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SACRAMENTO, CA: On Thursday, June 10th, the Sacramento City Council heard a presentation about "7th and H", a proposed affordable housing by Mercy Housing to be built at the corner of 7th and H Streets in downtown Sacramento, which they voted unanimously to approve.

The affordable housing community will include 150 studio and one bedroom apartments. Seventy

five of the units will be reserved for formerly homeless residents. The other half will be reserved for residents earning between 40%-50% of the Sacramento median income. There will be extensive community space, comprehensive resident services, a health clinic, and ground floor retail in an eight-story building located in close prox-

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Architect's rendering of 7th and H project.

Nashville Floods Destory Local Tent City

The Contributor; NASHVILLE, TN: When Ronnie Smith lost two jobs and a house four years ago, he was left with only one option. Like so many others in similar circumstances, he headed to Nashville's largest year-round shelter space, the Nashville Rescue Mission. But, having never been homeless before, Smith struggled to adjust. Finding it near impossible to stay sane in such a chaotic and crowded environment, he soon began looking for another option. So, when he was finally able to move into the peace and quiet of an abandoned house with a friend, he was relieved. But, despite his best efforts, that friendship finally fissured, and Smith found himself in search of what seemed to be his last option: a tent. Once he obtained his tent, Smith spent his evenings setting up camp anywhere he could manage only to find himself, again and again, threatened by strangers or told by police officers to "move along."

Finally, bereft of any remaining options, Smith headed to the only place left on his list-the place he had hoped never to have to go: Nashville's Tent City. Having heard nothing but bad stories of the city's largest homeless encampment - from drugs to theft

to violence - Smith carried his belongings toward the riverside encampment with trepidation.

But when Smith arrived at Tent City eight months ago, he was surprised to find little to confirm those rumors. On the contrary, what he discovered was something he hadn't been able to claim in his years on the street: a community. "People were real helpful. They'd even watch out for your stuff when you were gone," says Smith, one of approximately 140 residents of the camp who, up until the morning of May 2nd when floodwaters completely destroyed the camp leaving every last resident displaced, were grateful to be able to call Tent City home.

Tent City before the flood

The Tent City that Ronnie Smith encountered eight months ago was not the same Tent City that has existed on the banks of the Cumberland River for more than 20 years. Not only had its population grown in that time from a mere handful of residents to over 140, it had also changed from a well-kept secret to a widely-recognized fact of the city, appearing in local newspapers, countless television news stories,

a few documentaries, and even The Wall Street Journal.

To understand what initially caused this wider exposure and overall shift at Tent City, we need to go back to 2006, when then-Mayor Bill Purcell announced, in a trend that mirrored a number of other American cities, that the city of Nashville would begin its official push toward raising the "quality of life" in its downtown area. In the eyes of the average beholder, this campaign appeared, rather innocently, to be concerned with strengthening the overall pleasantness of our city. For those on their way to work, for tourists, for weekend honky-tonkers and concert-goers, the idea was, seemingly, to make downtown Nashville a more desirable place to spend time.

Unfortunately, however, a direct result of this public policy has been the criminalization of homelessness in Nashville.

To illustrate, if a well-dressed woman on her way to work stops on a sidewalk to rest with her large rolling briefcase in tow, no one would think anything of it. However, try the same thing when you're a resident of the Rescue Mission who has no choice but

to carry your large pack containing all of your belongings back and forth across the city on a hot day. When you stop to rest on a sidewalk and relieve your back, you'd better not rest too long, unless you're looking to land an "obstruction of the passageway" citation from a law enforcement officer.

The same goes for carrying an open alcohol container in public or cutting through a parking lot to save time: one who is not homeless will seldom receive any trouble for such actions. But the same is not true for those who are homeless, and the city's court and arrest records prove it.

All things considered, the notion of "quality of life" as understood in Nashville translates into little more than "quality of life" for some of Nashville's residents, but certainly not all of them. Furthermore, and perhaps more telling, it is all too clear that this notion of "quality of life" also translates into "quality" for some at the expense of others. So, in a city where it is a serious challenge to show your face as a homeless person on a public sidewalk in downtown Nashville without be-

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On the Streets in Paris

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By A. D. McKenzie, INSP

December in PARIS, France - They huddle in the doorways of buildings with their few belongings, trying to keep warm. Or they sleep in covered shopping centers, accompanied by their pets - usually dogs. Some, reluctantly, make their way to government-run shelters.

These are France's homeless people (or SDFs as they're called from the French sans domicile fixe), an estimated 200,000 of whom live on the streets throughout the country.

Their plight, often ignored by both officials and citizens going about their business, is now arousing concern as freezing weather sets in, blanketing the country in snow.

