

"On this day we commemorate the service of our veterans. It is a day to remember that they gave their lives to preserve a free society in this country. But many homeless veterans, who are constantly being harassed and deprived of services or subjected to programs that treat them as less than human, may wonder about their sacrifices to preserve this country's freedoms," he said.

"America is losing its soul to materialism, and the poor have a greater responsibility to remind America that the Face of God can only be seen in their faces. The Scriptures are very clear about this and the role of the poor in our society... Surrendering the community at large to the money lenders builds a society that exists upon a foundation of sand that Scripture reminds us is spiritually bankrupt and doomed to failure," he ended.

After all the speeches and music, many who participated moved as a group to Caesar Chavez Plaza where dinners were handed out and the rally concluded.

# Subjects for next Agenda

MEETING FOR 2-8-2000 WEDNSDAY

GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF  
S.H.O.C.

Presby Report is ready to get new funding.

an appearance before the board of supervisors  
on behalf of the homeless (two minutes).

ON THE AGENDA RIGHT NOW IS THE FOLLOWING

A MEETING WITH THE POLICE DEPT,S CAPT HYDE  
ON THE 17 of this month.

THE US CENSUS BUREAU WOULD LIKE OUR HELP IN COUNTING  
THE HOMELESS. IDEAS.

ST MARKS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH LADIES WOULD LIKE  
US TO SUGGEST A PROGRAM TO HELP THE HOMELESS. SUGGESTION

THE GIFT AND KINDS GRANT TO FILL OUT WE WILL NOW GET  
DONATIONS FROM THEM.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO APPEAR BEFORE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSC.  
TO DEFEND THE HOMELESS CAUSE.

WE NEED TO RESPOND TO SEN. ORTIZ LETTER, SUGGESTION?

WE HAVE BEEN CONTACTED FROM DENVER MENTAL HEALTH ASSC.  
TO PROVIDE SHELTER INFORMATION TO HELP IN FINDING LOCAL  
LOCATIONS TO REFER PEOPLE TO ARRIVING IN SACRAMENTO.

WE ARE DEVELOPING A FUND RAISING ART SHOW. HOPEFULLY IT  
WILL GIVE US MORE INDEPENDENT FUNDING.

A DISCUSSION ON THE NEED FOR A LARGER FACILITY  
TO ENABLE US TO EXTEND HELP TO AN EVER EXPANDING  
AGENDA.

OPEN DISCUSSION.



**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**

926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2851

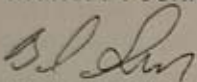
E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

---

December 31, 1999

To: Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Attention: Muriel P. Johnson, Third District

  
From: Blake Smith, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

PURPOSE: To address the accumulation of garbage and debris along the American and Sacramento Rivers.

INTENT: Use committee of volunteers to bag and dispose of garbage.



**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**  
926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814  
Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2351  
E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

---

**For Immediate Release**  
January 15, 2000

**Contacts:** Blake Smith, Paula Lomazzi (916) 442-2156

## **Homeless Campers Cleanup the American River**

We wanted to make you aware of S.H.O.C.'s program to help clean up the river which includes the homeless campers. In their attempt to dispel all the impressions of homeless people being unkempt and having camps that are unsanitary, they are, with the park ranger's cooperation, undertaking a massive cleanup campaign along the river. They will be around the Boy Scout, Camp Pollack area 160 & Northside area on Monday, January 17, 2000 in the afternoon, around 3:00 pm.

We have received opposition from the Salvation Army Neighbors Program and the Sacramento Police Department. The Police Dept. has been attending Neighborhood Associations, and showing outrageous photos of garbage, so called left by the homeless in a continuous campaign to show the homeless in the worst light. Thanks to the timely intervention of Supervisor Muriel Johnson the program will go forward.

I feel the community at large is entitled to know that there are many in the homeless population that are concerned about the community at large and feel they should be accepted as part of this community. They deserve to be heard. If you send someone to cover this please contact Blake Smith who will be directing the cleanup.

This is an ongoing project. If you are not able to cover this story on Monday, please call S.H.O.C.'s office for further schedule information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Max Biddle

sent to:

SN&R

Ch. 58

31

40

3

10

13

6

Capitol Public Radio (KVUE)





## Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2351

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

### River Clean-up Project of Sacramento

---

The River Clean-Up officially started on January 17, 2000 along the American River Parkway in Sacramento. Representing S.H.O.C. (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee) volunteers began the clean up despite the rainy conditions. Local media stations Channels 3, 10, 31 and 40 were all present and filming as the crew began its work. Cleaning up the debris left over the years the volunteers quickly filled up the orange bags donated by the Rangers before the city police had shown up to begin their sweeps of the rivers. The Clean-Up project spear headed by Blake Smith and Reverend James Snow and is being underwritten by the County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman, Muriel Johnson and the Department of Recreation (Rangers) with opposition coming from some members of the Sacramento Police Department and the Salvation Army's Neighbors project.

Channels 3 and 10 did extensive filming of the location and the areas in question. They interviewed Mr. Smith, Reverend Snow and Al Rasmussen concerning their efforts in the project. These included the reasons why this is being done, why some of the homeless are out here and some of the risks to people who might want to stay there or just bring their kids for a walk in the park. They also filmed some of the camps being currently used and what we would like them to look like after they have been cleaned up, like a model camp to set a precedent of what we expect from the other people who wish to stay where they are cleaning as to what it should look like. Channel 40, FOX News, did an extensive interview with the project leader Mr. Smith which was broadcasted the following day and was also broadcast statewide. Following the broadcast statewide local church groups, other Homeless organizations and various other groups have offered assistance to the project including bringing items to help with the clean up. These include extra people to help pick up and move the bags of trash to where the bags can be picked up, additional items to ensure the safety of those who are cleaning up, refreshments and a positive spirit.

RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECT  
American River Clean-Up Committee  
- Project Managers -  
Blake, Marvin, Rev.Snow, Scott

S.H.O.C. Members  
Lillian, Susan, Art, Paula

Contacts:

Sponsored by Sacramento County Board of Supervisor.  
Muriel P. Johnson - Third District

Phone (916) 874-5471 Fax (916) 874-7593 E-mail Muriel@bos.co.sacramento.ca.us

Park and Recreation Department  
Ranger Dave Lydick  
Phone (916) (916) 875-6548 Fax (916) 875-6632

City Council  
Fax (916) 264-7680

Police Internal Affairs  
Head of Accountability Mr.Casimere  
Fax (916) 264-7618

Volunteers
Rev. James Snow
Blake Smith
Alfred Rasmussen
Robert Mayse
Benny Hayes
Heather Nekle
Stanley Laxton
Janet Goodman
Robert McManos
William McManos
Patty Cartwright
Keith Anderson

<b>Volunteers</b>
Victor Mullin
Sharon Puccetti
Richard Terranova
Michael Lines
Dan Gifford
Matt Carboni
Bobi Carboni
David Elliot
James Whitmore
Colleen Richards
Anthony Hartman
Edward Byrnes
Don Thatcher
Thurwell Cooper
Charles Gaston
Rita Currin
Wallace Taylor
Morris Bores
Marvin Bores
Gary Wilson
Donald Powell
Melvin Cline
Steve Hancock

<b>Volunteers</b>
Don Klock
Steve Hancock





**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**

926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2851

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

Date: January 14, 2000

---

To: Blake Smith

From:

*Paula Lomazzi*  
Paula Lomazzi

Subject: Police Department's negative campaign against the homeless at Neighborhood Association meetings.

Julie Padilla just reported to me that the Police Department is campaigning against the homeless at Neighborhood Association meetings. She just went to a meeting at an association and the police brought film or photos of the garbage along the American River. Julie suggests we contact the Neighborhood Associations with our own information campaign so that we may undo the damage the Police are creating for our image.

I am compiling a list of Neighborhood Associations. We will come up with a strategy on how to approach them (We are all smarter than just one of us).

So far this is what we have:

**Neighborhood Associations**

Sierra Curtis Neighborhood (916) 452-3005  
2791--24th Street  
Sacramento, CA

---

**TO DO:**

Amy, our past intern was involved in a neighborhood association. She may be a good contact

---

Will search for more associations on internet.  
Chamber of Commerce?

WOW ~ >!>!

January 26 2000 !  
WEDNESDAY MEETING  
S.H.O.C. 'S  
GRAND OPENING  
OUT REACH OFFICE

S.H.O.C. 'S

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STEERING COMMITTEE

PROJECT DIRECTORS

S.H.O.C. MEMEBERS

S.H.O.C. VOLUNTEERS



**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**

926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2851

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

January 24, 2000

---

TO: Loaves & Fishes

ATTN: Tim Brown, Director  
*Paula Lomazzi*

FROM: Paula Lomazzi, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (S.H.O.C)

SUBJECT: Friendship Park Office Use

We are grateful that you have offered us the use of an office at Friendship Park. It will be a great benefit to our organization and especially to the many people we hope to serve.

We would like to use the office for voter registration, to sign-up volunteers for the River Cleanup Project, hand out garbage bags, accept claims and complaints against local officials, dispensing information and receive stories and information for Homeward Newspaper.

We would agree to maintain office hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 am--2 pm.

...

AND THE PEOPLE OF THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY GATHERD TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF OUR OUTREACH OFFICE AT LOAVES AND FISHES, FRIENDSHIP PARK.WE SHOWED THE VIDEO OF THE RIVER CLEAN -UP TAKEN BY THE VARIOUS NEWS STATION . IT WAS TRUELY AMAZING TO SEE THE HOPE AND SMILES LIGHT UP THEIR FACES AND RENEW THEIR SPIRITS!

THE MAIN PURPOSES OF THE OUTREACH OFFICE ARE:

- 1.VOTER REGISTRATION.
- 2.SIGN-UP VOLUNTEERS FOR THE RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECT AND TO HAND-OUT GARBAGE BAGS.
- 3.ACCEPT CLAIMS AND COMPLAINTS AGAINST LOCAL OFFICIALS.
- 4.DISPENSING AND RECEIVED INFORMATION.
- 5.RECEIVE STORIES FOR HOMEWARD NEWSPAPER.
- 6.AND TO GIVE THE HOMELESS A PLACE TO FEEL TOTALLY WELCOME AND TO KNOW THEY COUNT AS HUMAN BEINGS.



# Street newspapers give power to powerless

**Solutions, not just stories, needed —  
Michael Walters**

GEORFEE VANDERBURG  
Journal Staff Writer  
EDMONTON

Street newspapers give a voice to the voiceless, power to the powerless and a name to the nameless, say their supporters.

Betty Nordin, 54, used to sleep in Edmonton's garbage bins, in dilapidated hotels and under trees, never knowing if she would make it through the night.

Fourteen years ago the former prostitute, drug addict and alcoholic began to turn her life around. Now Nordin is a writer who shares her experiences of pain, loneliness and homelessness with readers of *Our Voice*,

Edmonton's street newspaper.

"I try to be a voice for the people on the street," said Nordin. "I try to pass a message to everyone. No matter how long a person is on the street, there are no hopeless cases. There is hope for everybody."

Nordin is one of 100 writers, vendors and organizers of street newspapers throughout Canada and the U.S. who have gathered at the University of Alberta until Sunday for the North American Street Newspaper Association's annual conference.

Participants from cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Montreal and Calgary, many of whom were able to attend the conference thanks to travel scholarships arranged through NASNA, are discussing common problems at North America's 45 street newspapers and forging common solutions.

**"I try to pass a message to everyone. No matter how long a person is on the street, there are no hopeless cases. There is hope for everybody."**

*Betty Nordin*

Workshops include sessions on starting a street newspaper, urban journalism, promoting and marketing street newspapers, recruiting vendors and fund-raising.

Washington, D.C.'s Michael Stoops, a founding member of NASNA in 1996 as well as a director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, said street newspapers empower the homeless, serve as transitional employment and educate the general public about issues re-

lated to the underclass.

"I'd say 95 per cent of street newspapers are covering issues that everyone else is not covering," said Stoops. "There's no right-wing street newspapers, but they're not too far left that they would turn off people."

Stoops said NASNA, which adds two to three street newspapers every year, now sells as many as 350,000 copies of street papers monthly across North America.

Michael Walters, the managing editor of Edmonton's *Our Voice* and an organizer of the conference, said his newspaper does more than simply help homeless people articulate their experiences.

"We can't just be telling people stories," he said. "We need to be looking at solutions to the problems and looking at getting those people involved in the so-

lutions, because they have the answers."

He said the biggest challenge facing street newspaper vendors is acceptance.

"It's easy for people to think that the reason people are poor is through some fault of theirs — that they must be retarded or lazy. It's not true. That's been the myth that's been perpetuated by governments over the years because it sort of disolves any responsibility for society to deal with poverty."

Conference participants will be joining in a "vend-off" tonight in which delegates from different street newspapers will hawk their latest issues to pedestrians along Whyte Avenue.

The delegate with the most sales wins a night on the town with Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, say organizers.

News from Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC)  
4-26-00

On Saturday April 8th. SHOC held a rally to educate the public via the Homeward Newspaper on how the homeless people are being attacked by the Cities of California, including Sacramento and to demonstrate the need for safe camping areas. We didn't have a big turnout because we put a warning on the posters that they may go to jail on this one, and sure enough the City police came in and shut us down silencing our voice. This rally had another aspect to it, Blake Smith's American River Project was working near by. This project was approved by the Sacramento Board of Directors and the Park Rangers are supplying the large orange bags for the trash. This project does more than clean up the river it also shines a good light on the homeless people. Well Blake and his volunteers were picking up trash next to Northgate Blvd. within sight of the rally when one of Sacramento's finest pulled up in his black and white and told Blake to "stop your activity or you will be arrested and taken to jail". Chris, one of Blake's volunteers left her wheel chair and was working near Blake when the officer told her the same thing. This officer above, OOP's I mean, this officer OF the law then came over to us. We were under the I-160 overpass where unknown to us two black and whites and a motorcycle cop were parked on the overpass overseeing everything from above. The homeless Artisans had a small art show set up. Sharon and I were passing out the Homeward newspaper at the four way stop when the officer called her over and issued her a ticket for illegally standing on a center divider. In protest I went over to her spot on the divider and continued to hand out papers to the cars passing by when I realized the news media should be in on this. Although we had contacted them earlier only two showed up early that morning and then left without interviewing anyone. I rushed to a phone and called all of the media but none showed up. Too bad, the City of Sacramento exhibited exactly the kind of behavior that we were trying to educate the public on. They not only silenced our voice (for that day) but they also closed Blake's "sanctioned" project. Well Blake's American River Clean-up Project is

still going on and we are still passing out the Homeward Newspaper. Thank you Sacramento for giving proof to our facts.

Meanwhile SHOC contacted Governor Grey Davis's office, to ask for some emergency legislation to protect the homeless from the Cities of California. We asked for a panel of his people and our people to work together and come up with a realistic plan that will work. We also gave him one solution to the camping problem that could work, and to demonstrate the idea we rallied under the I-160 overpass at Northgate Blvd. showing the simplicity of freeway on and off ramps and under overpasses to become State run safe zones for the homeless to camp and/or live in there vehicles. We were quite pleased when his office got back to us in only three days, but it looks like we were sent on a wild goose chase. We aren't going to end it here, we must continue to participate, to educate the public, to march and rally the Capitol until our collective voices are heard. To stop the abuse we must all work together.



STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 4032  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-4909  
(916) 445-7807  
(916) 327-2263 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICES  
1020 N STREET, ROOM 375  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
(916) 324-4837  
(916) 327-8754 FAX

5975 BRIDGEGATE CENTRE LANE  
SUITE 145  
CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA 95610  
(916) 961-1482  
(916) 961-1148 FAX

# California State Senate

SENATOR  
DEBORAH V. ORTIZ  
SIXTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT



CHAIR  
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT &  
RETIREMENT

MEMBER  
AGRICULTURE & WATER  
RESOURCES

BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
EDUCATION

January 21, 2000

Max Biddle  
Sacramento Homeless  
Organization Committee  
926 J Street, Suite 1046  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Biddle:

Thank you for sending me a copy of *Homeward*, a newspaper dedicated to reporting and publicizing issues faced by the homeless. I understand that your organization disapproves of city and county policies as it relates to the homeless, and would like state officials to closely monitor these policies.

