all material that is a consequence of our taking advantage of enormous quantities that mass contains. (The energy density is tremendous, small plants can produce huge amounts of energy.)

We here in the United States have had the good fortune to avoid having to make the tough bets that Japan has had to choose, among its limited choices. Indeed, we surely have benefited from Japan's choice to use nuclear instead of petroleum, leaving more of the latter for those of us who have chosen not to use nuclear sources and rely so heavily on petroleum. Were Japan's demands higher, petroleum would surely be more expensive, certainly far scarcer.

In the end we may have no choice but to make the same bet that Japan has made. Petroleum fuels will someday become too scarce to be feasible. With luck, "fracking" shale will be recognized for the polluting technology that it is, and hence become unfeasible, thus dismissing the idea that technology can keep a petroleum-based system operating. Moreover, the burning of petroleum fuels is progressively accelerating global warming. Half the forests in the world are now gone. Likewise, the demand for energy is increasing exponentially. Solar energy can help, but its contribution is limited. This is even truer for wind power. All this means that the choices will become fewer with each passing year, and there are not so many years left that action can be taken. 2020 may be the deadline, being the point at which either runaway global warming becomes irreversible or glaciers unavoidable (given that some models predict the initiation of an ice age as being the outcome of global warming).

If we ignore the nuclear waste itself by accepting the responsibility of developing better technology for its stewardship, nuclear could be the best choice that we have. Aside from the waste, there is no greener way. We must keep in mind however, that responsible stewardship depends upon maintaining a civil world, which is no small task.

(This text is from no science book that Chongo has ever written. However, to see the books that Chongo has written on nature [on physical science] - in collaboration with Jose - go to the web site [www.chongonation.com](http://www.chongonation.com), which is a web site dedicated to educating those who have least opportunity for learning the scientific foundations that describe nature more accurately than any other body of ideas ever conceived. Chongonation.com provides books that allow such opportunity, in lay terms, and most significantly, without any math whatsoever. Simply go to the [www.chongonation.com](http://www.chongonation.com) home page and click on either 'Books on Nature' [Conceptual Physics] or 'Products & Prices' to see just how many books are available. To see the other science essays that Chongo has written, simply click on 'articles' or 'science articles'. To see links to science videos, click first on "Free Education" from the home page.)

# The Things They Carried

by Megaphone (Canada)

Every day they line up in the earliest morning hours before the doors even open. Those in line are the binners, who collect the unwanted bottles and cans marked for trash, exchanging them for money at the recycling depots that dot the city. The photographer Brian Howell examines shopping cart culture.

The line snakes its way down the street, and those in it appear anxious. They are ready to get in and get out as quickly as possible, in order to get back to work and back into this line again. This is the daily routine outside of the United We Can bottle depot on East Hastings Street, in Vancouver, Canada. The binners work their way through the city every day, traipsing across town and tracing their way through the city's complicated tertiary commuting paths comprising laneways, alleys, back roads and residential streets. It's a study in social commerce. It's a capitalist model, an environmental model, an employment model. Most often, the binners are seen pushing their overflowing shopping carts with bottles and cans.

It's this underground world of commerce that is the subject of Brian Howell's newest series, "Shopping Carts".

Brian Howell is a photographer and artist who has exhibited both in Canada and internationally. His artistic work tends towards society's margins, like "One Ring Circus", a documentation of a local professional wrestling circuit, and "Fame Us", which chronicled celebrity impersonators.

Despite his chosen subjects, Howell treats their obsessions sincerely and with integrity. Their motivations may be mysterious to the casual observer, but for Howell, there is a world to mine. Like his other series, "Shopping Carts" blends his photojournalistic background with his artistic sensibilities.

In "Shopping Carts", the otherwise mundane, quotidian objects are considered by Howell as art objects. The series comprises 25 large-scale photographs of shopping carts that were purchased firsthand from their owners in Vancouver and around the Lower Mainland. I imagine

the binners he stopped were fairly quick to agree to his proposal. After all, most of these carts are not filled with personal belongings, but with objects meant to be traded and sold.

The photographs themselves are stunning, bursting with colour against the stark white background he shoots them against. He geographically locates each photograph, showing that the carts are not isolated to certain neighbourhoods or communities. It's part of the process of separating the shopping cart culture from homelessness: those that use them to carry goods from those that use them to carry all their personal possessions.

It's strange, though, to see the carts portrayed in this way, all motionless and silent. Usually we hear them before we see them, a rattling racket through laneways that announce their presence before appearing.

Even in these circumstances they are slightly surprising to see, taken out of their natural environment of brightly fluorescent-lit shopping malls and grocery stores. Howell takes the removal and incongruity one step further, though-out of the stores, out of the laneways and onto the walls of a gallery.

At first blush, shopping carts would seem to be a strange subject for a gallery series. But Howell reveals the layers of meaning behind these simple four-wheeled carts. As he displays them, they are beyond merely functional, packed not only with goods, but with significance. Howell shows us a deeper side of these objects, exploring themes of homelessness, consumerism, commerce, class and environmentalism.