Already one homeless man in Bordeaux has died of the cold, raising to 326 the number of people who have died this year as a consequence of living on the street, according to Les Morts de la Rue (The Dead on the Street), a collective pressure group.

"It's unacceptable for people to be living on the streets and for them to be dying there," says Christophe Louis, president of the group, which comprises 40 associations working to help the homeless. "The government needs to provide long-term shelters. Temporary solutions aren't working."

Benoist Apparu, the environment ministry's secretary of state for housing and urban affairs, recently ordered all town officials to accept all requests for shelter.

"The confirmation that there will be a period of severe cold weather in our country demands the concerted mobilization of all actors - the state services, associations, local collectives and each French person," Apparu's office said in a statement.

The ministry said that more than 108,000 places are available in shelters all year long, and that an additional 8,000 have been made available for the winter, including 1,100 in Paris.

A ministerial advisor, Franck Thiébaux, told IPS that for the first time this year, the government has been coordinating the various efforts to help homeless people, in order to reach a greater number. Such efforts include having volunteers contact people living on the streets and informing them about public shelters, Thiébaux said in a telephone interview.

The government has also allocated 80 million euros (114 US dollars) to "humanize" the shelters this year and in 2010, Thiébaux said.

President Nicolas Sarkozy declared in 2007 that within two years "no one would be obliged to sleep on the sidewalks and to die there from cold, because the right to housing was a human obligation."

Despite such assurances, critics say much more needs to be done, and demonstrators gathered in Paris Saturday to demand further action.

"In reality, the government doesn't want to

occupy itself with the question of access to housing," says Jean Baptiste Eyraud, spokesman for Droit au Logement (DAL - Right to Housing), an independent pressure group that organized the protests. "They need to take real measures to give lodgings to homeless people and they're dragging their feet on that."

The global economic crisis has meant that an increasing number of people have faced eviction in the past year, and DAL would like the government to act on France's 2007 law which makes the right to housing an enforceable right, on the same level as the right to health and education.

This could entail putting the Requisition Act into force, in which empty properties would be made available to those without homes or those who are "badly housed", including immigrants living in deplorable conditions.

According to DAL, France has more than 1.8 million empty apartments and other spaces that could be used to house the homeless. These include some 122,000 places in Paris alone, says the group, quoting the French statistical agency INSEE. In addition, there are "millions of square meters of offices and other locales that also remain unoccupied," DAL says.

These potential "lodgings" remain empty because of "negligence, commercial calculation and the selfish refusal to rent", says the group. Some landlords prefer not to rent their property because French law is usually in favor of the tenant. For instance, tenants cannot be evicted in the winter months even if they fail to pay their rent.

"The government must give housing to people, either by providing social apartments or renting private lodgings," says Eyraud. "Public shelters are of bad quality. People should not be put in shelters."

Patrice, a homeless man in his 50s who sits daily next to a supermarket near the Eiffel Tower with his cap in front of him, told IPS that he disliked the shelters and preferred to stay outdoors.

Each night he wraps up in a "good blanket" and sleeps under a roof of the Village Suisse, a landmark shopping centre of some 150 dealers selling expensive antique furniture and art objects.

"Nobody has to worry about me," he said. "My name may be Patrice but I'm pas triste (not sad)."

He says he receives help from people in the neighborhood who have got to know him. They give him warm clothing and quilts to see him through the winter.

Patrice may consider himself lucky, but statistics show that his "good fortune" might not last. According to the group Les Morts de la Rue, the average age of those who die from living on the street is 47.6 years, in contrast to the national life expectancy of 80 years.

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Homelessness Increasing Among Elderly

www.streetnewsservice.org

By: Staff Writer
Big Issue (Scotland)

Yet a gritty, alternate version of the elderly archetype will become increasingly visible in the years to come. The homeless population in Boston and across America is aging rapidly, a process coupled with the simultaneous trend of more elderly adults becoming newly homeless.

Such was the topic of conversation at a recent panel hosted by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) and Hearth, Inc., at which experts discussed the policy implications and models for cost effective solutions to stem the crisis of "the rising tide".

According to a report published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, homelessness is beginning to increase among elderly adults. Converging trends will feed the equation as baby boomers turn 65 the growth of the overall population of elderly individuals in the U.S. will surge. Meanwhile, the number of homeless adults from ages 50-64 is expanding, according to recent reports.

For example, in San Francisco in the period from 1990-1994 to 2000-2002, the representation of people ages 50 and over in the street homeless population grew from 11.2% to 32.3% (from Hahn, et al., Journal of General Internal Medicine). In Massachusetts, homelessness among those ages 55 and older increased from 8% of the homeless population in 1999 to 14% in 2003 (from Maschede, et al., UMASS Center for Social Policy).