An article in *Homeward* outlines the specific city and county policies surrounding the homeless in which your organization opposes, as well as reports on the rally held at the State Capitol on Veteran's Day. Along with *Homeward*, you also sent me signed petitions asking me to support legislation that would protect the rights of the homeless and assist in promoting tolerance of the homeless in our communities. I believe it is very important for state and local officials to collaborate and address the issues faced by the homeless and ensure their rights are not violated.

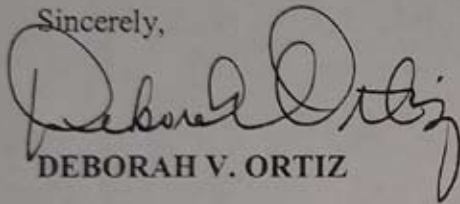
As you know, there is no easy solution to ending homelessness. However, I have had the opportunity to support legislation that is intended to assist the homeless. For example, I voted in support of AB 612 (Jackson) which appropriated funds for the use of temporary shelters and armories for the homeless. I am also supportive of mental health programs that may assist in keeping the mentally ill from becoming homeless. AB 34 (Steinberg) provided for the allocation of state funds to counties for adult mental health programs and related services such as housing assistance, substance abuse programs, and vocational rehabilitation. There is much more work to be done if we are to truly tackle this issue in a thoughtful way.



Biddle, Max  
January 21, 2000  
Page Two

Thank you for taking the time to contact my office. I look forward to reviewing future legislation that may afford the homeless greater opportunities for housing assistance, rehabilitation and job training. If I may be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact my district office at (916) 324-4937.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Deborah V. Ortiz", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

DEBORAH V. ORTIZ

DVO:kp

# **Attention**

# **Rally and Protest**

**Saturday**  
**April 8th, 2000**

**12th Street Overpass (I-160)**  
**at Richards Blvd**

The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) is sponsoring a Rally and Protest to protest the anti-camping and sleeping laws, Saturday, April 8th, under the 12th Street Overpass (I-160) at Richards Blvd. Set-up time will start at 8 AM.

Come take part in Blake Smith's river clean-up project. Work with the Family Christian Center who will come out to help with the cleanup.

If you're an artist or crafts person, set up a display and sell your stuff.

If you play a musical instrument, come and join in.

If you want to participate in the Protest part of the rally, contact any SHOC member for special instructions.

Loaves & Fishes will supply lunch beginning at noon.

The Salvation Army will provide some of the music.

The News Media will be there.

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001  
(916) 319-2009  
FAX (916) 319-2109  
DISTRICT OFFICE  
1215 15th STREET  
SUITE 102  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
(916) 324-4676  
FAX (916) 327-3338

Assembly  
California Legislature

DARRELL STEINBERG  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, NINTH DISTRICT  
CHAIR, ASSEMBLY LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE



COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
HEALTH  
JUDICIARY

*In response  
to petitions  
& newspaper  
and cover letter*

February 8, 2000

Mr. Max F. Biddle  
Treasurer  
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
926 J Street, Suite 1406  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Biddle:

Thank you for writing my office to voice your concerns regarding the policies used by local governments in dealing with the homeless.

Like you, I oppose cities in California passing ordinances that criminalize our citizens when they become homeless. I believe that homeless people should be treated with as much respect and dignity as anyone else.

I have and will continue to strongly support increases in funding for support services for the homeless. My bill AB 34 will provide \$10 million to Sacramento County and two other counties to increase treatment for the homeless who are mentally ill.

Again, thank you for taking the time to write. I will keep your support in mind when this issue comes through the legislative process. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

DARRELL STEINBERG  
Assemblymember

DS/ah





**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**

926 J Street • Suite 1406 • Sacramento, CA 95814

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2851

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

DATE: March 17, 2000

TO: Diana Griego Erwin

FROM: Paula Lomazzi

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

SUBJECT: Article "Dreaded disease, difficult patient"

Thank you for the article informing us of this important health issue.

We know Josephine. She used to come up to our office almost every day for a month or two, I believe, up until the middle of January--Blake believes up until at least the first part of February. It would probably coincide with the date she was diagnosed with TB because, all of a sudden she didn't come around. This last Wednesday she did come to this office. I was not here, but Blake Smith, Susan Ducker and Lee Parks, were here during her visit. I got a TB test this morning. All our members are urged to get a TB test

Going back to the time we saw her frequently, maybe I can help give some idea as to her past whereabouts. Maryhouse; the religious classes; our office; she went to many of the same free meals I did; Food Not Bombs (Sundays at Ceaser Chavez Park), She went to many of the free holiday meals (HardRock, Salvation Army, that I remember), she shopped some times at Macy's, that I know of; alot of church groups served food at the park and maybe she went to some on Saturdays or Sundays by Loaves and Fishes, I don't remember. Meanwhile, I'll be remembering people who may have associated with her.

Max Biddle, Treasurer of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, I believe, is about to present a plan to our local government to address this and related issues, to accomodate people that don't fit into the current shelter systems and programs. I don't know the details, but he may like to talk with you about it.

I am sending you information about our organization and other activities to catch you up on the news we sent media in the recent past.

If you need more information, call 442-2156.



## Homework Article

### What is SHOC?

SHOC is a homeless advocacy non-profit organization working under the umbrella of the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA)

SHOC is a voice and a tool for the homeless.

Any homeless person with an idea that will benefit the homeless population can have access to SHOC's office equipment and expertise to make their idea a reality. For instance:

Scott Frates came to SHOC with a complaint about how the downtown guides were abusing the homeless people with not only words but physical harm as well. Scott headed up a committee to deal with this problem. Scott gathered up complaint forms from those who were being abused and took them to the ACLU who started their own investigation. Don Casimere's office also got involved and now there are regular meetings to make the downtown guides accountable. (Don Casimere is an independent investigator appointed to investigate complaints about the Sacramento Police Department.)

Blake Smith and James Snow came up with an idea to clean up the trash along the American River. With SHOC's help the River Clean-up Project got an OK from Muriel Johnson of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. The Forest Rangers have also given them their support by furnishing trash bags and removal. This project has been delayed by rain but with nice weather approaching it will start back up soon.

SHOC has been gathering up complaint forms from the homeless who have been abused by the local police and security forces. These forms have given Casimere's office the teeth it needs to hold the police accountable. There are now monthly meetings with Don Casimere, the Sacramento Police Dept, the Downtown Partnership, the Sheriff's Office, NSA Security and SHOC just to mention a few who attended the first meeting.

### Donations Needed

The River Cleanup Project needs donations of shovels, rakes, pruning sheers and other gardening tools. The Forest Rangers are supplying the large orange trash bags and pick-up and disposal. Contact SHOC at (916)4542-2156 for instructions if you have anything you wish to donate.

### Wish List

SHOC was donated a very fine video camera by Steve Buelow, but to make it work we need the following:

- Video tapes                      video 8
- Batteries                         SONY NP-22 battery pack 6V
- 2 VCRs for editing
- A small screen TV, 10 to 13 inch.

SHOC also needs:

- The loan of a cell phone for about 3 months
- Money
- Office supplies and Equipment

All donations are tax deductible. Contact SHOC at (916)442-2156 if you wish to donate anything.

Homeward

## Meeting with Don Casimere

Susan Ducker from the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) and Cecilia Escamilla from the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA) set up a meeting with Jim Hyde of the Sacramento Police Dept. at Don Casimere's office (Office of Police Accountability). The meeting was originally arranged to discuss some matters that concerned SPD Captain Jim Hyde. It was originally planned for only a few members of SHOC and SHA to meet with Jim Hyde but as the date neared, other prominent members of the community expressed a wish to attend. The meeting, held on February 17, 2000, ended up including the following members:

From the Sacramento Police Dept.--Jim Hyde, Sam Vargas, Gary McLaughlin, Hugh McGee (Bike Unit) and Mike Summers; Lynda Buckmaster and John E. Hayes from Volunteers of America; Neal McAuliffe, Jerry Simpson, Jon Ciero and Chris McAdams from Vietnam Veterans of Calif.-HOPE; Jan Galloway, Homeless Programs-DHA; Michael Dueit of Consumer Affairs; From NSA Security Services were Steve Carson and Mark Thomas; Stephen Blus and Cecilia Escamilla from Sacramento Housing Alliance; Connie Miottel of Capitol Station District; Tommy Clinkenbeard from the Sacramento Public Defenders; Susan Ducker from Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee; Michael Ault and Ron Loofbourron from the Downtown Partnership; Tim Brown of Loaves and Fishes; and Don Casimere, Office of Police Accountability.

Though the purpose of the meeting was to discuss some issues Jim Hyde wanted resolved, it evolved into a town meeting where issues of major importance to the community as a whole were discussed. It was agreed by the members that the way things have been handled in the past concerning the homeless, was not effective, that the approach needed to change. It was agreed upon that the dialogue established there should continue, involving other organizations, government, businesses and the citizens of Sacramento. They planned a follow-up meeting for the first week in April.

I'd like to thank Julie Padilla for all the times during her Mayoral Campaign that she stood up for the homeless and for all the hard work she did trying to give us the best mayor that money couldn't buy. Also, it just went public that Julie Padilla is planning to make 62 acres available to benefit homeless people of Sacramento. It is in the early stages of planning but I thought it might give some hope to what seems a hopeless situation. THANK YOU, JULIE!



## River Cleanup

Homeless individuals organized to clean-up an area of the American River commonly used by campers. The River Clean-Up officially started on January 17, 2000 along the American River Parkway in Sacramento. Supported by S.H.O.C. (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee) volunteers began the clean up despite rainy weather.

Local media stations Channels 3, 10, 31 and 40 were all present and filming as the crew began its work. Cleaning up the debris left over the years the volunteers quickly filled up the orange bags donated by the Rangers. Interviews of Blake Smith, Rev. James Snow, and Al Rassmusen made it on their evening news. Channel 40, FOX News, did an extensive interview with the project leader Mr. Smith which was broadcast the following day and was also broadcast statewide.

The reporters were given a tour of the clean-up site showing not only trash left by homeless people, but refrigerators, tires, old car and truck bodies dumped there as well.

Rev. James Snow told them, "And we're going to show that all this mess, including that truck behind you, wasn't put here by a homeless person. We're going to clean it up, anyway."

Blake pointed out the dangers (hypodermic needles and such) as he was picking up the trash. He said, "We're going to clean it all up, every stitch of it." Al told them he pulled up 200 pounds of glass that day and recycled them.

The Clean-Up project was spear-headed by Blake Smith and the Reverend James Snow with the support of County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman, Muriel Johnson and the Department of Recreation (Rangers). Clean-up organizers also reported some opposition coming from some members of the Sacramento Police Department and the Salvation Army's Neighbors project.

Organizers of the clean-up said they would continue with it as long as necessary, weather permitting. Though the heavy amount of rain received in this area has slowed activity, the clean-up has made progress by the individuals still able to find dry land. The volunteers are anxiously awaiting a long enough dry spell to resume the work in full force.

The American River Parkway, a most beautiful stretch of wild land surrounded by the City of Sacramento, serves as sanctuary for all sorts of natural life. Also serving as recreational land, there has been opposition to allowing homeless people to stay there. The main objection has been about the trash marring the natural beauty of the area.

Blake Smith, with Rev. James Snow as advisor, introduced the solution at one of our S.H.O.C. meetings. They said that the homeless could just clean it up, and that they had recruited enthusiasm from their fellow river dwellers.

Project organizers decided that the orange bags used by the County would be needed to show official proof of their work. The task of acquiring the bags involved contacting one official after another. Muriel Johnson, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, was finally contacted and authorized her approval for the project. Ranger Dave Lydick of the Parks and Recreation Department became the ally that brought the project to actualization by agreeing to provide the orange bags to the volunteers. 150 bags were delivered to the S.H.O.C. office on January 12. By this time there were 41 volunteers signed up and given volunteer cards to verify their intentions.



# FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 3/13/00

Pages: 1



also sent to  
58, 40, 31, 13, 10, 3, Bee,  
News Review

From: Paula Lomazzi

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
926 "I" Street, #1406  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax: (916) 442-2851  
Phone: (916) 442-2156  
E-mail: SHOC\_1@yahoo.com

To: Capitol Week - KVIE

Subject: To Inform you on current activities and concerns  
of the homeless population and SHOC.

1. Blake Smith has filed an official complaint with the Sacramento Police. Sgt. Brey of Internal Affairs is heading investigation. Mr. Casimere with the Police Accountability Unit, is also investigating. Tommy Clinkenbeard, Public Defender is offering his council. Stuart Katz has also represented.
2. The NSA's oppressive actions must stop.
3. Working with Julie Padilla concerning 62 acres (provided by her) for free camping.
4. Addressing the suspension of constitutional rights in Sacramento.
5. Setting up Grants for eco-systems concerning River Clean Project.
6. We have set up Garbage Pick up with Salvation Army: Jack of Neighbors Program; John T. Shilson ((916) 442-0331), Director of Social Services; Arthur Harris of Salvation Army.
7. Contacted San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness concerning coalition of state issues.
8. Loaves and Fishes: Art workshops began last week Mondays--Wednesdays 12:00--1:30 (See April 446-0874/9650). A small jam session on-going on Saturdays at Friendship Park. (Should get bigger).
9. Setting up appointments with Neighborhood Associations to do presentations and panel discussions.

Street Spirit  
SF May 2000  
vol. 6 #5

the assault and by downplaying the seriousness of the crime with his comment that they "are expected to recover," Clark reinforces the lack of concern the general public should feel when a homeless person is the victim of an assault.

Couldn't the victims be unable to remember details of the attack because

their hearing centers or vision apparatuses at Stanford Hospital and remains hospitalized. Dawson has been released.

With "Boston" still in Stanford Hospital recovering from the brutal assault, yet another homeless man was viciously stabbed twice while he slept in San Lorenzo Park. Eyewitnesses report that the victim, Brad Mills, was hand-

Issues Task Force (HITF). Doug McGrath reported to the Task Force an incident of police misconduct against the homeless. "Officer Alex Martin beat a homeless man with his flashlight across his face." The man, Charles, interviewed by HUFF (Homeless United for Friendship and Freedom), bore visible scars and scabs

from photos in the city. Recommendations to end the sleeping ban and institute other reforms remain undiscussed. Promises to "present new wording" for the sleeping ban sections of the camping ordinance have been casually broken by Mayor Keith Sugar, swing-vote

See Policing the Homeless page 18

## SACRAMENTO POLICE SILENCE HOMELESS ACTIVISTS

**Police attempt to silence the voices of homeless people by threatening to arrest them for the 'crime' of distributing homeless newspapers and for cleaning up the American River.**

by Clifford Crooks

On April 8, the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) held a rally to educate the public via the *Homeward* newspaper on how homeless people are being attacked by the cities of California, including Sacramento, and to demonstrate the need for safe camping areas. We didn't have a big turnout because we put a warning on the posters that people may go to jail on this one, and sure enough the Sacramento police came in and shut us down — silencing our voices.

This rally had another aspect to it: Blake Smith's American River Project was working nearby. This clean-up project by the homeless community was approved by the Sacramento Board of Directors and the Park Rangers are supplying the large orange bags for the trash. The American River Project does more than clean up the river; it also shines a good light on homeless people and their

involvement in community uplift.

Well, Blake and his volunteers were picking up trash next to Northgate Boulevard within sight of the rally, when one of Sacramento's finest pulled up in his black-and-white and told Blake: "Stop your activity or you will be arrested and taken to jail."