The carts themselves are a study in contrasts. Some are modern and sleek, with slim lines, painted black and built for speed; others boxy and utilitarian, designed for little beyond carrying as much as possible (these are the pack mules of the shopping cart breed, and one can almost see the wheels uncontrollably wobbling off in the wrong direction); some carts are draped in clothes and fabrics; others are filled with cables and wires; all are overflowing with cultural detritus that would be considered by many on first glance to be little more than an accumulation of junk.

As Douglas Coupland asks in his introductory essay on the series: "People often say that they're throwing something away, but this statement begs one of the great questions of consumerism: 'When you throw something away, what, exactly, do you mean by away?'"

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## Overcoming Adversity

continued from page 5

there are 7 main points to staying upbeat when life looks bleak, these are: smiling to yourself and others and maintaining a good posture, thinking positively and counterbalancing a negative thought with a positive one about yourself, being nice to yourself and others, facing your fears and forgetting your failures, focusing on your achievements and successes so far in life, stopping yourself from continually attempting to be perfect and not comparing yourself to other people, not caring what people think of you and finally, being proactive in keeping company with positive and optimistic people who have high self esteem and high self confidence, and should you be around pessimistic people, don't allow them to pull you down, instead maintain your positive thoughts about yourself and direct your positive and optimistic thoughts in their direction.

Just remember, it was during John Bunyan's most depressing times, being locked away in a prison cell that he produced his masterpiece A Pilgrim's Progress which has sold millions of copies worldwide. Perhaps changing our mindsets regarding failure would change everything. If something doesn't work or a job is not secured, does that mean you failed?

No, it doesn't, it just means that job or opportunity isn't for you, or isn't for you right now. There is a mistaken belief that failure is somehow bad for you but a writer in the area, Ken Jacobson says that

failure can be a stepping stone to success as it fuels determination, forces creativity, makes you use your mind and facilitates change.

Failure is much too strong of a word, perhaps we need to adopt the policy of some further education institutions who, when grading papers are instructed to write 'NYS' (not yet successful) as 'Fail' is deemed demoralizing.

In future when you don't get that job/don't achieve that goal, perhaps instead of wallowing into the old failure spiral you should simply say to yourself "I didn't fail, I'm just not yet successful, just like many great women and men before me who have gone on to achieve great things."

As Richard M. Nixon the 37th President of the United States once said "A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits."

Like the well known evangelist Billy Graham once said "Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has." So perhaps in this time of economic depression, instead of worrying where your next job will come from, instead reflect on the many talents you have to offer the world, because you do have them - we all do!

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"750 Hornby Street", photograph part of the exhibition  
"Shopping Carts". Photo: Brian Howell

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Courtesy Display

## Obituary

**Lori Green Reed Haynes**

d. 1/28/11 Aged 42 yrs

Natural Causes

**Donaven Hernandez**

d. 2/5/11 Aged 4 yrs

Mustard Seed Student  
Car Accident

**Rick Terranova**

d. 2/27/11

pending

**Tracy Hall**

d. 4/3/11 Aged 53 yrs

Natural Causes

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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. John's 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

SAEHC, Sacramento Area Emergency Housing Center: 4516 Parker Ave. 24 hrs: 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

Helping Hands: 3526 5th Ave. Sundays, 8-11 breakfast, sack lunch, clothing

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.

### 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

also 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: Wed. only. Call for appointment to go in at 11am, 1 or 1:30pm, or attend Bible study at 9:15am and get clothing at 10am 447-3268

### Medical

Mercy Clinic: For homeless adults, children: Next to Fire Station on N. C St. 7:30am & 12:30pm. 446-3345

Sacramento Dental Clinic: 4600 Broadway (Primary Care Blding) 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. Blding.-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. Next to Friendship Park gate. 699-1536

### Youth Services

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

Wind Youth Center: 701 Dixie 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

Sacramento Mental Health Center (County): 2150 Stockton Blvd 24hr. Will evaluate anyone for voluntary or involuntary psychiatric care due to danger to self or others. In-patient care facility, drop-in. 732-3637

### 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: 3640 40th St.; 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, Workfare and Medical rep at hearings. 736-0616

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

### Miscellaneous

Francis House: 1422 C st. 9:30-11:30 am M-W & 1-3 pm M-F: walk-in or referral providing resource counseling, advocacy, vouchers for IDs, Dvr Licenses, Birth Certificates, plus motel vouchers for qualified families. 443-2646

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. 800-300-5616

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

## About 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) 455-4900**

Individual Membership dues:  
Standard: \$50;  
Low-income, Student: \$10

### Organizations:

\$200 - \$1,000  
Dues based on organization budget, please call to get estimate.

### Send donations to:

Sacramento Housing Alliance  
1800 21st St. Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## Jobs Wanted

Give hope and happiness.  
Give a job, such as moving or yard work, to a homeless worker.

**Call Loaves & Fishes  
job phone at 832-5510**

### Or mail to:

Loaves & Fishes  
Jobs for Homeless  
PO Box 2161  
Sac, CA 95812

Social Security Office: 8351 Folsom Blvd (East of College Greens Lite-rail stop) M-F 9am-4:30pm 381-9410: Natl line 1-800-772-1213

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

**Health Rights Hotline:  
551-2100**

**VA Outreach:  
1-800-827-1000**

Homeless VA Coordinator:  
**(916) 364-6547**

## 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 \$15 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee).

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