Based on the predictions of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the elderly homeless population will increase dramatically between 2010 and 2020. According to the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), this augmentation will require a multi-disciplinary-team approach to treating the complex health, mental health, and substance abuse issues that frequently and comorbidly affect elderly adults in

situations of homelessness.

A 2003 HRSA report explains that numerous external and internal barriers inhibit older homeless individuals from accessing services, and advocates for the minimization of these in order to achieve optimum health and housing security. Obstacles that elderly homeless persons may face include difficulty using the shelter system which can be especially harsh for an older adult-lack of affordable housing and transportation, or simple unawareness of resources and benefits, such as SSI or food stamps. Complicating these external barriers is the fact that elderly people experiencing homelessness may experience greater distrust of service providers, out of fears such as that of "being put in a home".

The image of your grandparents clinging to a threadbare blanket beneath a murky highway overpass-or perhaps more realistically, bunking in cots beside nefarious characters in emergency shelters-is likely enough to elicit revulsion and shame. Still, awareness of and solutions to the problem of elder homelessness in America are seriously insufficient.

Dread of "the system" felt by older adults in situations of homelessness is largely justified. After all, the conventional approach to address aging in the contemporary United States is to sequester elderly persons, to strip them of their independence and individual agency, to silence their voices in civic dialogue-diminished societal productivity is equivalent to death in America.

Elderly persons experiencing homelessness deserve the respect that your grandfather should command when recounting tales of his youth, or the affection you'd feel in the arms of your grandmother's embrace. The onus of change rests on the shoulders of the young. May we be inspired by the wisdom of our elders.

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Nashville Floods

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ing questioned about what you're up to, the obvious result is a city where homelessness disappears-which is precisely what every city dreams of.

But Nashville city officials ought to know better. When you "get rid" of a problem, it's a good idea to engage in a bit of reflection, to dig a little deeper. You may ask yourself: has the problem been made right, alleviated, redeemed? Or has it merely been made to disappear? The truth is, the "quality of life" campaign and other efforts to rid our city of the "problem" of homelessness can only result in the displacement of that problem, meaning, if we look hard enough, we'll find that the problem hasn't been alleviated, only relocated. And to find where we've sent so many of our beloved "problems" packing, one need look no further than the banks of the Cumberland River. Because when it is a crime to be homeless and to dwell as such among the other citizens of Nashville, and when the Rescue Mission, for various and legitimate reasons, is not an option, one is left, like Ronnie Smith and so many others, with only one remaining option: camping. And Tent City, located alongside Inner City Ministries on the banks of the Cumberland River was, until recently, one such place for 140 men and women to do just that.

But as Tent City grew, so did Metro government's hyper-awareness of it. Before long, though it was by no means the first time in its more than 20-year history that it happened, police officers showed up at the camp in 2008 and posted notices that the camp would be shut down in a matter of weeks and would therefore need to be cleared of all belongings as soon as possible; anything left standing would be razed and anyone remaining would be arrested. And so, after being unable to stay too close to downtown without getting harassed, homeless individuals who retreated to Tent City for some semblance of privacy and freedom were once again told to "move along," or else face arrest.

That is, until local churches, advocates, and outreach workers stepped in. Offering to clean up the premises, then actually paying for dumpsters, port-o-potties, showers, and dumping in volunteers to pick up trash - all while promising to stand face-to-face with any bulldozer that might tear down tents and well-designed wooden homes to the ground - Tent City's closure was averted. After rallies and extensive volunteer efforts from ministers, students, and concerned citizens, the word from Mayor Dean at last came down that the camp would not be demolished.

Since then, despite occasional and somewhat subtle attempts by Metro's police department to reverse Mayor Dean's order, Tent City has gone from being a homeless encampment perpetually on the verge of destruction to the closest thing Nashville has to an officially-sanctioned "transitional housing" site, with law enforcement recently going so

far as to destroy other camps and send their residents packing for Tent City. In the last year, with the help of its closest outreach workers and ever-present volunteers, a Tent City council, made up of Tent City residents, was formed to help keep order and rules intact. If that is not evidence enough of the fact that its residents deeply desire to get their lives back together, they have even initiated and held AA meetings on site, aware that alcohol abuse has often been the root of more than a few problems the camp has faced in its history.