Chris, one of Blake's volunteers, left her wheelchair and was working near Blake when the officer told her the same thing. This officer above the law — OOPS, I mean this officer of the law — then came over to us. We were under the I-160 overpass where, unknown to us, two black-and-whites and a motorcycle cop were parked on the overpass overseeing everything from above.

The homeless Artisans had a small art show set up. Sharon and I were passing out the *Homeward* newspaper at the four-way stop when the officer called her over and issued her a ticket for illegally standing on a center divider. In protest I went over to her spot on the divider and continued to hand out newspapers to the cars passing by when I realized the news media should be in on this.

Although we had contacted the media earlier, only two showed up early that morning and then left without interviewing anyone. Frushed to a phone and called all of the media but none showed up. Too bad, for the City of Sacramento exhibited exactly the kind of behavior that we were trying to educate the public about.

They not only silenced our voice (for that day), but they also closed Blake's sanctioned clean-up project. Well, despite this police harassment, Blake's American River Clean-up Project is still going on and we are still passing out the *Homeward* newspaper. Thank you, Sacramento, for giving living proof to our factual reporting about police intimidation and persecution of our city's homeless residents.

Meanwhile, SHOC contacted Governor Gray Davis's office to ask for some emergency legislation to protect the homeless from the anti-poor laws being passed by the cities of California. We asked for a panel of his people and our people to work together and come up with a realistic plan. We also gave him one solution to the camping problem that could work.

To demonstrate the idea, we rallied under the I-160 overpass at Northgate Boulevard to show the simplicity of turning the vacant land near freeway off-ramps and under overpasses into state-run safe zones for the homeless to camp and/or live in their vehicles.

We were quite pleased when his office got back to us in only three days, but it looks like we were sent on a wild goose chase. We aren't going to end our efforts though. We will continue to participate, to educate the public, and to march and rally at the Capitol until our collective voices are heard. We must all work together to stop the abuse of homeless people.

### Fifteen Minutes of Fame

by Walter Liggett

Fifteen minutes of Fame's rapidly shifting spotlight usually focuses on show biz, transgressions, accidents, tragedies. Terror-bomb victims at least once a month. This brief shifting glare seldom favors creative artists, poets, thinkers, seldom the poor.

### maybe maybe maybe

by Randy Fingland

maybe they'll bring the food today to feed the hungry kids instead of sending more fighterplanes to satisfy the appetites of power

### Partners

by Randy Fingland

well ain't we whiny in the mornin' askin' with that tone for ever'body else a-roun' to be un'erstandin' like they ain't been out on concrete all night without sleep & got no toast 'n' coffee handed to 'em in their doorways either





**County of Sacramento**  
**Department of Regional Parks, Recreation**  
**and Open Space**



RECREATION & PARK  
AND  
FISH & GAME COMMISSION

Robert J. Bastian  
Michele McCormick  
Theodore M. Robinson  
Art White  
Louis Zimmerle

February 25, 2000

RONALD D. SUTER  
Director

DEPUTY DIRECTORS  
Roy Imai - Planning &  
Regional Parks  
Gary Kukkola - American  
River Parkway  
Thom Oliver - Golf

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
926 J St. Suite 1406  
Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Dear Rev. James Snow:

Reverend, in response to your request to allow the homeless to "live/camp" along the American River Parkway in return for keeping those areas clean I would like to address several areas of concern.

The American River Parkway is a day use only facility that accommodates approximately 5 million visitors per year. Camping is not only against the law but being a day use only park there is no overnight patrol for protection of those that are illegally camped. This is not a safe environment to be in whereas the shelters that are provided for the homeless have supervision and provide a much more secure environment. Health concerns are also an issue as most homeless camps are not near any toilet facilities, resulting in human waste being deposited on the ground creating a very real health concern for not only the homeless campers but also the other park users and the park employees that have to clean these areas.

Sacramento County Parks is a member of the Sacramento County and Cities Board on Homelessness and has participated, and will continue to participate, in the outreach efforts that have included both social services and law enforcement working to assist the homeless in changing from this lifestyle. The homeless camping along the parkway have a negative impact on the environment and in many instances create either an actual or a perceived threat to the public using the parkway. We will continue to enforce the no camping ordinances along the American River Parkway and hope that S.H.O.C. will assist us in advising the homeless as to where the shelters are located and encourage them to use them.

4040 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento, CA 95827  
(916) 875-6672 FAX (916) 875-6632

I have recently been supplying boxes of trash bags to S.H.O.C. for cleanup of old campsites. I have been made aware that rolls of bags have been found by Rangers in active homeless camps where they are being used for storage of property while a previous camp that was occupied by the same campers had a truckload of trash that had not been bagged or removed. I will continue to provide bags for organized cleanup efforts that we will participate in but not for distribution to homeless where they are not being used for the intended purpose.

If I can be of any further assistance feel free to contact me at 875-6548.

Sincerely,

*Dave Lydick*

Dave Lydick  
Park Ranger II

CC: Blake Smith, S.H.O.C.  
John O'Farrell, CDNAA  
Ron Suter  
Gary kukkola

*Charles Barker*

*527-94-8283*

*DLN*

*N-219730*

*Security Supervisor*

*Cost estimates portafortiles 8--10  
Sat. 6am*



## SHOC HISTORY

November 22, 2000

---

- ✓ 1989  
State Capitol campout

-----  
October 18, 1990

- ✓ Volunteer organization with no office, run by a few dedicated people on a shoestring budget, SHOC has had significant impact on local housing policy. Desired to hire full-time homeless organizer. No access to institutional funding due to political nature of work, totally reliant upon grassroots funding.

-----  
October 9, 1991

- ✓ letter to Heather Fargo, City Councilmember to place light rail stop by L&F, close 14<sup>th</sup> and D Street underpass and provide police patrol for area.  
(underpass has been closed)

-----  
11/22/91?

- ✓ SHOC agenda -Campaign for Human Development-nominations of board members. Voter registration. Winter emergency fundraising ideas. Meeting with mayor on housing. Meeting on Homelessness Awareness Week.

-----  
Nov. 28, 1991

- ✓ Homeless American's Assoc. of Calif. Protest at the State Capital on Thanksgiving Day.

-----  
December 13, 1991

SHOC - Petition City Council and Board of Supervisors to end homelessness. Asked for Bond Issue or other means to provide 1,000 small dwellings - minimum cost, with homeless as active part of construction project. \$100 to 200/month rent.

-----  
December 13, 1991-News release

- ✓ December 18, 1991

-----  
July 7, 1994

- ✓ SHOC meetings may have been irregular - Tim Brown Chair.

-----  
October 16, 1996

- ✓ Eddie Harris volunteered to serve as new chair for SHOC. Every one agreed.

-----  
November 20, 1996

- ✓ First Homeward meeting at Loaves and Fishes. First issue due out in December.

-----  
December 13, 1997

- ✓ SHOC/SHA/Homeless Artisan - Homeless Artisan Show - Shasta Hotel from 5:30 to 8pm (1017—10<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Homeless paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, andicrafts.  
Poetry reading  
Refreshments

-----  
April 21, 1998

- ✓ Symposium - SHOC and Amnesty International - from 9 to 11:30 am - at Loaves and Fishes.  
Speakers invited: William Kennedy, attorney for N. Calif. Legal Services, Jerry Fishman of Amnesty International, Brian Landsberg of professor McGeorge School of Law.  
Subject: Human rights and police harassment. Homeless forced to break the law because of anticamping ordinances.

-----  
May 5 1998

- ✓ Campaign to educate homeless about tax credit.

-----  
September 21, 1998

- ✓ SHOC Bulletin warning of areas police are sweeping.  
✓ Announcing Overflow Shelter to open with 200 beds.  
Planning Rally.  
Bell ringers need to apply with Salvation Army.

-----  
**NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK - 1999**

-----  
Nov. 18, 1998

- ✓ Homeward - Taylor's Campaign - Showing at CSUS Union Auditorium at 7:30pm.  
Homeward fundraiser. \$10

-----  
November 20, 1998

- ✓ SHOC - Rally at State Capitol - North Steps from 9:30am to 3 pm



**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**

c/o Loaves & Fishes • P.O. Box 2161

Sacramento, CA 95812

Office 916-442-2156 • Fax 916-442-2851

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

---

**Date:** July 6, 2000

**To:** Blake Smith

**From:**

*Paula Lomazzi*  
Paula Lomazzi

**SUBJECT:** Adopt-a-Mile

Richard Martin of the American River Parkway Foundation, called today to inform us that the Adopt-a-Mile application has been approved and our sign will be put up next week. Our sign will be located along the bike trail near the Camp Pollock area, somewhere between Northgate Blvd. (after Discovery Park) and Del Paso Blvd.. They call it "Mile 2-3".

Our sponsor is the Parks Commission. They donate money for that mile; we donate the volunteer labor. Therefore, the Foundation has funding to provide us with the tools we need. Richard mentioned they have shovels, cutting tools, trash bags, etc. if we need them. I told them we've been getting the bags from the Rangers and some tools from Salvation Army, but that you will let him know if you need anything. I asked him if they had gloves. He's putting that on his list of things to purchase.

If we would like to work on a special project out there, he recommends it for further public relations advertising. He said that if there is an area that needs especially extensive work, like a lot of underbrush that should be cleared for fire safety, we can get a temporary BIG sign saying we are working on it. He works with the Department of Parks and Recreation and said he could possibly meet next week out there (or soon) if we would like instructions on things, for instance, where the brush needs clearing and other proper stewardship instructions.



# GETTING BY on the STREETS



Sacramento Bee  
photography by  
Chris Crewell

David "Doc" Walker, 55, panhandles during afternoon rush hours. He can pull in up to \$20 in an hour.



Cassandra Farr, 33, left, has five children, and a sixth is on the way. She feels guilty about exposing her kids to the homeless life. The family is living in a small shelter room for 60 days. Dealing with a difficult pregnancy, Farr's goal is to find a home before she has her baby.

## Relying on panhandling, government aid or work, these homeless hang on

By Blair Anthony Robertson  
BEE STAFF WRITER

**C**assandra Farr is a mother of five, with a sixth due Sept. 2. Homeless since December, she's consumed by guilt for putting her children through a dizzy, numb kind of hell, bouncing from shelter to shelter, standing out from all the families that seem so regular and happy.

July began for Farr with the first good news since she wound up homeless: An emergency shelter in Sacramento would for 60 days provide room, board and counsel for mom and family. Farr, who receives \$781 a month in welfare and \$399 in food stamps, also would be put on a

strict budget to help her save enough money for an apartment.

"My goal," Farr, 33, proclaimed at the beginning of July, "is not to spend any money at all."

People like Farr don't become homeless for just one reason. The reasons add up until something gives, until bridges are burned and options run dry. But money—or the lack of it—is what keeps many people homeless. And money may be their ticket out.

For the 31 days of July, The Bee studied Farr and three other homeless people to witness, dollar by dollar and day by day, how they ran their lives and whether they had a serious chance of getting off the streets.

► HOMELESS, page A12



Cliff Crooks, 56, above, takes a break with a cigarette and some Gatorade. He calls his van home. Elizabeth Marz, 56, left, lights up a cigarette. She works temporary jobs and sleeps on church steps.







"Everybody in Sacramento runs the same sad sign. I've always tried to be a little humorous as well as letting people know I'm homeless."

David "Doc" Walker

Parahandler, talking about how he came up with his sign that reads "Hungry Shopping Please"



David "Doc" Walker, who likes the homeless life for now, grabs a cup of Starbucks coffee at a grocery store, left, and has a smoke in an east Sacramento strip mall, near where he spends his nights. Cigarettes eat up nearly a third of the money he makes panhandling.



Walker, below, takes a cigarette from a motorist while panhandling near the corner of Howe Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard.



## Homeless: Street people learn tricks of survival

► CONTINUED FROM A12

chance," Leah said. But then, Cassandra Farr began to feel as she thought about the long month ahead. How would this one be any different?

"Stop crying, stop crying, Mom," pleaded her 5-year-old daughter, Cassandra. Standing on her toes to dab her mother's eyes. "Stop crying, stop crying, stop crying."

Emergency shelter manager Al-Amin Jennings explained that many in Farr's current situation do find the strength to turn their lives around.

"They are only here for 60 days," he said. "The house is, 'How am I not going to be homeless in 60 days?'"

Many of the homeless families make use of Section 8 federal housing subsidies. But there are no guarantees. The Sacramento housing market is tight, landlords can afford to be picky, and rental prices are climbing.

"There are some months where I say, 'Oh my God, for one get into a place,' and they have to go right back into the streets," Jennings said.

While Farr coped with the fate of her family and the burden of her past, Jennings over her head, David Walker headed into the early days of July with a smile on his face. He wasn't

necessarily interested in getting off the streets. He once faced the same responsibilities as Farr, but now it seems like that was another person—a person it hurts him to talk about.

Walker says he was married twice and had grown children. He says his second wife died and he lost his first son in an emotional accident. Last year, The Bee featured Walker in a story after he landed a low-paying job grinding lenses for an optical company and the state wanted to garnish his wages to collect back child support. That became moot when he left the job after a run-in with a fellow employee.

Now it is just him and the elements. The money he gets panhandling along a busy intersection goes for food. He has no other source of income. Like many longtime homeless, Walker knows all the tricks to survive: the cheapest place to get a meal, the back doors of restaurants that will hand him a freebie, the stores that give away baked goods at day's end. Call it the unofficial guide to Sacramento on \$10 a day, or less.

He described his dining habits one July night: "It was real hot yesterday. I worked from 4:30 p.m. to 5:17. That's when I went over and got my dinner from Del Taco. I had



DAVID "DOC" WALKER  
Parahandler, age 55, homeless eight years

Earnings and freebies in July \$350

\$350 From panhandling with a sign

• About 25 free meals at Leavers & Fries

• One home-cooked meal from woman who saw him panhandling

Spending \$350



\*One marijuana joint left after run-in with sheriff's deputy

Sacramento Bee/Chris Hansen

two chicken soft tacos, no lettuce, I don't like rabbit food. Besides, they throw extra cheese on when you don't get lettuce. I had two ice waters. It's cheaper, and Coke is only going to make you thirsty. I needed to rehydrate my body. "Then I bought my breakfast for the next morning: three-day-old chocolate croissants for 80 cents and a pint of milk.

The croissants go for a dollar apiece, but you wait 'till the end of the day and they mark them down."

During the month The Bee kept in touch with Walker, he not only refused describing every meal, but kept meticulous records and handed over receipts for every purchase—everything but the four marijuana joints he says he

Walker prepares for the day after working up at his camp. Walker, who says he has grown children, has no source of income other than his panhandling.

smoked.

When Walker gets enough money panhandling, he quits. He doesn't think any further ahead than the next meal. He isn't planning to save, at least not now. He wants to get off the streets, but maybe two years from now. He'd like to see a dentist for his aching, rotting teeth, but that day will come in due time, he supposes.

Putting things off, it seems, is easier for Walker. Many of the projects he started during July were put on hold or forgotten. He had begun several articles for the homeless newspaper but never completed them.

As Farr went off in search of apartments, struggling to maintain her health in her seventh month of pregnancy, as Walker was killing time on a computer or thinking about his

next fast food repast, Cliff Crooks was going with the flow, seemingly untroubled. He wants to be homeless.

He parks the cramped but peaceful quarters of his 1978 GMC van to an apartment. Inside the van, a sheet of plywood resting on milk crates serves as his bed. He keeps an ice chest for perishables. He has a gas heater and a kerosene stove.

"It's a mean, nasty world out there and I don't want any part of it," he said. "For one thing, I'm lazy. If I had a place, I would never leave the house. In my van, I'm out every day."

Crooks' budget appears to give him enough money to get off the streets if he managed his life differently. More than half of his usual monthly income of \$781 is spent on storage and gasoline. If he used that money for rent, he could afford a modest apartment.

People like Crooks represent a small part of the homeless population, according to Tim Brown, executive director of Leavers & Fries, a non-profits-asked crisis for the homeless. Brown says a 1999 homeless survey showed that just 5 percent of those questioned wished to remain homeless.