While Tent City has been far from an ideal community, it has been a necessary one. In a city that promised 2,000 units of low-income housing five years ago and yet has drastically failed to follow through on that promise, a place like Tent City remains inevitable. Not only that, but Nashville's primary shelters are not legitimate options for individuals in committed relationships, for those who own pets, or for those who have a criminal record. Furthermore, the road from homeless to housed and reintegrated is a long and arduous one-one that is near impossible to manage without a system of support. It is for these reasons that "transitional housing" (what Tent City strives to be) is important. A step above temporary shelter and a step below permanent housing, transitional housing puts a floor beneath the difficult path of downward mobility, allowing homeless individuals to prepare for permanent housing and social reintegration with the guiding help of outreach workers and a community of other homeless men and women in the exact same boat.

But, despite the fact that it has existed on the banks of the Cumberland for over 20 years, and because it has grown so rapidly on land owned by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), city officials have had no choice but to put a timeline on relocating Tent City. To that end, in February of this year, the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission formed two subcommittees charged with locating an alternative site for the camp, as well as with researching models and structures from officially-sanctioned, transitional encampments like Dignity Village in Portland, OR that could work in Nashville. Progress has been made and more evolved rules and guidelines are in the process of being written with the help of Tent City residents.

While many things have improved at Tent City in the last year - things that have allowed many people to gain the necessary footing to step into housing and better work and a more humane existence-its days have long been numbered. But, to the shock of its residents, it would not, in the end, be the cold machinery of bulldozers that would level Tent City; it would be the unexpectedly volatile Cumberland River come rising over its banks, higher and higher until the top of every last tent and tarp-covered wooden home packed full with every last belonging stood fully submerged beneath its consuming waters.

The flooding of Tent City

When Ronnie Smith woke up Sunday morning, May 2nd, to a small but steady stream of water running in front of his tent (a large tarp fastened over a wooden frame), he wasn't terribly surprised. "It wasn't all that unusual," he said. "So I went back to sleep." When he woke up fifteen minutes later, however, with water halfway up his bed (a stack of two mattresses on top of two box springs), he began to worry. After a quick glance around his tent in which all of his belongings were floating like debris on the surface of the water, he grabbed the only dry items he had time to reach for: a t-shirt and a pair of shorts. When his feet hit the floor, the water was well above his waistline. Emerging from his tent, he started wading with other residents to higher ground.

One of those other residents was Ruth Simmons, a relative newcomer to Tent City the day the rains began to fall. Waiting to receive word on her disability appeal, and working as a vendor for The Contributor in the meantime, Ruth considered it a gift to be able to live where she did for those brief months. "I was very comfortable there. It was my home." When she woke up Sunday morning, like any other rainy morning, she, along with Ronnie Smith and so many other Middle Tennesseans, had seemingly no reason to be concerned. Even as the water rose, Simmons says, it didn't quite sink in what, exactly, was happening. "I was kinda in denial." That is, until she stepped outside her tent into waist-high water.

An hour or so later, residents began to gather together on higher ground where they met Doug Sanders, outreach minister at Otter Creek Church, who had been given permission by Inner City Ministries to use their bus to transport residents to the Red Cross Shelter that had just been set up at Lipscomb University. Doug, one of the more familiar faces at Tent City in recent years, drove two busloads of residents, about 70 in all (plus more than a dozen pets), to Lipscomb where Tent City residents and approximately 130 non-Tent City residents stayed until Tuesday, May 18th. Another 30 of Tent City's residents received temporary shelter at Woodbine Presbyterian Church and Green Street Church of Christ, as well. The remainder of the residents went either to a friend's house or straggled on the edges of the flooded camp until they found someplace else to go.

Of course, it wasn't just those living on the banks of the Cumberland that felt the force of the record-breaking rainfall. It has been nearly 100 years since Tennessee has seen anything close to the amount of rain that fell those first three days of May. As much as 18 inches of rain fell in some areas, leaving countless streams, rivers, and waterways well above their capacity. The images are unforgettable: the building floating past almost fully submerged tractor trailers on Interstate 24; the tops of stop signs barely visible

above the water line; rescuers driving boats down the middle of roads that have never been flooded before; homes and businesses all but buried beneath standing water; people of all ages hanging onto trees and cars for dear life; brown water sneaking up to Second Avenue downtown; and the list goes on - more endless than any one person can know.

But more than the images on the news, every person in Middle Tennessee, whether personally affected or not, knows countless others - family, friends, neighbors - who were. So widespread is the devastation that every Middle Tennessean knows someone who lost every last thing: people whose houses were carried upstream; people whose cars were destroyed; people whose tokens of memory were lost; people who now own nothing but the clothes on their back.

But the storm's devastating effects have had a rather fortunate result, as well. The true character of a people is given room to reveal itself in the worst of times, and Nashville has proven itself to be more generous than expected. Anyone who spent any time tearing out drywall or tile flooring in a flooded house knows well how many strangers spent days walking through the desolation offering whatever help was needed. At last, the "Volunteer State" has been given the opportunity to prove its nickname unmistakably accurate.

Many have said that natural disasters such as the flooding that struck Middle Tennessee have the ability to act as a great equalizer. While it is true that all socio-economic classes were affected by the storm, its lasting effects will likely not prove equal. For some, losing "everything" means losing those things that can fit inside a two-person tent. When Ruth Simmons, holding back tears, says that she lost "everything", she means her bed, a few bags of clothing, her personal identification, photos of her children and grandchildren, as well as her Contributor bag and newspapers. All of it now floats somewhere along the banks of the Cumberland River while she strains her mind to figure out some way to start again.

Tent City after the flood

There is no minimizing the degree of loss people all across Middle Tennessee will continue to suffer for a long time to come. But it would be a mistake to pretend that every victim will experience an equal degree of restoration. For those living in Tent City - and let us not forget the countless other riverside homeless encampments of the city - the future is especially uncertain. But just as the people, organizations, and businesses of Middle Tennessee have been given an opportunity to respond compassionately to victims of the flooding living in all areas, so the pre-flood posture of our city - government and public alike - to-

Falling Home Prices - *the bottom or a lull?*

www.streetnewsservice.org

By Jim Christie

SAN FRANCISCO - Matt Bording doubts many in his financial bind would agree that home prices in California are near a bottom. And there are many in his predicament.

Bording owes more on his mortgage than his Richmond, California house is worth so he is giving up on the loan.

"We're walking away," Bording told Reuters, noting he will soon hand his lender the keys to the three-bedroom house he bought with his wife in 2005 because its value has plunged with his zip-code's median home price over the last year.

"It's down about 60 percent," he said. "I don't see that rebounding in a realistic time frame."

Brisk sales of foreclosures are leading optimistic analysts to forecast an end to the misery of falling home prices in California, a first step to recovery in a key housing market at the epicenter of the U.S. mortgage crisis.

But Bording says his neighborhood is full of for-sale signs for known foreclosures and the disrepair of other houses suggest their owners share his view: "They may want to jump off a sinking ship."

BARGAIN HUNTING IN FORCE

Some analysts say the slide in home values in California has run its course thanks to buyers with government mortgages and investors snapping up foreclosed properties.

"We're running out of foreclosed units in most places," said Alan Nevin of MarketPointe Realty Advisors in San Diego. "It looks like we're straightening things out."

The state's median price for an existing, single-family home rose 1.4 percent in April from March to \$256,700, marking two consecutive months of gains.

The median fell 36.5 percent from a year earlier, but that snapped a nine-month run of year-over-year declines in the 40-percent range.

Additionally, April's backlog of homes selling for \$300,000 or less, where foreclosures are concentrated, would take 2.5 months to deplete, compared with 11.1 months a year earlier.

Strong demand at the lower-end of the state's housing market is bolstering the segment's home prices, a first step for broader price stability, said Leslie Appleton-Young, chief economist for the California Association of Realtors.

"It appears that the median price is now at or near the bottom," she said.

A LULL, NOT A BOTTOM

Skeptics, however, say the sharply reduced backlog of foreclosures may only pause the slide in home prices because mortgage defaults are on the rise in upscale neighborhoods.

"I'd liken it to clearing some bodies off the battlefield. It doesn't mean the war is over," said Sean Snaith, an economist at the University of Central Florida and transplant from Stockton, California, a frequent contestant in recent years for the title of the nation's foreclosure capital.

A new mortgage default wave looms, skeptics add, noting the foreclosure rate on "prime" fixed-rate mortgages prevalent in upscale neighborhoods doubled in the last year and now account for the largest share of new foreclosures.

Home prices in California neighborhoods untouched by foreclosures so far face another threat -- curtailed lending of large mortgages. Without them, many "move-up" buyers are sidelined, reducing demand and asking prices.

Large loans were 10.5 percent of home purchase mortgages in California in April, down from about 38 percent in the first-half of 2007 before the credit crunch hit lenders, according to real estate information service MDA DataQuick.

The lending "pendulum" has swung so hard from lax standards it is now "embedded in the ceiling on the other side," said Lou Barnes of mortgage bank Boulder West Financial Services.

Sellers of higher-end homes in California are taking note. "Where houses used to sell for \$800,000 or \$850,000, some are down to \$650,000," said Avram Goldman, president of Pacific Union Real Estate, a San Francisco area brokerage.

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Courtesy Reuters © 2010

7th and H Project

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imity to public transit and a number of neighborhood amenities. The building will incorporate many "green" features and Mercy Housing will strive to achieve LEED certification at 7th & H.