Those few "are legitimate people who don't want to be part of the system," Brown said. "They are fiercely independent and don't want to pay two-thirds of their income for rent."

Crooks has been homeless long enough to find a comfort zone. And he has adopted an us-vs.-them attitude, believing the system is set up to work against the very neediest. One way or the other, Crooks is surviving. At the end of June, for instance, he had 68 cents left over. Then July's Social Security check arrived.

Though Crooks smokes regularly—\$80 a month for tobacco he calls himself—he fumes over his health. Daily he takes two anti-depressants.

► HOMELESS, page A14



# Homeless: Shelter rules require use of a budget

► CONTINUED FROM A13  
Lipster to lower his cholesterol, two diabetes tablets and an aspirin. Medi-Cal covers the costs. But Crooks also spends \$130 a month on herbs and vitamins, he says gingerly before sharing his story.

Crooks has been homeless for six years, ever since he and his girlfriend split up. He has a single strategy for his monthly income: make it last.

"When I first got paid, I do things to treat myself. I'll go out and have a good dinner," he said, spent \$20 taking a friend to a movie. Most mornings, he spends \$1.95 at McDonald's for a sausage biscuit with egg. He gets a free senior coffee.

Elizabeth Marx, however, chooses to drink cheap coffee. During July, she didn't hesitate to buy \$2 gourmet cups. In July, she said, she had two packs of cigarettes a day and had her monthly earnings of \$419.

She knows she could get into a transitional housing program if she wanted to, but she doesn't want to give up her apartment. But she says she doesn't have one.

By July, her hopes of getting a place of her own again had been reduced to getting a room in a single-room occupancy hotel, which would require about \$350 cash up front. Even that modest goal seemed elusive.

Though many shelters are hard to come by, advocates for the poor say people like Marx—working but homeless—are a growing group.

"I will not play the game, just like I will not purchase," Marx said, sitting on a bench in Capitol Park and watching some of the working people find a shady place to have lunch. "I am not going to go to the store and say, 'You look like you might need a few bucks.' That I will accept."

At St. Francis Church in downtown Sacramento, where Marx sleeps on the steps with more than a dozen other homeless, a Ukrainian congregation arrives every Sunday night to sing and deliver food. They say Marx is the wrong way.

"They bring cold cheeseburgers and warm soda," she said. "I won't drink their soda or eat their food."

Not surprisingly, the well-read and well-spoken Marx has been disconnected from society. She doesn't have any friends who could help solve her housing problems. She is estranged from her three sisters and two brothers. Her mother is dead.

To make ends meet last March, Marx pawned her late mother's half-sister engagement ring for \$400.

Since then, unable to pay the loan back, Marx has been spending \$13 a month to keep the pawn going, so the ring won't be sold.

"I used to be like that," Marx said, looking toward the bench crowd at Capitol Park. "Friday it's going to be me again. I want to work at a secretary. I need to have an apartment with furniture and kitchenware. I need to have a car. I need to have coffee."

Every weekday morning at 8 a.m., Marx rides her bicycle from the church to the State Rail station. She spends \$1.50 to travel to a Labor Ready office, where she checks to see if there is a temp job for her. On the days when there are no jobs, the light rail fare really hurts.

On the days she doesn't work, Marx and her duffel bag find a bench in the park. During a recent visit, she was on page 147 of Patricia Cornwell's mystery "Post of Origin," one of her many better reads. Sometimes, she reads a chapter so she had brought a used pair for \$1.50.

She recently spent \$4.50 for Revlon nail polish and \$7 for the matching lipstick.

"That was the last time I splurged something I want to take for granted."

► ► ►  
Halfway through July, Cassia Farr was feeling optimistic for the first time in many months. Wearing an orange print dress, Farr had been making the rounds looking for apartments and had applied for Section 8 housing assistance. Her body gave her constant reminders of the urgency of her quest: Premature contractions had started and bleeding sent her to the emergency room four times.

"I want to be in a place of my own before I have my baby. I don't want to have my baby in a shelter," Farr said during a session at the shelter with social worker Bernice Wilson. "I want to have some place stable."



To stretch his money at month's end, Cliff Crooks dines on a peanut butter and margarine sandwich while he enjoys an episode of "Star Trek: Voyager" at his van.

Without told her to focus instead on making a permanent move by the end of the 60 days she's allowed at the shelter. "If you have the baby here, then it's your baby, too," Wilson said.

"He's going to be loved wherever he is. Just relax. This is your stopping point. Back at the shelter room, the children tried to make up the time with by looking up magazine photos. Said Marx as he climbed onto the top bunk bed, "We're not used to living here. We're used to having our own rooms and stuff."

Around that same time of the month, Walker was feeling good about money and had few worries, probably because he had few expectations.

"Everybody is fact about it, but the time said yes," he said, explaining his philosophy as he sat in the shade near the corner of University and House streets. "I've always tried to be a little bit of a hustler, as well as letting people know I'm homeless."

That's how he came up with "Hungry Struggling Model."

"I can portray the detected look, it's an act, but with me I really do need to get hold of some money. The money always manages to come around. I know one guy who was making \$50-\$60 an hour. Then again, he only had one leg."

One day toward the end of July, as hundreds of cars drove past, some motorists looked, some stared, some frowned. But it was hard to find anyone laughing. Most commuters adjusted their radios, talked on their cell phones or fiddled with the radio.

"It's the end of the month and the day before payday," said Walker. "It's like pulling teeth from a crocodile."

By the end of his hour, he had \$11—enough for dinner. On a really good night, he might take a movie, too.

Walker says he occasionally gets hassled by the cops for vagrancy. One day in July, he says a sheriff's deputy emptied his pockets, placed his \$17 in cash and a mattress ticket for "Paradise Park 30" on the trunk of the patrol car and drove off with Walker in the back seat. The money and the ticket blew away.

Otherwise, Walker has no problem with what others, even some of the homeless, see as begging.

"One lady yelled, 'Have you no pride?' I said, 'Lady, I ate the price yesterday,'" Walker said. "When I started this, I was starving. I needed the money. That will cut into you. That's when you say pride is getting in the way."

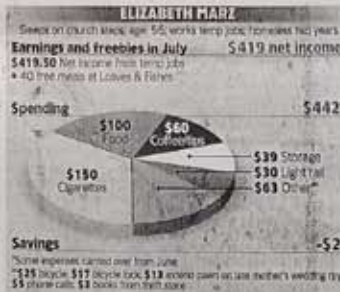
► ► ►  
At the end of July, Cassia Farr's daughter Alicia turned three. She received donated gifts from the shelter: a new jumpsuit, a toy necklace, nail polish, purple shoes and a watch.



Cliff Crooks picks up some prescription drugs to treat his manic depressive. Medi-Cal pays for the \$355 of medication that Crooks, who is on disability, takes each month.



Elizabeth Marx puts on her socks as she prepares to spend another night on the steps of St. Francis Church at 26th and K streets in Sacramento.



On July 30, Crooks had \$4 and was hoping his disability check was in the mail.

If Elizabeth Marx had found steady temp work during July, she would have stood a chance of finding a monthly room at one of the city's low-cost motels.

But at month's end, her vacant eyes told the story before she did the math.

She couldn't really explain why she had not applied for a permanent job, except to say that being homeless offers a particular set of complications. Showing up every morning clean and pressed (a monumental task when your home is a church step, when most of your clothes are crumpled in a duffel bag).

"I probably should have started applying for jobs sooner," she said. "Part of it is the sheer difficulty of being homeless. I spent 30 years working. At my age, it's not that easy to find jobs any more."

That person she used to be, that life she used to take for granted, seemed very far away.

She reached into her pocket and counted up 13 cents, not even enough for a piece of art.

► ► ►  
The Bee's Blair Anthony Robertson can be reached at (916) 321-1099 or brobertson@wsn.com.

enough to find a heater. By then, she will be the mother of six. Cliff Crooks was feeling the money pinch even before July drew to a close. But he continued to revel in his freedom. He hadn't figured out needing a \$60 starter for the van and \$100 worth of tools to install it.

With a week remaining in the month, Crooks was nearly tapped out. After digging into his savings account at Bank of America for \$150, he had \$20 in the bank and \$15 in his pocket. To get by, he would eat more free meals at Lovers & Fishes and drive his van less.

"I just roll with the punches and not let it bother me," he said. "Sometimes I make it all month, but not often."

If she follows the plan through the end of September, she will have \$1,952 in cash from her welfare check and \$1,107 in food stamps—



## YOUR VIEWS

2001

### Homeless in Sacramento

**R**e "Getting by on the streets," Aug. 26: The Bee should be commended for its recent examination of the lives of the homeless. It didn't ignore the problem, but neither did it perpetuate common myths.

Some politicians would have you believe that the homeless were working Americans from stable homes who lost everything they have due to corporate downsizing or budget cuts from ruthless Republicans. As the article illustrated, this is not the case. One was homeless by choice, one got pregnant when she already had five kids and no husband and three spent a significant portion of their welfare benefits or income on cigarettes. None of them is looking for work.

The homeless deserve our compassion, but no government program can make up for the lack of family and friends, and no benefits can force people to make better decisions for themselves.

— Mark Androvich, Folsom

**T**he article gave readers an opportunity to understand the daily struggles of our homeless in Sacramento. Most homeless individuals face additional challenges even beyond their extreme poverty. The Sacramento City and County Board on Homelessness survey in 2000 showed that more than half (52 percent) of those questioned were physically or mentally disabled; an astonishing 69 percent of the women had suffered physical or sexual abuse. It is also important to put their individual stories in a societal context, or we run the risk of blaming the victim.

The strong economy and cutbacks in subsidized housing have created a housing squeeze, forcing more and more families and individuals into homelessness. Rents in Sacramento rose 12 percent last year; the vacancy rate is less than 3 percent; more than 30,000 people are on the waiting list for Section 8 housing assistance. Is it any wonder that the number of homeless women and children turning to us for help has increased dramatically?

— Tim Brown, Sacramento  
Executive Director, Loaves & Fishes

**T**he front-page article on the homeless did not invoke my sympathy, but my anger. Why does Cassandra continue to procreate? Feeling guilty about exposing her children to homelessness does not seem to keep her from getting pregnant.

Sacramento County should require tubal ligation before handing out welfare to the likes of Cassandra. Her children should not have to endure the life she's giving them.

— Barbara Tyner, Citrus Heights

**A**fter reading the current article on the homeless, I still see that three out of four featured are homeless by choice.

The fourth person, unfortunately, is homeless due to circumstances beyond her control. What is within her control is the ability to not become pregnant. There are myriad services available to her to prevent pregnancies. I realize the current pregnancy began before she lost her job and home, but I just cannot understand why she is continuing to have children with no father permanently in

### LETTERS POLICY

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited and republished in any format. All letters submitted become the property of The Sacramento Bee. Visit [www.sacbee.com/voices](http://www.sacbee.com/voices) for more info.

**MAIL:** Letters, P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852  
**E-MAIL:** [opinion@sacbee.com](mailto:opinion@sacbee.com)  
**FAX:** (916) 321-1996

the picture. What kind of an example is she setting for her 15-year-old daughter?

Children are precious and should be given every opportunity to excel and thrive. Having a bunch of children with no father around is unfair to those children. They grow up in a life of poverty and need. I really cannot feel sorry for that mother. She can and should stop having more children. The losers in her story are her children.

— Pamela Niebauer, Placerville

**O**ur previous economic expansion hid equally unprecedented levels of personal bankruptcy and home foreclosure, making the primary causes of homelessness — job loss, family breakup, health problems or other unexpected catastrophes — too familiar to too many.

Recent press coverage proves that solutions to homelessness are less familiar. Who knew that no phone number for job applications is a greater impediment to employment than no bed or shower? Long-debunked myths about these populations and programs also constitute imposing barriers to effective action. We think those on the streets are homeless because they're drunk, but Stanford Medical School found that at least half the time, it's the other way around.

Similarly, neighborhood opposition to new programming remains stiff despite local examples such as our Quinn Cottages, where predictions of adverse community impacts never materialized.

Another obstacle is the myth of insufficient resources: With medical and police expenses the same as supportive housing, it costs taxpayers as much to ignore homelessness as to address it.

Most devastating is the misperception that homeless people are hopeless.

Daily, they are defying these obstacles to make the transition from the streets to self-sufficiency, thanks to our community's concerted efforts to help those helping themselves.

— Robert V. Tobin, Sacramento  
Executive Director, Sacramento Cottage Housing

**T**he article portrayed me as a gigolo who won't work. The fact is that I have reached a point in my life that I am free to do with my life as I want, and I have chosen to work full time as an activist for the homeless.

The story stated I hit the streets after breaking up with my girlfriend. I came to Sacramento to help my daughter with a drug problem. After living on the streets for three months and seeing the injustices the homeless people were suffering, I deliberately took a new — and I might add a real and meaningful — direction to my life.

The article implied that I won't work. The fact is I work. I am the president of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (for no money, I might add). Among the many things SHOC does is publish Sacramento's only street newspaper, Homeward.

The article also stated I won't move indoors. I won't move into a room because I would have to give up my van since my expenses would go up to the point that I couldn't afford a vehicle. In addition, Social Security would cut back my check by \$100, explaining that it is cheaper to live indoors than living in my van. I would become a prisoner to my apartment. This is only one example of how the system knocks you down when you try to get up.

— Clifford Crooks, Sacramento

### The right housing mix

**R**e "Low-income housing shift," Aug. 18: Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Regional Housing Needs Plan indicates that the greatest housing need in Sacramento is for above-moderate-income housing and a much lesser need for low-income housing.

This plan demonstrates what city residents have been saying for years: There is a disproportionate amount of low-income housing in city neighborhoods, particularly in the central city. How refreshing it is then that a government agency should implement progressive policies that are consistent with regional goals and that are responsive to the community.

It is absurd that the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency is being vilified for doing what the central city and the region wants and needs.

Only now do government agencies rightly recognize that healthy neighborhoods are characterized by housing for a variety of income levels, and that the best way to provide affordable housing is in mixed-income developments and mixed-income neighborhoods.

— Al Esquivel, Sacramento

### Dangerous developments

**R**e "Riverside project back for new try," Aug. 26: In the last year four breaks in the American River levee have been accidentally discovered; yet this city is poised to approve building a hotel and restaurant on the Sacramento River levee. These warnings must be taken seriously.

This project was stopped last year by the State Reclamation Board and opposed by the Army Corps of Engineers because of its intrusion upon the levee. It is being resubmitted because Gov. Gray Davis has appointed a new reclamation board, which the developer states is "friendlier" to his project. Since the developers, Robert Leach and Roger Dreyer, are heavily involved in Democratic fund-raising, you can guess his meaning.

Does it take a disaster before our city officials understand that under no circumstances should they allow any building on the levee? City officials are jeopardizing our safety for greed and political ambition.

The only way to stop this insanity is for residents throughout the city to contact their City Council member and let him/her know that the levees are off-limits to their developer friends.

— Tony Munso, Ginny Munso, Sacramento





# Housing crisis deepens

Advocates rally at the Capitol in support of a measure to build more affordable dwellings.

By Silvina Martínez  
BEE STAFF WRITER

More than 30,000 families are waiting for federal housing help in Sacramento, the rental vacancy rate remains below 3 percent and the average rent rose more than 15 percent in the last 18 months.

In addition, more than 2,000 units have been taken out of the affordable housing market, as long-held contracts for federally subsidized apartments expire and landlords opt out of the system to charge market rents.

"People are scrambling for housing now," said Rachel Iskow, executive director of the Sacramento Mutual Housing Association.

Homeless and housing advocates rallied Wednesday at the Capitol to support



legislation that would allow the construction of nearly 1.5 million low-income homes across the country in the next 10 years.