The development is designed to help meet the City of Sacramento's, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency's, and Mercy Housing's goals of:

Reducing homelessness through the provision of high quality, service-enriched housing in fulfillment of the City of Sacramento's 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness;

Replacing SRO units in the downtown area in realization of the City of Sacramento's SRO Strategy;

Building affordable, safe, and attractive workforce housing in the downtown area,

creating a connection between the existing downtown neighborhood and the future Railyards redevelopment.

Mercy Housing is a non-profit housing organization with the mission of creating and strengthening healthy communities through the provision of quality, affordable, service-enriched housing for individuals and families who are economically disadvantaged. Mercy Housing's portfolio includes over 7,558 apartments in 124 properties in California, 18 of them in Sacramento County alone.

Mercy Housing will be the developer and owner of 7th & H. The architects are Mogavero Notestine Associates and SERA Architects. The health clinic operator will be The Effort. Mercy Services Corporation (MSC) will provide the property management services for the development.

SHOC, SAFE GROUND ACTIVISTS ATTEND US SOCIAL FORUM

by Cathleen Williams

DETROIT, MI: On June 22-27, thousands of activists - attendance was estimated at 20,000 - gathered in Detroit to share their experiences and plans for creating a society that meets our most basic needs - for housing, for health care, for jobs and justice and quality public education - even for water.

Five leaders of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee's Homeless Leadership Project and Safe Ground Sacramento traveled to Detroit to teach and to learn and to bring back home the inspiration, determination, and hope generated by the gathering, as homeless organizations from across the country met in workshops to discuss their tent cities, their resistance to police harassment, their occupation of vacant buildings and their strategies for activating and educating each other about the ongoing struggle to

find shelter and safety in our devastated economy.

All around the huge convention center in Downtown Detroit you could see people of all ages and ethnicities talking to each other about the need for a coordinated movement to reclaim our land and our lives from this heartless system that is driving our people to the edge of survival. National Days of action were set in the final assembly, which presented resolutions from every front.

And Detroit - with its great hulks of abandoned buildings, its burned out housing and closed public housing projects, reminded us that the time in now. Yet in the midst of devastation there is energy and hope - thousands of gardens in every neighborhood growing the food people need, just as the Social Forum, too, was cultivating skills, understanding, and unity, everything we need to build this growing movement.

Picture at
right:

Tracie,
John,
Regina.
& friend
at
Detroit
Social
Forum



CLAIMANTS AWARDED IN LEHR PARTIAL SETTLEMENT

Checks went out May 25 to claimants in the class action partial settlement of Lehr, et. al. v. Sacramento County et. al. Claimants were awarded either \$350 or \$750 depending on what they lost. Claimants had to have filled out a claim form before the deadline of February 18, 2010. Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee served as claims administrator and got much help from Loaves & Fishes' staff and programs.

If you have any questions call SHOC at (916) 442-2156

A Lost Soul

I traveled far to get here,
I gave up my past
Not knowing the cost or fear,
Here alone with no one to cast a safety net my way.

I have only memories around me.
There's no one here to call.
As night slowly falls in this city,
I have no hearth or hall.

The street is my parlor,
Strangers pass by endlessly.
Never stopping to talk,
To all you're invisible, a lost soul.

They don't know what brought you down,
They don't care that you're hurting.
You're just one more face in their town,
You don't fit or exist, or are worthy.

By Barbi Baker © 2008

Save the Date July 20 - MUSIC • FOOD • CIVIL RIGHTS

IT'S BEEN A YEAR - AND WE'RE STILL HERE!
Join us to celebrate all the good
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SafeGround Jubilee July 20 • Cesar Chavez Park • 4-6pm

TRACKING THE WOBBLE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

www.chongonation.com

by the homeless science writer,

Chongo

Last issue's science article discussed the coming of the end of the Mayan calendar, on the twenty-first day of September, two and a half years from now, in 2021, in the context of a recent movie entitled "2012."

The article explained first how the movie paints a picture of inexorable doom for the entire planet on the aforementioned date. Hence, it seemed to have a cast of thousands, albeit that most of these thousands of cast members were simply computer manipulations of human images. According to the fictional story of the movie, December twenty-first, two thousand twelve, is a date for disaster for life on Earth, according to the movie "2012." It is also the day that the "Mayan" calendar ends!