The National Housing Trust Fund, proposed in bills introduced in the Senate and the House earlier this year, would be used as a permanent source for the construction, rehabilitation and preservation of housing for low-income people — the money drawn from excess revenue generated by the Federal Housing Administration.

The legislation is imperative in Sacramento, Iskow said. "We have people

Aldo Vasti, top right, makes a protest sign on the north steps of the Capitol as friend Richard Ryan looks on. The Capitol rally Wednesday supported legislation that would allow the construction of nearly 1.5 million low-income homes nationwide in the next decade. Above, street performers from the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee depict family members being evicted from their home.

Sacramento Bee/José M. Osorio

► HOUSING, page B4

## Housing: Burton proposes bond

► CONTINUED FROM B1  
coming desperate for housing," she said, "because they have been evicted due to rent increases and they have been given 30 days to find a new place."

"And it's virtually impossible for low-income families to find a place in this tight market," Iskow said.

The stock of affordable housing is shrinking even more in downtown Sacramento, advocates said.

Although redevelopment agencies must spend 20 percent of their tax increment funds on affordable housing, advocates claim that those funds in downtown Sacramento are being invested in high-end projects which are inaccessible to low- or even moderate-income families.

"It's wrong what they are doing with our tax money," said John Marcotte, a 30-year-old free-lance writer who spoke to the homeless and activists sitting on the north steps of the Capitol.

Marcotte likes to live downtown but may soon have to move.

"My rent went up more than 20 percent in the last 18 months and I have no guarantee that he (the landlord) won't raise it again," he said. "I'm being priced out of Sacramento."

Figures show that California has 15 of the nation's 25 least-affordable housing communities.

Earlier this week, state Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, D-San Francisco, announced a \$2 billion bond proposal to dedicate to rental housing for low-income

households, farm workers and first-time homebuyers.

According to a study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, almost half of all rental households in the state pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent.

Tim Brown, director of Sacramento's Loaves & Fishes, said the housing crisis is for real.

"People are losing their homes every day," he said. Of those coming to Loaves & Fishes for help now, Brown said, between 30 percent and 40 percent are people with part-time or full-time jobs. Most have never been homeless. But they just can't find housing, he said.

□ □ □

The Bee's Silvina Martínez can be reached at (916) 321-1159 or [smartinez@sacbee.com](mailto:smartinez@sacbee.com).



# Capital bites

SNAR

Rally 24 MAY 01

## Day in the park

**Dregs on display:** There they were, out in Cesar Chavez Park, in the heart of Downtown Sacramento, in all their grubby glory, demanding to be seen, and heeded, and housed.

Sacramento's homeless population keeps out of sight as much as possible, in accordance with popular and political will. They congregate in the environs around Friendship Park on the seedier fringe of Sacramento, or in hideaway camps along the American River.

Those who venture into more proper and upscale parts of town are subject to arrest or harassment for no better reason than the populace doesn't want to look upon their dirty faces and be reminded that there are still desperately poor people living in the wealthiest country in the history of the world.

But with the support of their benefactors at **Loaves & Fishes**, the homeless occupied the central plaza last Thursday, defiantly demanding to be recognized as citizens with rights and needs.

Speeches and chants claiming the ranks of the homeless have been growing every year while the number of places for the very poor to lie their heads has been shrinking. Hundreds of homeless people ate their free lunches in the park, then banged on the doors of power, demanding help.

"We shouldn't have to beg. We shouldn't have to ask," declared **Chris Delany**, a founder of Loaves & Fishes, in a fiery oratory that could have been spoken by Eugene Debs or Mother Jones. "It should be the basic right that everyone has shelter."

Such a sentiment seems quaintly and naively compassionate in these days of cutthroat capitalism, an antiquated notion that members of a society have an obligation to one another, and particularly to the weakest and least capable citizens.

But who knows, 100 years from now, maybe the idea of letting profiteering corporations and individuals exploit the masses will seem like a strange old concept to which few can relate. We can only hope, and work to make it so.

Got a tip?  
Fax 810  
Capital bites at  
498-7920, call  
1234, ext. 3333,  
e-mail to [tb@newsreview.com](mailto:tb@newsreview.com)  
[newsreview.com](http://newsreview.com).

Friday, May 25, 2001 • The Sacramento Bee



Sacramento Bee/Chris P. Ochoa  
**Keith Henderson, 31, attends a homeless rally Thursday at Cesar E. Chavez Plaza in Sacramento. Henderson's family of four became homeless in February and are now living in a subsidized motel.**

## More housing urged at rally for homeless

By Jennifer K. Morita  
BEE STAFF WRITER

Tacos on Tuesdays, relaxing in her quiet room and the "clean smells" of Ptoe Sol and freshly baked chocolate chip cookies are things homeless 13-year-old Barbara Walston can only dream about.

"It'd be so nice to have our own place," said Walston, who detailed in an essay about what it would be like to live in a house instead of a cramped motel room.

"We could cook what we want to eat, we could have a dog and ask friends to spend the night."

Roughly 600 homeless men, women and children rallied Thursday in Cesar E. Chavez Plaza across from Sacramento City Hall, demanding more shelters and affordable housing.

Carrying signs that read, "Home is where the heart is - where is yours?" and "Build homes not jails," women staying at the Maryhouse shelter marched into the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors' office to drop off 50 letters.

Children from Mustard Seed School also delivered a hand-made scroll - filled with their wishes for permanent homes - to Mayor Heather Fargo's office.

up, and more people are being made homeless. Regionally, we were not providing sufficient shelters to meet the population demand before rent went up, and now we're even further behind."

Two months ago Sharon Ingram lost her apartment when her husband used his paycheck to buy drugs instead of paying rent. All the shelters were full, and when the 39-year-old mother of three ran out of money for a motel, she and her son ended up spending the night underneath a tree, in a bush they shared with several other women.

"It was the worst night of my life," said Ingram, who is eight months pregnant. "I was so scared. In the morning it started raining, and that's how I caught pneumonia."

Although Ingram eventually got a bed at St. John's Shelter, her time there ran out this week.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," Ingram said. "I'm just praying."

The Bee's Jennifer K. Morita can be reached at (916) 773-7383 or [jmorita@sacbee.com](mailto:jmorita@sacbee.com).



## YOUR VIEWS

7/11/01 Bee

### LETTERS POLICY

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited and republished in any format. All letters submitted become the property of The Sacramento Bee. Visit [www.sacbee.com/voices](http://www.sacbee.com/voices) for more info.

MAIL: Letters, P.O. Box 15779,

Sacramento, CA 95852

E-MAIL: [opewr@sacbee.com](mailto:opewr@sacbee.com)

FAX: (916) 321-1996

### Housing for homeless

**R**e "Paradise lost," editorial, June 23: The Bee did an excellent job of pointing out the seriousness of the homeless problem in Sacramento: individuals and families camping out illegally on the American River Parkway.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors could effectively address homelessness by setting aside facilities that are easily converted to transitional housing. Some of that housing exists at McClellan Air Force Base in the form of a hotel that is ready-made for many individuals and families committed to doing what it takes to become self-sufficient.

The board should re-examine this viable option as it comes with little cost and a whole lot of heart for our fellow human beings.

— Deborah Rose, Sacramento

Chairperson, Sacramento Cottage Housing

□ □ □

**O**f course you're going to find "illegal camps" in the American River Parkway. There are hundreds of people who have nowhere else to go. Sacramento refuses to acknowledge there is a homeless problem.

The fastest-growing segment of the homeless population is what was the middle class a few years ago. Where are these people to go? Sacramento has torn down more than 2,000 single occupancy rooms over the years without replacing any. Rents have skyrocketed. Companies are laying off people by the thousands.

Even the police officers I have interviewed agree that we need permanent camping areas. As it is right now, without adequate housing for the poor, the river is the best place for the homeless. They are out of sight unless you wander off the trail, where you will find them hiding in the shrubbery.

— Cliff Crooks, Sacramento

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

□ □ □

**R**e "County offers aid on housing," June 27: In determining the future uses of McClellan Air Force Base, federal law says there should be a balance between economic development activities and homeless assistance.

Is it "balance" when 99.7 percent of the available acreage at the base is dedicated to business interests and only 0.3 percent is available to fulfill the county's commitment to the homeless? Is it "balance" when the county makes a private offer to homeless advocates, only to withdraw it once it is accepted?

Those of us who are trying to solve the county's homeless crisis recognize the value of a business park at McClellan. We also recognize that we have a golden opportunity to strike a balance for base reuse that assists the hundreds of women and children who are being turned away at area shelters. The county should recognize this balance as well.

— Molly McGurk, Sacramento

Director of Operations, Sacramento Cottage Housing

## OUR VIEWS

# Housing squeeze

## Policy failure shows up on the church steps

**W**hat did Patricia Imel do to earn being pelted in midtown Sacramento the other day by teenagers armed with rotten fruit?

Was it that she works regularly at a medical answering service? Or is it her offense that she earns \$7 an hour? That's above the minimum wage but not enough to pay first and last month's rent and the deposit needed to get into an apartment. And so she sleeps on the front steps of St. Francis Church.

The teenagers who pelted her probably thought she got what she deserved: brutes and bigots always do. But thinking people will recognize that Imel and many others of the growing number of homeless are caught in larger forces not entirely within their control.

As always with homelessness, the causes are complex and hard to pin down. But it looks as if an increasingly tight housing market combined with a slowing economy have reignited homelessness in Sacramento.

In the last year, three downtown low-rent hotels have shut down with no replacement housing built for the tenants who were displaced. Meanwhile, rents downtown have soared.

But it's not just the vagaries of the downtown housing market that has forced Imel and her companions on the church steps into homelessness.

As the chart below demonstrates, the

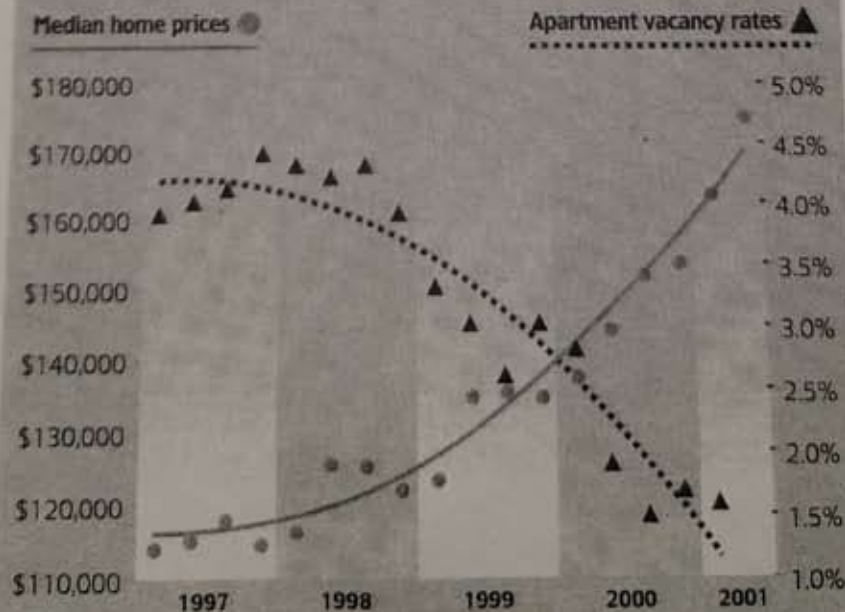
housing squeeze is region wide. The line arcing down is the apartment vacancy rate. The line arcing up is the median price for existing homes. Together they spell trouble. When those curves cross so dramatically, homelessness is the inevitable fallout for those at the bottom of the wage scale.

Keeping up with housing demand when the economy booms and so many families have been forced out of the Bay Area into this region by soaring prices for houses and apartment is hard. But the people sleeping on the church steps send a message to leaders across the region and in every community: Those fights that happen almost weekly about whether to build apartments, duplexes and fourplexes or whether to allow downzoning or upzoning or inclusionary zoning aren't just about abstract ideas.

They are about the lives of our neighbors who take care of children, clean homes, tend lawns, wash dishes at the corner restaurant and answer the phone for the doctor when the baby comes down with the croup in the middle of the night. Those decisions about whether to build housing for the Patricia Imels who earn \$7 an hour make the difference between a night in a bed and a night on the church steps wondering whether the toughs will be back with their misplaced scorn and rotten fruit.

### Apartment vacancy and median house prices

Vacancy Rates Reported for TYPE A, B, C Properties according to CB Richard Ellis



Source: Real Estate Analytics, Metrolist, CB Richard Ellis

## How About \$40,000 a Year?

Organizing for a living wage in Sacramento

By Preston Rudy

Working for a minimum wage, \$5.75 per hour, Dave Walker has not been able to afford a place to live in Sacramento. He does not have enough for the first and last months' rent, so in spite of working full time, he continues to live as a homeless man while he tries to build up enough cash to pay for a place to live. Rosalina Garcia works as a janitor and barely has enough to pay for herself and her children, and as a

leader of a unionization campaign she has been harassed by her employer.

Eight low-wage workers testified about the struggle to support families and make ends meet on poverty wages before a gathering of 330 Sacramentans on November 18 at a forum on poverty. This event was organized by a coalition of over 50 organizations that have come together to work toward economic justice in Sacramento. A panel of city leaders listened and committed themselves to support a living wage, including city councillors Lauren Hammond, Dave Jones, and Sandy Sheedy, as well as Senator Deborah Ortiz, Dean Don Brown of Trinity Cathedral, Reverend Wyatt, Faye Kennedy of the Sacramento Area Black Caucus, Hach Yasamura, and Ruth Holbrook of the Central Labor Council.

The testimony was supplemented by data showing that 47% of Sacramento residents are low income. An employee working full-time at minimum wage, \$5.75 per hour, earns a gross salary of \$11,960 per year. The federal poverty level for a family of three is \$13,650. The basic message of the Living Wage movement is that working at a full time job should raise people out of poverty. One of the estimates that was presented at this meeting indicated that a Sacramento family with two working parents and two children would have to have two jobs, each paying \$9.35 an hour, to pay for monthly bills. This would amount to \$38,896 per year.

*"47% of Sacramento residents are low income."*

Recently, federal Living Wage legislation has been introduced by Representative Luis Gutierrez, and now has 93 co-sponsors in the House. The bill is supported by a community-labor coalition called the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support. This bill affects all federal contracts over \$10,000, and requires employees working on these contracts to be paid enough to reach the federal poverty level for a family of four—currently \$8.20 an hour. This is an important step to say that the federal government should not support low-wage companies and to strengthen the national movement for living wages everywhere.

The organizing for a Living Wage in Sacramento needs broad support from many groups. Call Jessica or Brian at ACORN at 455-1795 if you have questions or want to help organize an event.

### State Health Official to Speak in February

Grantland Johnson, the first African-American Secretary of California's Health and Human Services Agency, will speak at the Unitarian Universalist Society Forum on Sunday, February 11, at 9:30am. Before his appointment by Gov. Gray Davis, Johnson headed Region IX of the US HHS, under Donna Shalala. He has also served as a Sacramento City Councilman and County Supervisor, and is known as a champion for children, the elderly, and the poor. Open to the public, the Forum topic is "Tackling Barriers to Health Care in California."

### Health Nuts & Vegetarians

Why pay for your fellow American's bad diet, which makes disability insurance cost so much?

Have you been looking for

#### Accident-Only Disability cover

Protect savings and the roof over your head from loss of income due to short-term disability from an accident with affordable "Paycheck Insurance"

Lauren Ayers CA Ins. License # OC939  
(916) 448-4848 7 am to 10 pm

BPM Jan - Feb - 2001



## SHOC Interview

1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 26

bought in Kashmir; he's above everything. He can drag the police over the coals and that's exactly what he did.

NS: So he was brought in because the community found that there was nowhere to go with their complaints because Internal Affairs would not investigate. What did Cassano do with your complaint from the homeless community?

Lillian Will, he called a meeting with himself there and members of SHOC and the police department. The first confrontation began and, of course, the police denied a great deal of this. Their position was, "We didn't do it. We're innocent." Then, SHOC would bring forward the complaints.