According to the article, the colossal computer graphics that of the movie utilizes to sensationalize this date have nothing to do with what is actually going to happen, nor with what ever could. (If it did, then the film would no longer be a fictional story, but instead, a scientific description.) Because the subject matter in these science articles is strictly scientific fact, it was explained in the last issue's science article how this date simply corresponds to the otherwise uneventful date when the earth, sun, and center of the galaxy align in a 'straight' line. (This line is straight according to the path of the light revealing the alignment that is reaching us only now, remembering from the illustration in the science article entitled "A Four Dimensional Sphere, Like the Universe Seems to Be" - the reader can find it among a list of other science articles after clicking on "Articles" from the www.chongonation.com home page - that this line corresponds to the physically existent, 'true' now).

Somehow, this alignment of earth, sun, and center of galaxy has been associated with catastrophe, because such a quality sensationalizes anything - like the mystery that may seem to some to surround the Mayan calendar - and as humans, we naturally love a sensational story. But, mystery is the very thing that science dispels, replacing misunderstanding with explanations. Outside the realm of science however, it is fashionable to imagine a date for doom, because such a thing gets people's attention and thus provides opportunity for those who profit from such frightening notions; not

limited to movie producers.

The first misunderstanding with respect to the calendar is its New World origins. This amazing calendar was brought to the New World some two thousand years ago. It was brought by what were surely the best mariners of the day, best by virtue of their advanced ship building technology, a technology that produced sea-going vessels four hundred feet long.

Apparently, in the case of these ancient mariners, great seamanship also meant greatness in science and math, in particular, astronomy. We know this because approximately twenty years ago a calendar was found in China coinciding with the Mayan, and most significantly, predating it. Hence, barring the highly unlikely chance that the Mayans stumbled upon an identical calendar upon their own, then the ancient Old World (Chinese) version of the calendar provided the basis for the New World (Mayan) version that those fascinated with dooms-day scenarios embrace so faithfully.

Such mystery-based faith, like a faith we might have regarding anything for which we might lack a scientific explanation, requires a fundamental belief in some sort of mystery. In this case, the mystery is the origins for such a remarkably accurate calendar. The beauty of mystery is that mystery begets speculation, like the speculation of extra-terrestrial origins for the calendar and hence extra-terrestrial visitors to the New World. And extra-terrestrial visitors leave the greatness of modern western culture intact, while an advanced eastern culture like that of the ancient Chinese does not.

Now, one could say that maybe it was the Mayans who brought the calendar to China. However, no Mayan relics have yet been found outside their corresponding New World hemisphere, certainly not in China. In contrast to the absence of New World Mayan relics in the Old World, ancient Chinese relics have definitely been found outside of their corresponding Old World hemisphere, in particular, here in North America, off the coast of California. They exist in the form of ship anchors as were used in China some two thousand years ago.

Divers have found such ancient ship anchors of the coast of the Catalina Islands. One can only conclude that the ancient Chinese, besides being great mariners, were likewise great astronomers as well, as is reflected in the accuracy of their calendar. A computer is

required to outperform the accuracy of the "Mayan," albeit actually the ancient Chinese, calendar.

To have developed as accurate a calendar as they were able to do, the ancient Chinese would absolutely have had to have been as accomplished in mapping the motion of the heavenly bodies as they seem to have been at mapping their motion across the Pacific. A calendar actually maps time by mapping, that is to say, 'according to', the motion of the spin of the earth (the days) and the motion of the earth orbiting around the sun (the years).

Mapping the days in a year easily uses length of the days to map the length of a single year. But, how do we map a single year among a series of years that extend for eons into the past and into the future.

Any day of the year can be indexed relative to its displacement in rotations of the earth with respect to the longest and shortest days (summer and winter solstice, respectively) of a single orbit (as a date). How do we do the same thing for a whole year? How do we date an entire year? What would be the equivalent of the date for an individual day?

A calendar begins with a "first" day, New Year's day, January first. Applying that same principle to the years, it becomes obvious that the need for a starting point arises, from which any year can be indexed and from which, among other things, special leap years can be calculated (leap years vary every one hundred years and multiples thereof). And what better starting point for a set of years than an alignment, one based upon something predictably cyclic, like an alignment, for certainty, one that includes the observation platform itself as one of the components, namely the earth. Two other points are needed - enter the sun - and enter something with which the sun and earth align only rarely, namely, the very thing that the solar system itself and everything else in the solar system orbit around, namely, the center of the galaxy.

Any rotating system is subject to wobble. A solar system is no exception. It just so happens that the plane of our solar intersects with the plane of the galaxy itself. This means that there is a day upon this intersection when the earth and sun find themselves located in perfect alignment with the light emanating from the center of the galaxy, identifying the end of

one epoch, and the start of another. Like the orbit of the earth around the sun, the rhythm of this intersection is cyclic and therefore predictable (subject, as is the case with all things in nature, to an element of uncertainty: variation). This leaves us with a question, which is, how did the ancient Chinese calculate the "wobble" of the solar system with respect to that of the plane of the rotating galaxy? Wouldn't that require sophisticated technology? Well, it turns out that it is not as difficult to do as one might imagine. That is the subject of this article: how.

Were one to observe the planets easily visible in the night sky, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn for a period of months, one would notice that they seem to follow the same course across the backdrop of the stars lying beyond them. They chart a course along what is effectively a common line because they lie, more or less, in the same plane as that of the solar system. It is a line to us here on Earth, because we too lie in that plane, which means that we see it from the side, as a line.

Given enough years of tracking the motions of the planets, even across generations, as an established science in a technologically advanced society - as the ancient Chinese must have been would surely have done - such a science could not help but notice that this line would be migrating in one direction or another, either "up" or "down", with respect to the stars lying behind. Couple this revelation with a deep understanding of motion (that is, some effective physics), in particular, orbit and rotation, an advanced science with effective mathematics would surely find it rather obvious that our solar system was in a "wobble," predictable and cyclical.

(This text is not from any 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 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 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 'Science Videos', from 'Videos' page)

Nashville Floods

continued from page 3

ward homeless neighbors now has an opportunity to be re-examined and reconsidered. After all, the recent displacement of Tent City due to flooding is not the first displacement its residents have experienced, and it almost certainly will not be the last.

As for what comes next for the displaced residents of Tent City, there is much still to be determined. Metro has officially condemned the land on which Tent City stood for so many years; saturated with raw sewage, upturned port-o-potties, diesel fuel, and other contaminants, it is no longer a place where humans can live in relative health and peace. But then, we might ask, when has living under a bridge or by a river ever been an acceptable form of human dwelling in a land of such plenty?

The immediate goal is to locate an alternate site for Tent City to be relocated. Calls for land in the downtown vicinity have been sent throughout the city, but those calls, as of the writing of this article, have yet to be answered satisfactorily. Donations of tents and sleeping bags have, however, been plentiful, and will certainly be used, but not until land is found.

The long-term goal is to move the camp to a permanent location before the end of the year. But both the temporary and permanent sites will continue to move away from the sort of camp where anyone can come and go and camp whenever they'd like, toward the sort of camp where people who are serious about making every effort to get back on their feet are given the means to do so. All in all, the goal will be to offer a dignified alternative to living on the streets or in shelters - streets and shelters that either do not welcome or cannot accommodate everyone.

The good news is that, in the wake of the flood, many Tent City residents have received aid from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). In addition, a number of Tent City residents have been approved for Section 8 housing vouchers. But even so, it may take months, if not longer, to secure actual housing locations for those resi-

dents. This may prove especially challenging in a city that is drastically under-resourced when it comes to low-income housing options. As for the rest of Tent City's residents, some have received hotel vouchers that will last for a few weeks, while others will take refuge inside the walls of a handful of area churches that have been gracious enough to show hospitality to those left with no other place to go. But hotel rooms and emergency shelters are viable options for only so long, which is why the request for land in the downtown vicinity on which Tent City may be allowed to re-establish itself - as a well-organized transitional housing site - remains the most dire need at the present moment.

In the end, a city like Nashville - with all its churches, non-profits, and government institutions - certainly does not have to stand alongside the very poorest of its displaced flood victims. Indeed, there is no official law stating that a city must care for those whose lives have consisted of one disabling tragedy after another - those who, after the flooding of the Cumberland River, have found themselves displaced for what seems like the hundredth time. But there is no better moment than the present for the people of Nashville to reflect on what it means to be a city that cares for all of its citizens, no matter their socio-economic status. For if it is indeed true that "We Are Nashville" as the slogan says, then it is eminently important that none be excluded from that "We" - that none be left wanting after we've congratulated ourselves for being such a generous city. If "We Are Nashville", then we will open our doors - and our land - to Ronnie, to Ruth, and to all the others left with no other place to go.

To stay up to date on the latest developments with Tent City and its displaced residents, stay tuned to The Contributor's website, www.nashville-contributor.org, where the team will be posting regular updates throughout the weeks and months ahead.

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Obituary

Katherine Diane Menefield
d. 5/21/10 aged 58
of heart attack

Thomas "Cowboy Bill" deOllos
d. 5/22/10 aged 45
head injury from hit-and-run

Joseph Kramer
d. 6/3/10 aged 49
accidental head injury

Anthony "Tony" Oliver
d. 6/16/10 aged 37
suicide



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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.

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: 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. 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 (at T St.) 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. 979-0897 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

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

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
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Send donations to:
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1800 21st St. Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

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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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