Blake Smith was a homeless man who became involved in this. He later became the president of SHOC, but at that time, he was camped out on the river with his friend. One day he went to his camp after eating lunch at Louisa and Fishes, and there were two policemen hiding behind the trees with guns drawn. The police came out from behind the trees and said, "Get out of here now," or something to that effect. They ran, because the police had their guns drawn.

Now Blake knew that was totally against the law, so he wrote out that complaint and we submitted it to Casimere, and Casimere was really able to go to bat with that. It was one of the outstanding complaints he had to work with.

Blake Smith was an angry over what had happened that he was willing to back up that complaint all the way. We had several meetings with the police after that, and we had meetings with Tim Clinkenbeard, the public defender. The outcome of all this was that Blake needed witnesses because the police, of course, were denying it. We went and found one of the witnesses and she wrote up a complaint. So we did back it up, but as far as I know, neither of the officers involved were punished in any way, and nothing was done. Blake Smith has since left Sacramento.

I just want to say Casimierz was such a gentleman about this whole thing. He actually came to Friendship Park [the park for homeless people at the Leaves and Fishes complex] and he said that he wanted to meet everybody. I'll never forget that day. This man who looks like a judge, all dressed up, very educated; he sat right down and homeless people came up complaining about what had happened to them, and he listened to them all. I thought it was really wonderful because he didn't think of himself as better than us.

SS: What role did the public defender, Clinkenbeard, play?

**Lillian:** Clinkenbeard had witnessed last summer, when he came out with one of the people he was representing, and he saw helicopters, two cars, a jeep, and various policemen chasing the homeless down the river. He couldn't believe what a waste of taxpayers' money that was. When he saw this, he comprehended what was involved and he has since become a defender of the homeless, and he has a local clinic he runs at Loxley and Hixson.

He represents homeless people in front of the judge with his lawyers. All the homeless have to do is to show up and he drives them there and he brings them back. He worked out an arrangement with the judge. A typical sentence for misdeemeanors is four hours of cleaning up at Louver and Fishes. Clinkenbeard has been a real help and a tremendous asset for us.

**SS:** What was the ultimate outcome of your work exposing police misconduct?

**Lillian:** After we made the complaints and had several meetings with the police — even though, as far as I know, the policemen themselves were not punished — Casimere was pleased because he was



SHOC members at the memorial wall created by Leaves and Fishes to commemorate people who died in Sacramento while homeless. Seated from left to right: Paula Tomazzi, Clifford Crooks, Lillian Hanson, Mikael O'Toole. Lydia Garre photo.

"Sacramento wants to be a world-class city. They think the idea of a world-class city is to be a wealthy city with no homeless people in it."

—Clifford Crooks, SHOC

able to convince the police that something was wrong. And they did back down! They did back down without further ado; they stopped making the raids at two or three in the morning, which is what we were aiming for. They no longer do that.

They were ID-ing homeless people and they're still doing that and even taking IDs away. That continues; they are harassing the homeless now. But we were able to stop the merciless practice of waking up the campers in the middle of the night so they couldn't sleep. That was so inhumane. That stopped.

**SS:** Paula and Clifford, you've worked with the homeless community a long time. How would you describe the change in police treatment of homeless people from last winter to this winter as a result of your campaign to expose police abuse?

**Clifford:** They're not nearly as brutal this year. They're not drawing their guns. They keep their guns in their holsters now. They still give out camping tickets and we're advising everybody to plead not guilty and demand a jury trial, and then they dismiss the charge.

**Paula:** I got a report from a lady who's been out here for years and years and years, and she said that this year it's remarkable that the police don't come out at night. And if they do, they're mainly targeting places where people might not even be homeless and they're coming together to buy drugs, and they're targeting those places over and over again. But they're not really harassing people in encampments. But this lady that told me this got a ticket the other day, so... [laughs] It shows that it still goes on. People on sheriff's work crews are still confiscating the property of homeless people.

SS: I remember three or four years ago Loxes and Fisher was sued by city officials to stop nearly all their services because they didn't want homeless people in the downtown. Are there larger problems of prejudice against homeless people in Sacramento, beyond police mistreatment?

**Paula:** The Downtown Partnership [a coalition of businesses] and a lot of people in City Hall are interested in growth and bringing new businesses in. So the businesses downtown want to get rid of handicapped.



Paula Lomazzi staffs the SHOC office, surrounded by a profusion of protest signs.

Clifford: They actually put a panhandling meter out there. Instead of giving to a panhandler, you put your money in a meter.

SS: *For real? An anti-paahhandling parking meter?*

**Paula:** It's really funny. It's a red parking meter and the sign says that the proceeds will benefit the Food Bank and the Downtown Partnership! (Laughs uproariously.) So like they're out there panhandling themselves!

Lillian: And some of the young people who work as Guides for the Downtown Partnership are taking the money for themselves.

**SS:** So the Downtown Partnership is trying to reduce panhandling by teaching people not to give. What do you think of that approach?

**Clifford:** That's crazy. Everybody needs money for food, a pack of cigarettes, a cup of coffee, or even a beer. I don't agree with aggressive pushhandling. But they're just trying to take that little bit of income away from people who need it.

SS: What is the role of the so-called Guides?

Lillian: They've hired these youth and call them Downtown Guides. We call them the "Bumblebees" because they wear yellow and black.

SS: The businessmen hired them to be like mercenary security guards?

**Clifford:** Yes. With no training. They have no license, no permit. They're above the law. We have called about every authority to get them to stop abusing the homeless, and nobody can touch them. Finally, Consumer Affairs was able to step in and advise them to wear badges.

SS: You can't go to a police review board if they commit abuses, because they're a private security force?

Lillian: But they're called "the eyes of the police."

Clifford: I caught them myself bloody-

you a duck, beating him up. He was bloody and they were chasing him down the street; he kept trying to get away from them and they just kept following him and they called the police and kept an eye on him until the police got there. Finally an ambulance came and took the man away. That's when I took the sergeant and asked him their names, and he said: "We don't have to give you our names. They've brought camping gear that they've confiscated up to our office and gave us this gear and stuff they've taken from the homeless in the downtown area."

**Lillian:** They steal people's camping gear. There have been deaths downtown on account of the Bumblebees taking away their sleeping bags and gear. I have a friend named Randy who parkhurses in front of the Catholic Church. He would just stand there and the parishioners would say, "Here's a dollar." They've been doing this regularly for years. The Bumblebees would get right in front of the dollar and say, "Don't give him any money." The parishioner would have to put his arms behind the Bumblebee and give it to Randy. They go up to Randy and insult him and call him every name, hoping that he'll have a fight with them. They like to insult him and jeer at him and laugh at him, and they follow him around town periodically. They provoke him. He often takes refuge inside the State Capitol.



# How Sacramento Homeless Activists Fought Back Against Police Abuse

## The Street Spirit Interview with SHOC

by Terry Messman

**S**itting in the crowded, bustling offices of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), Clifford Crooks gestures to James Gorman, an articulate homeless man working feverishly on the phones to try to convince churches in Sacramento to open their doors to street people during this rainy winter. Gorman has a vision of convincing churches all over California to wake up and realize that the bedrock principles of their faith compel them to become more actively involved in working for justice and offering sanctuary for the homeless poor.

Crooks watches Gorman working the phone lines in his one-man crusade, and says with satisfaction, "This is how SHOC works. When a person gets really ticked off, they have an office to come and fight... You find that an angry man gets a lot done."

Fueled by that kind of dedication and outrage, the homeless organizers of SHOC have beaten all the odds and endured in their stubborn and tenacious defense of homeless people in our state capital for more than a decade now. Since 1987, SHOC activists have somehow kept up a remarkably creative drumbeat of protests and pressure campaigns in support of the human rights of the poor.

SHOC has persevered in its grassroots organizing for justice despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles and the limitations of a shoestring budget. This bare-bones, impoverished group made up of equally impoverished members somehow has found the heart to take on the powers that be in a very unequal struggle. For SHOC's efforts to defend the defenseless are opposed by powerful forces: by a police force notorious for unleashing aggressive raids to tear apart homeless camps; by merchants who launch heartless campaigns to drive away the poor; and by a City Council which committed one of the most shocking acts of officially sanctioned bigotry in recent history by voting to sue Loaves and Fishes, one of the pre-eminent service providers in the state, in an abortive attempt to push the poor out of downtown Sacramento.

One of the reasons for SHOC's survival in this climate of intolerance is surely their feeding that poor people's lives hang in the balance. SHOC is now involved in an effort to end police brutality against homeless campers. Lillian Hanson believes that a systematic police effort last winter to demolish encampments, slash tents, and confiscate the blankets of homeless campers directly threatened the lives of her friends. "They were being robbed of their sleep and their life was being taken from them literally," she said.

Mikeal O'Toole, one of SHOC's founders, took part in past efforts to block bulldozers that roared up to demolish a homeless encampment. He quietly demonstrates the life-and-death stakes involved in this struggle by pointing to one of nearly 200 names inscribed in marble on a memorial built by Loaves and Fishes to honor homeless people who died on the streets of Sacramento. O'Toole points to the name of Gene Kulik, a founder of SHOC, who was his friend and a dynamic reason for SHOC's very existence. "Following a period of depression, Kulik died while he was still homeless. Now all that is left is a name etched on a marble wall."

**Street Spirit:** For the last several years, I've heard story after story from friends in Sacramento of police mistreatment of homeless people, especially raids on encampments by motorized cops they call "Bronco Biliys." What has the situation been like in your city this past year?

**Lillian Hanson:** I remember very clearly how last winter I came down to Loaves and Fishes and my homeless friends were not allowed to sleep in Sacramento. The police were raiding their camps consistently, every night or every other night, at two or three in the morning. Deliberately and with forethought, they would take the campers down to jail, and sometimes just release them, sometimes hold them in jail. But the point is the campers could not sleep anymore. They were robbed of their ability to sleep.

**SS:** Where were the camps located that were being raided by the police — in the downtown, sprinkled around the city, or mostly on the American River?

**Lillian:** The police were concentrating on the river camps. Definitely up and down the river.

**SS:** Was this random harassment or a deliberate effort to systematically tear down homeless encampments?

**Lillian:** It was a deliberate move on the part of the police. It was planned with forethought. The police during the day were scouting to find where the camps were. Then at night, they would wait till two or three in the morning and consistently go after the same camps and roust the campers.

The NSA security people were also making the rounds of the camps and waking the campers up — telling the campers that they were sleeping on ground that belonged to businesses and calling the police. Then the police would come and

take them to jail and give them tickets and citations. Later on, we found out that the NSA was actually raiding camps on property that was not business property; they had no business being there.

**SS:** What is NSA?

**Clifford Crooks:** It's their security in the downtown area — NSA Security.

**Paula Lomazzi:** They're hired by the Business Improvement District in this area of Sacramento. They hired their own private security.

**Lillian:** Later on, SHOC was able to find out that where they were raiding the camps, they had no business being there because it was public property. It did not belong to the businesses, but they were doing that anyway, overstepping their boundaries.

**SS:** Did they arrest homeless people themselves or call the police?

**Clifford:** They would call the police and get the police to do it. But they did other things themselves, too. For instance, one of the guys here, they gave him three days to clean up his camp. On the last day, when he had his stuff sorted out and his sleeping bag and everything ready to move, the same guards that told him he had three days, took it and threw all his stuff in a pond.

What we did was Debbie and I went up and confronted each of the security guards, and we told them they were being watched now, and anything they do is going to be reported and documented. And it stopped right then.

**SS:** Debbie was a member of SHOC?

**Lillian:** She was a friend of ours who died of cancer last year. She was a homeless person who camped out along the river.



Lillian Hanson photo

Mikeal O'Toole points to the name of SHOC co-founder Gene Kulik, one of many homeless people whose lives and deaths are remembered on this memorial wall.

**"You try going without sleep for one month and see how you feel. They looked like ghosts. They were being robbed of their sleep and their life was being taken from them literally. After awhile you can't focus and you can't think..."**

— SHOC member Lillian Hanson

**SS:** That's how you confronted the private security force. What about the police?

**Clifford:** As far as the police go, we had to do a lot of complaint forms about how people were being harassed in encampments by the police, and then it was taken before Don Casimere's office.

**Paula:** Casimere directs the Office of Police Accountability.

**Clifford:** Casimere was brought in by the work of the NAACP. They had like 1,500 complaints against the Sacramento police brought into Internal Affairs, and only one was investigated in a year's time.

**SS:** So the NAACP spearheaded the effort to get Casimere appointed to investigate all the complaints of police abuse?

**Lillian:** Yes, the NAACP negotiated with the city for about four years and they take credit for Casimere being hired, and the Mexican organizations also took credit. The police brutality to the Black community and the Mexican-American community was really quite horrible and they needed to do something to set it back.

This is aside from the police brutality to our homeless population. When we entered the picture, Don Casimere just happened to be appointed there recently and we were able to work with him.

**SS:** What happened with the complaint forms SHOC collected from homeless people harassed by the police?

**Lillian:** Casimere stated to us that the complaint forms that SHOC gave him were to his advantage and something he could really use. I remember many a night last winter coming down to Loaves and Fishes in the rain collecting these complaint forms. Clifford did it, Paula did it, we all did it.

My friends, the campers, they had long, dreary faces then. They were worn out, they were tired, they could hardly walk, there were no smiles, and it was raining hard. It was really quite ghastly, the sleep deprivation. Their sleep had been taken from them. You try going without sleep for one month and see how you feel. They looked like ghosts. They were being robbed of their sleep and their

life was being taken from them, literally. After awhile you can't focus and you can't think and you can't get a job.

Some of the ones I had spoken to had gotten jobs and saved money and they had their gear to go to work; but they were unable to do the jobs because the police would come in and raid their camps with all their gear. So they couldn't show up at work. The police were constantly taking every blanket they had, and they couldn't sleep at night.

**SS:** What were the police excuses for confiscating blankets in the middle of winter — illegal camping?

**Clifford:** Yeah, they'd use the camping laws.

**Lillian:** The camping laws gave them the right to steal people's blankets. There was a terrible, horrendous lack of blankets last year — people were freezing. That's when SHOC stepped in. We collected the police reports. Clifford created our complaint forms.

**SS:** What kinds of complaints did you document?

**Clifford:** Police abuse, and things like cutting their camping gear up. As a matter of fact, we have a sleeping bag right there with a complaint form on it that has been all sliced up. Police would cut up tents, sleeping bags, everything. They would either slash them up and leave them there or they would take them with them. Like underneath the overpass over here, people would camp under that. On a rainy night, at about two in the morning, the police came in and confiscated all their gear, forced them out from underneath the overpass out into the rain, and left them defenseless to the elements.

This was all going on until we took our complaint forms to Casimere's office. Then he called Internal Affairs and he drug them over the coals for all this abuse.

According to the NAACP, there were 1,500 complaint forms turned in from all over the city from citizens, and Internal Affairs only investigated one or two of them out of all those. That's why they

See SHOC Interview page five



## SHOC Interview

from page five

**SS:** What has SHOC done to try to make the Guides more accountable?

**Clifford:** We presented them with a whole pile of complaint forms. We went to Casimere's office again on that one. He made them tow the line. Then Consumer Affairs came in and told them they would have to wear badges, and they said they would comply. Scott Frates is the one that initiated this work. This is how SHOC works. When a person gets really ticked off, they have an office to come and fight. Like James Gorman working on the churches. This is what SHOC does. You find that an angry man gets a lot done.

What Scott did is make Consumer Affairs tell the Downtown Guides to wear badges. Well, they didn't comply. Six months later, they still hadn't complied so I called Consumer Affairs again and got them on it again. So now they say they're wearing badges, but I went and checked with them downtown and they're wearing jackets and they said, "The badges are underneath our clothes." (Laughs.)

**SS:** So now they're wearing badges but you can't see them.

**Clifford:** Right (laughs). So we went back to Consumer Affairs again, and that's where we stand right now.

**SS:** Why is it so important that they wear badges?

**Lillian:** So they can be identified when they beat up people.

**Clifford:** Absolutely. They got no accountability. It's like a Gestapo squad.

Legally, it's a threat to our American way of life. If this happens over here, it can happen in every other city, and now you've got a police force that can come in without any accountability and harass you and shoot you if they want to, even. They have to be identified. Their original task is to be guides to direct tourists and people around the city. That's all they're supposed to do. They're not supposed to be a security force. They're not trained in that in any way, but that's what they're doing.

**Lillian:** They have no training. They wake up the sleeping homeless — that's when we first noticed them. If you were in the park asleep they would wake you up and say you can't sleep. They would go for the homeless and report open container violations. They would go up to senior citizens that had been shopping downtown and were sitting there with a paper bag with a Coke in it. And the Bumblebees would tell senior citizens that they couldn't sit there on the bench, and they'd make everyone move; or they would go to senior citizens and demand to see what is in the paper bag or they would ask to open your backpack to see if there's a beer in there. And the older citizens give in to that because they're intimidated. And they couldn't sit down and rest.

**SS:** How did the Downtown Guides evolve from helping tourists to targeting homeless people?

**Paula:** I think the Guides' main purpose may have been to get the atmosphere to be the way most of the businesses and city officials want. I think one of their main purposes was to cut down on the panhandling. It's gone back for years and years to the early '90s. They've had dif-

ferent campaigns to get rid of homeless people downtown, like they offered little business cards that would have a list of all the services. They would give them out to all the customers and tell them to give the cards to panhandlers instead of money.

**SS:** So the Guides are the latest and maybe the most aggressive effort to make homeless people feel uncomfortable downtown and make it safe for business to make its money.

**Paula:** Yeah. But I think they're under the wrong impression that there's any threat because of the homeless, because they're the main customers downtown. They're the only people that live downtown, because there's a lot of state offices and people come here to go to work and then they go off out of the central city. The people downtown that they're trying to get rid of are the people that are their actual customers and have lived there for years.

**Clifford:** Sacramento wants to be a world-class city. They think the idea of a world-class city is to be a wealthy city with no homeless people in it. They're closing down the SRO hotels right and left. As a matter of fact, the City is out of compliance. There was a law that said for every SRO they closed down, they had to build a new one to replace it, and the City is out of compliance with that. They haven't built one and they're over 2000 units behind now. We still want to sue the City over that and make them come into compliance with that law.

Now Sacramento has considered that low income is placed at \$40,000 and low-low income is placed at \$26,000; so that's what the rents are being based on around here. So anybody making less than

\$26,000 won't be able to afford to live with these rents.

**SS:** So even if they do make affordable, "low-income" housing, it's targeted at people making \$40,000 a year, or at \$26,000 even for extremely low-income people.

**Clifford:** Yeah, that's what the housing is targeted at. Low-low income is considered \$26,000. To us, that's a lot of money.

**SS:** How much does somebody on General Assistance get in Sacramento?

**Clifford:** Only \$210 a month. And folks on Social Security get about \$780 a month.

**Lillian:** The people on GA cannot pay for rent anywhere.

**Paula:** We're also having a lot of problems, probably like everyone else, with HUD housing. The contracts are running out and they're going to market rate. We're losing a lot of them.

**Clifford:** For Section 8 they had about 8,000 applicants for 800 units. There are so many people who have a certificate, but they just can't get a place because there are none.

**SS:** Are there enough shelter beds for homeless people in Sacramento?

**Clifford:** There's only about 250 shelter beds, for 1,500 to 5,000 homeless people in the county. And the winter overflow shelter is run by the City in trailers, but you can only stay there for two weeks. And they keep the place full all winter long. It closes on March 31st.

For more information, write: SHOC at 1351 North C Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: (916) 442-2156. E-mail: Homeward2@yahoo.com



# 15 minutes

by Amy Finnello

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

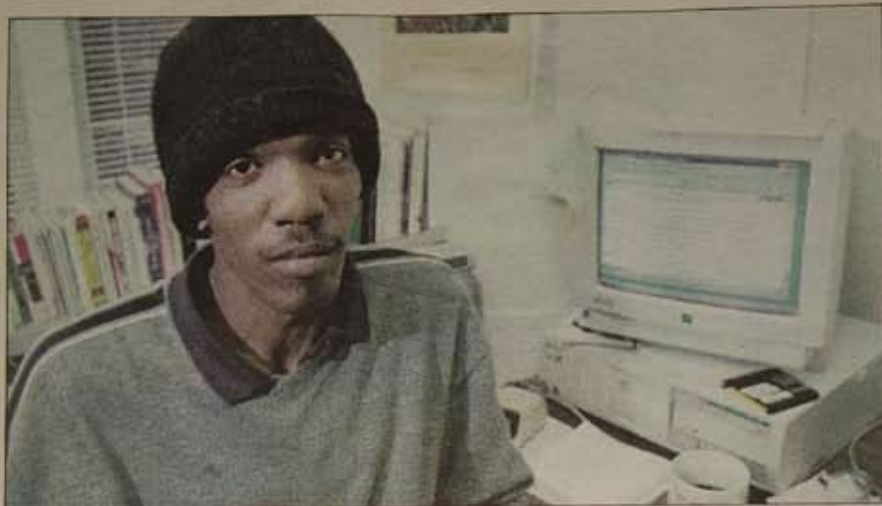


PHOTO BY JEFF BLUM

## Homeward bound

Let's face it. As far as the popular media goes, the homeless citizens of Sacramento don't get much play, save for the obligatory stories around the holidays and during the winter months when area shelters are overflowing.

**Homeward**, however, focuses its efforts on this population year-round. Funded by grants and sponsored by the nonprofit Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, better known as SHOC, **Homeward** rolled out its first issue in 1997. Since then, the bimonthly newspaper has distributed 3,500 copies of each issue to city officials, area libraries, Loaves and Fishes, the Salvation Army and area coffee houses, "creating a voice" for a largely silent population. Co-editor and SHOC treasurer Paula Lomazzi says her paper seeks to build a connection between the homeless and non-homeless communities to, in her words, eliminate the "us versus them" mentality.

It's a vision that principal writer Douglas Anderson says he can get behind. The 39-year-old Anderson has lived in Sacramento the last 35 years—19 of which were spent working as a certified nurses assistant in area hospitals and senior care facilities. But the death of his mother six years ago, he says, left him struggling emotionally, leading to a downward spiral that resulted in the loss of his job and his home eight months ago.

Anderson says he is now working his way back and claims part of that journey is trying to put a human face on the homeless population, of which he is now a member, by writing for **Homeward**.

**If you had to name the biggest misperception about the homeless by the general public, what would it be?**

That every person who is homeless nowadays is there because of drugs and alcohol

and that they've given up on society. I think that's the biggest misperception. Yes, there are those who are addicted—I'd say 35 percent to 40 percent—but there are just as many who are out here because of non-drug and alcohol related circumstances. Many homeless people, like me, have college educations. They lost their job and couldn't afford the rent, whatever. I think that there are people who do use drugs and alcohol, for coping reasons, but that's not the reason they're there.

**What purpose does this paper serve?**

It provides information to the general public about what [situations] can cause homelessness. It lets the public know that homeless people do have morals, they do have education. The paper shows that homeless people do know how to keep in touch with society [and] that just because we're homeless, it doesn't mean we're stupid. It doesn't mean we don't have feelings; it doesn't mean we're not human.

**In a recent issue, you basically called for the homeless community to clean up its act, in terms of taking responsibility for some of the perceptions about them, specifically in regard to the trash and human waste that is left in many of the camps. What prompted that piece and what kind of response have you received?**

I was looking at the fact that law enforcement is on our backs a lot of the time because many of our camps are junky. So what I tried to do is get homeless people to look at this—look at the way a lot of people keep their camps and ask themselves, "Are their complaints valid?" So I tried to put the homeless in society's shoes. I got a few positive responses and we've had more people coming in and volunteering for our American River clean-up [project] and others coming

in with some good ideas about how to [remedy] the situation.

**What's your biggest gripe about the popular media?**

I think the media should interview more homeless people about how individuals got there. Contrary to popular opinion, we have more families coming onto the streets now and the media doesn't seem to be aware of just how large the percentage is of families out here. I think that kind of reporting could change the general public's opinion. I also think if the media took the time to find out where these families are and took the time to show that homeless people used to be doctors, teachers, housewives, veterans, whatever, that would help people see us differently.

**You've said that you'd like the city's anti-camping ordinance removed. How can **Homeward** help facilitate a dialogue between city officials and the homeless on this issue?**

As it stands right now, law enforcement and the political system are saying, "You guys are a menace." So if I can get the homeless society to say "No, we're not a menace" and prove it, then the political system might look at it and say, "OK, now that you've cleaned up your act, maybe we can talk. We can negotiate." It's going to be a long battle and one that won't be accomplished overnight. Even though we're homeless, it doesn't mean we're the bottom of the barrel—so we shouldn't give society a reason to label us as such. On the other hand, society needs to stop viewing [us] as a menace and start viewing us as people with potential. That's what I'd like Mayor [Heather] Fargo to see.

**For information on submitting articles to **Homeward** or to subscribe, call (916) 442-2156.**



#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lois Wright, President  
SMUD

Bjorn Omgren, Vice President  
ECORP Consulting Inc.

Vanessa Nishikawa, Secretary  
Montgomery-Watson

Robert Fox, Treasurer  
S. J. Gallina & Company

Lee Berrington, Past President  
Pacific Bell

Amanda Carson Banks Ph.D.  
CNU Sacramento

Mike Berger  
Farrans Brinkerhoff  
Construction Services, Inc.

Christi Black, Emeritus  
Deen and Black Public  
Relations

Patricia Cox  
Elk Grove Parks and  
Recreation

Ken Davis  
Wildlife History Foundation

Albert Dreyfuss, Emeritus  
Dreyfuss and Blackford

Marge Hamby-Courney  
Bank of America

Dave Hill  
American River Raft Rentals

Shirley Johnson  
Aerojet (retired)

Jim Jones  
Aerojet

Jim Mac Innis  
River City Small Business  
Chamber

Ken Miller  
American River College

John O'Farrell  
Sacramento County  
Community Development

Brian Platt  
Attorney at Law

Kelley Shelton  
Capital Beverage Company

Ron Suter  
Sacramento County  
Regional Parks

Scott Wilson  
Granite Construction  
Real Estate Group

August 22, 2001

Dear Volunteer Steward:

The Parkway Foundation is working to make your Parkway Stewardship experience more rewarding. We have convened a committee of Adopt-the-Parkway Volunteer Stewards, County Parks staff and Parkway Foundation staff, to help develop ideas, procedures, work projects, and training sessions designed to improve the program.

The goal of the Parkway Foundation and the Adopt-the-Parkway program is to provide a value added service to the community and the Parks Department by having Volunteer Stewards accept additional responsibility for their adopted mile. The Parkway Foundation is working to develop and assist with planning events that include pruning, trail maintenance, graffiti removal and restoration projects within adopted miles.

Adopt Steward Ken Miller participated in a pilot project involving volunteer crews in work projects along his adopted mile. Ken reported the Demonstration Mile Project was a success, proving that if we have Adopt Stewards who are willing to work with Volunteer Work Crews, quite a bit can be accomplished within adopted miles. As a result of the finding, the Parkway Foundation will work to find more Adopt Stewards willing to take on Volunteer Work Crews to accomplish projects within their miles.

The Steward Committee has scheduled two orientation sessions for Saturday October 20 and October 27. We ask that you plan to attend one of the orientation sessions.

**What:** Adopt Steward Orientation

**When:** Saturday October 20, 2001

Or

Saturday October 27, 2001

**Time:** 9:00 am to 11:00 am

**Where:** Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks  
3711 Branch Center Road

Orientation will cover Steward responsibilities, reporting forms, procedures and guidelines, a report on the success of the Demonstration Mile Project and a general Question and Answer session. We will provide more information regarding orientation as we get closer to the date. Mark your calendars, plan to attend and bring suggestions for improvements, enhancements, and volunteer work projects that you believe can be completed within your mile.

Best regards,

Richard Martin  
Co-Executive Director

P.O. Box 188437  
Sacramento, CA 95818  
tel: 916.456.7423  
fax: 916.455.4632  
email arparkway@hotmail.com

P.S. There are just a few more weeks until the Great American River Clean Up. Once again we need your experience and participation. Please recruit as many volunteers within your group to pitch in and clean your individual mile.

### 3. WHAT WERE THE PROJECTS GOALS FOR THE PAST QUARTER?

- a. Getting an adopt-a-mile sign along the American River bike trail.
- b. Increasing participation in the river cleanup.
- c. More effort towards Homeward.
- d. Concentrating on our outreach to Neighborhood Associations.
- e. Establishing a place for the Homeless Artisans to work and sell their work.
- f. Procuring housing situation for staff and others.
- g. Renew contacts with City Hall, County Board of Supervisors and other civic contacts.
- h. Expand use of internet to help people gain employment.
- i. Upgrade and procure computer equipment.
- j. Connect with Project H.O.P.E..
- k. Attend NASNA (North American Street Newspaper Association) Conference.
- l. Follow-up on Julie Padilla's camping land donation.
- m. End oppression for the homeless and poor. Towards accomplishing that goal, we wished to work more closely with the California Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (CHCROP). We, also wished to help out with the problem that homeless people were having with the Downtown Guides.
- n. Get more say in how our community is run



#### 4. LIST THE ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS.

a. We filled out an application with the American River Parkway Foundation to become Adopt the Parkway volunteer land stewards, agreeing to be involved in four annual cleanups and to participate in the Foundation's annual cleanup event. We made many phone calls to the Foundation for confirmation and for further information to help us perform our obligations more effectively. We corresponded with Richard Martin with requests for tools, updates on progress, and information obtained concerning the Parkway. We filled out waiver forms to eliminate their financial responsibility in the event of injuries. We participated in their annual Great American River Cleanup. We sent a representative to an orientation meeting and received further instructions, waiver forms, and instructions on being a backup site coordinator for the cleanup event. We made and displayed a poster to solicit volunteers for the event. We made a small copy of the poster and made copies, that were distributed as flyers. Directions to the site check-in location were given. Ten people participated in the event that were confirmed from SHOC and SHOC contacts, though many more most likely participated because of our advertising campaign. Many others from the community at large, participated in our area. Transportation was arranged for participants to attend the afternoon festival. T-shirts were picked up at the event and later distributed to the participants who didn't attend the festival.

b. We have made contact with various organizations who are involved with court ordered community service. We were thinking about allowing people who had camping tickets and other misdemeanors, the opportunity to work off their tickets by participating in our river cleanup project.

We have arranged to have garbage bags from the Sacramento Co. Park Rangers and have made them readily available to campers wishing to clean their areas. We invited many in the homeless community to participate in the Great American River Cleanup and the Riverfest and announced our commitment to the mile we adopted. We have cleaned the river enthusiastically, with a hopeful outcome of leading by doing.

c. Paula Lomazzi attended the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) conference in Edmonton, Alberta. She made contacts and resources from throughout North America. It was a great educational experience offering incites on improving Homeward and gaining a network of sources for story sharing.

We got a new computer and arranged the office to accommodate easy work space for writers. Before our last issue came out, many people were asked to write a story for Homeward. Lee Parks, who previously left us, was encouraged to come back to help on the layout and editing of the paper, because Paula Lomazzi was called away from the work by a personal situation.

d. South Laguna Creek Neighborhood Association consulted us and we responded. Other than that, the various neighborhood associations have not been contacted for further presentation.

e. Cliff Crooks, has been concentrating more on civil right issues instead of the Homeless Artisans project. He has worked some on converting his bus that will eventually help facilitate his Homeless Artisan's project.

f. We have changed our original goal of getting housing for staff. We decided staff would be able to get housing if they received wages for the work they do. We have had meetings and discussed how we would go about getting funding for staff to get wages and what amount we would ask for. We have done research at the Foundation Center at the library and now have a printout of funding sources. We have sought donations on the internet.

J. Parsons has compiled the list of funding sources for his project, which deals with finding funding and resources for affordable housing opportunities through rehabilitating older structures and alternate building methods (strawbale housing). He is researching strawbale housing construction, material costs, and other aspects of the field so that he may eventually make an impact on the affordable housing crisis through alternate building techniques. Norm was researching affordable housing through rehab for awhile.

g. We have attended a City Council meeting regarding Sacramento's Housing Element to show our interest in including affordable housing requirements in the city's growth plan. J. Parson has attended and spoke at many subsequent City Council meetings. Though not "Civic" we have made contact with many homeless and poverty advocates and community members.

h. We have received a new computer and have set up a station. We are trying to figure out how to connect it to the internet. It has a modem but something's not working right. We have decided to get another phone line so we can access the internet and receive phone calls at the same time. Our Homeward2@yahoo.com email address is on a job announcement mailing list.

i. We have compiled a wish list and cost estimates of computer equipment and have agreed on our priorities. We have decided to seek in-kind donations or funding.

j. We have received H.O.P.E project's business cards and flyers. We made contact with one of their associates, David Sims from the Return to Residency Program, and have developed a relationship with him. He works in conjunction with Project H.O.P.E. at times.



k. Paula Lomazzi sent out application and registration fees to attend the NASNA conference, got her California picture ID and sent for a copy of her birth certificate (required to get through customs), gathered and packed pertinent Homeward and SHOC literature for sharing with other participants. She traveled by plane to Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA. She attended opening event and introduced herself to many representatives from North American street newspapers. Attended a get-together at a pub after event for networking. Friday, she attended welcome presentation and workshops concerned with newspaper production and activist work. Saturday, other workshops, presentations and business meeting were attended. Sunday, she participated in NASNA decision making, helping decide coming year's goals and voting on officers. Took extensive notes on all workshops, presentations, discussions and inspirations. Collected street newspapers and other literature from throughout North America to take back to Sacramento. Had long conversations with many colleagues and street vendors. Got addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. Joined an on-line street writers workshop. Expressed interest in joining Homeless People's Network. Agreed to send workshop notes to a member from Los Angeles, whose health prevented him from attending many of the workshops. Typed notes down the next couple days and sent notes to Los Angeles participant.

l. We have been keeping in touch with Julie Padilla through emails and in person.

m. We have become involved in the California Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (CHCROP) and the National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP). Cliff Crooks has been in touch with our San Francisco coordinators for both projects. We are continuing to collect complaint forms about complaints against the police, rangers, NSA security, Downtown Guides and keeping files on these complaints. We will be sharing the information with CHCROP, NHCROP, WEAP and Mr. Casimere of the Office of Police Accountability. Public Defender Attorney, Tommy Clinkenbeard is kept informed about any NSA (security agency) complaints.

Cliff Crooks contacted the Dept. of Consumer Affairs with the complaint that the Downtown Guides (Business Improvement District security force) were not identifying themselves when asked who they were and not wearing identification badges, leaving the individual guides unaccountable for their actions if complaints were lodged.

We continue the American River Parkway cleanup effort, since we have been told that the homeless were being harassed because they left so much garbage along the Parkway.



We have attended and sponsored a Rally concerned with affordable housing issues.

**5. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECTS ACHIEVING (OR NOT ACHIEVING) ITS GOALS?**

a. We have been confirmed as official Volunteer Stewards of Mile 2-3 of the American River Parkway, a parkway that stretches along the river for over 20 miles. A representative from the American River Parkway Foundation said that the erection of the signs usually takes some time, so if it is not up yet, it will be. We have been accepted as a member of the program, along with other prominent citizens and organizations, such as Bank of America, Sierra Club, Pacific Bell, Robert Kerth and many more. We have shown our enthusiasm and willingness to work hard at the Great American River Cleanup, and have proved ourselves valuable members of the project. From meeting with other prominent members of the community that participated, we have spread, further, the reputation that the homeless people of Sacramento can be an asset to the community.

b. Working off misdemeanor tickets has not succeeded, yet. We may choose not to pursue that avenue until more interest in the area opens up.

A lot of cleanup has been completed and the effort continues to produce good results. Though the main cleanup crew has not expanded, the work has been steady and massive amounts of garbage have been bagged by the cleanup crew and collected by Jack of the Salvation Army's Neighbors Program. Individual efforts by campers can only be guessed at by the amount of garbage bags that were distributed, which was quite a bit, approximately 200 bags. The steady progress made in the cleanup is visible to the community by the bags constantly stacked up by the road. This is expanding our public relations. This will, also, encourage others that the project is dependable and we are serious. The patrolling rangers and other officials are noticing the improvements and if they respond favorably, it will be encouraging to others.

c. We are still not satisfied enough effort was applied towards Homeward. We are going to have to work extra hard in that area. We have started early since last issue in collecting stories and items. Last issue turned out very nice (enclosed copy). We included a cover that was agreed upon at the NASNA conference to have on all October issues around the globe. We encouraged new writers and have a new writer, Doug, who is now spending a great deal of time writing and learning journalistic writing. We encouraged a police officer who wanted to share his program with the homeless population and he has contributed an article. We hope his acceptance will encourage other community members to share in the dialogue. Great ideas were shared at the NASNA conference that may be incorporated in the future. Contacts were made at the

conference that provided great material for future issues. From the conference, permission was given Denver Voice to reprint 2 different items from past issues of Homeward.

d. We have not accomplished further contact with the various neighborhood associations.

e. Cliff Crooks hopes his civil rights activities may lead to eventually the ability to establish a place he can set up his Homeless Artisan's operation.

f. We are still working on the funding for wages, though we wish to meet our more immediate needs, first. We will be searching for the funding source simultaneously with our search for funding of our other needs. J. Parsons is continuing his efforts and says he has had some resented good results and will be reporting to us on those results. Norm got discourage by finding that an excessive amount of money was required for assessment and/or city fees to even begin the rehab project he was interested in. He no longer works in this office.

g. J. Parson has established himself as a speaker at City Council on affordable housing and related issues. Our show of concern and the concern of other affordable housing advocates has won our inclusion of 15% affordable housing requirements for future developments. 10% will be for low-low income and 5% for low income.

h. The internet has not been utilized for employment purposes very much.

i. Marvin Jensen donated a very good computer. We have received other donations of office furniture and some office supplies.

j. We have made contact with Project H.O.P.E. . After reviewing the original flyers that they distribute to homeless, we are not quite sure they are sympathetic to our concerns. We have met the main people involved and have expressed a wish to work with them in helping as many homeless people as possible find housing, which ever way is most appropriate to their need. They gave us their more complete literature. We have decided to reserve judgment until we have more dealings with them and are collecting case history information on their program's effectiveness (Currently (after report date) they're helping a SHOC member find housing.)

k. Paula Lomazzi attended the NASNA conference. Many contacts were made from throughout North America. Information and incites were gathered to share with Homeward and SHOC staff, members and readers. Wrote an article for Homeward about the trip. Participation in having a universal cover on all street newspapers throughout the world. Many ideas for improving Homeward and



Homeward's purposes. Extensive notes and literature was brought back to share with others and for reference. The online street writers workshop proved to inundate our email with too many entries so we canceled that for now. We haven't signed up with Homeless People's Network, yet, because our email has been filling up with so much information sharing since the conference, it has been very time consuming keeping up on that. Two of Homeward's articles were reprinted in the Denver Voice (they asked permission at conference). Great articles are on file, now, for future reprinting in Homeward. Paula brought back an important observance that all the major cities represented were having the same problems regarding the homeless situation: affordable housing and shelter shortages, cities criminalizing homelessness and trying to get rid of homeless people, increase in homeless population, new development not considering low income renters. One NASNA member concluded that the problems we face are not with the city governments, local police, etc., like we may be led to suspect, but that the problem stems from a larger source—the world economy. He suggested we solve the problem from a larger angle—networking nationally and internationally to share ideas, information, successes and solidarity.

l. Julie Padilla has not seemed to have time to work on the land offer. She has committed herself new political obligations and is extremely busy with campaign work. We will renew discussions after the November election. There is a chance that the land deal has fallen through. Her family was not happy with her decision to use the land for homeless camping. The land is located in a high growth district. She may have changed her mind but will probably be our ally on future projects, if not on the camp ground project.

m. We have offered assistance with the projects CHCROP and NHCROP. We are sharing with the rest of the state our process of handling complaints with the police, private security and rangers. We are continuing to supply the organizations with information concerning civil rights problems in our area, which is being compiled from our input and the input supplied by all other organizations involved.

Cliff Crooks' dealings with the Dept. of Consumer Affairs resulted in the Downtown Guides being required to wear badges with numbers for identification purposes. Now when someone experiences any abuse or inappropriate behavior from one of the guides, they are able to identify the guide when lodging complaints. This makes the guides more accountable for their actions. It seems there may be less problems occurring because of this action. There have not been any substantial complaints heard about or filed with us since their compliance of wearing badges. We feel we may be partly responsible for lessening oppression from Downtown Guides.



The river cleanup crew moved back to the Camp Pollock area, the area where the cleanup project originated. The area, which previously was heavily populated with homeless people, had been cleared out by the rangers and police, due to high drug activities, we believe. When the river cleanup crew camped in the area, the rangers were aware they were staying there but allowed them to stay, but did eventually suggest they move further out from the Boy Scout camp. Where ever the cleanup crew stays seems to be unofficially sanctioned by the authorities, with occasional exceptions. Other than the Camp Pollock area, the police sweeps have decreased in frequency.

n. We now have open to us many avenues of communication, along with Homeward. We will be receiving support from other homeless organizations and advocates throughout the state, nation and world. We will be sending representatives on a human rights bus tour to educate people about human rights issues, collect information about human rights experiences. We have representatives that do attend city hall meetings and other community events in our endeavor to have a voice in how our community is run. We hope that reaching beyond our community will, also, eventually, have an impact on our own community.

## **6. WHAT WERE SOME OF THE PROJECTS MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS?**

### **Media Coverage**

David Walker contacted the media through our office with his personal story. The Sacramento Bee (our major local newspaper) picked up the story and did a front page article about him. Through this publicity, his bad situation was totally resolved. The community showed their support with donations to him and the child support collection agency completely dropped their claim, requiring him only to pay his children's medical expenses. One of the photos of David used in that article was used for a subsequent, unrelated article. (Copy Attached)

Cliff Crooks initiated media coverage for Delora Carter on her personal situation. Cliff was interviewed, also. (Copy Attached)

Street Spirit of San Francisco came to our office and interviewed Paula Lomazzi and Blake Smith. They came to see us and to interview us, but they couldn't pass up the opportunity to include Loaves and Fishes in the article. (Copy Attached)

### **Adopt a Parkway**

The American River Cleanup Project becoming official land stewards for a mile of the American River Parkway. The brochure from the American River Parkway

Foundation states that 5 million visitors will see our sign. We believe the advertisement will benefit, not so much the prestige of SHOC, but will improve the image of the homeless since the sign will read "**Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee**"

### **WEAP - Women's Economic Agenda Project**

Our new participation in this organization's Freedom Bus tour will gain us new connections and voice in our community. The newspaper, Because People Matters will be doing an article on it and our organization, connecting us to the activist community (its a well read local alternative paper)

### **Standdown**

James Stetchcon and Nick Masayon attended 3 Standdowns (3 day camp outs for homeless veterans), one in Sacramento, one in Modesto and one in Grass Valley. James will be writing an article on his experiences at the Standdowns. Nick was a speaker at two of the Standdowns. James' attendance was aimed at making Veteran contacts for future Veteran oriented projects and for a Veteran Bivouc he is organizing to call attention to the plight of homeless veteran. We had planned on getting more involved in the homeless veteran situation because so many homeless people are veterans and there should be more funding targeted towards that avenue.

### **NASNA**

Attendance of the NASNA conference was a great asset to, not only Homeward's improvement and growth, but also to our connections to Homeless Advocates and resources beyond Sacramento. We agreed on including a cover for Homeward that will be duplicated on street newspaper covers around the world.

### **California Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project**

Participation in CHCROP is the beginning of a great project geared towards helping the homeless situation through state-wide avenues (state legislative and information sharing among the other cities of California). Participation in NHCROP (National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project) is also believed to be a great resource. The complaint forms that we have been collected will be very useful in formulating patterns of civil rights problems that will need to be addressed.

### **Office Access**

Finally, with a great deal of patients, we have obtained access to our office with the hours we had wished. We are now able to keep our office open until 5 p.m. and later if projects require later hours. We are able to access our office on Saturdays, also.

Christyne Welsh, also, sent a memo to Loaves & Fishes, calling to their attention the need for wheel chair accessibility for outside their dining room exit. They paved the problem area immediately.

### **Downtown Guides**

The Downtown Guides are now required to wear number badges. This will insure that if there are any problems with a guide, they can be identified and thereby held accountable for their actions.

### **Megadeth Concert**

We were invited by the National Coalition on Homelessness to join them at the Sacramento Valley Amphitheater for the first stop of Megadeth's concert tour. We were honored that the National Coalition on Homelessness selected us to be their partners in this event. We thought there was great fundraising potential but the band didn't announce our presence to the audience, probably why we only made about \$40-not much of an accomplishment. The major accomplishments related to the concert were, 1) Working with the National Coalition on Homelessness on the project, 2) The design of a S.H.O.C. brochure that will be great for future fundraising projects and informing people about our organization, 3) The possibility of setting up tables and soliciting donations at future Sacramento Valley Amphitheater concerts. The National Coalition on Homelessness has assured us that the Amphitheater administration are familiar with us now and will agree to our future attendance. The National Coalition on Homelessness agreed to intervene if we have problems arranging it.

### **7. HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THE PROJECT?**

At least 20 people have been given copies of our Section 8 housing list. Hopefully they found housing by now.

Two people have received the media coverage they desired.



Most all of the people that camp on the American River Parkway have been harassed less, at least the camps that are kept clean in our vicinity. Messy camps may be targeted. There may be an unofficial support by the police and rangers for the cleanup effort. The area where the most work is being done is never visited by sweeps or patrols.

Many people get garbage bags from us, perhaps 30 people regularly. They use them to clean the areas that they sleep, thus avoiding targeting by the police.

The people who spend time downtown (and possibly just those who appear homeless) have been harassed less by the Downtown Guides since Cliff Crooks worked with the Consumer Affairs in seeing that they wear badges. At least we have heard less complaints about them.

Christyne's memo to Loaves and Fishes resulted in all dining guests in wheelchairs are able to exit the dining room without assistance, or without getting stuck.

Steering committee members and other SHOC members have been gaining skills in business, administration, computer, writing, democratic procedures, interpersonal relations, setting realistic goals and going about accomplishing them, public relations, and more.

Paula Lomazzi has been learning a great deal about the environment. She has gained new direction.

Christyne Welsh has gained computer skills, more confidence, office skills and used SHOC facilities to get her Social Security benefits.

David Walker, through his media exposure, received donations, CPS collections canceling his debt and housing offers.

Trapper was helped extensively, referred to agencies, taken to doctor's appointment's, etc.

People who come to our office with complaints about police, or unfair treatment from other agency's representatives, seem to feel better afterwards--relieved. Even if their complaint gets no immediate results outside this office, it seems to be a benefit to them. (Maybe 20 or 30 this quarter)

We referred many people to different agencies and housing resources.

We have about 3 new writers for Homeward, gaining skills at writing, computer, journalism, and homeless issues and becoming able to share their views with a large readership.

## **8. HOW HAVE THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY BENEFITTING FROM THE PROJECT BEEN INVOLVED IN IT?**

David Walker, benefiting from media coverage, is a steering committee member. He wrote his own story. Paula typed it in the computer and helped him select which email addresses he wanted the story to go to—he handled all the rest.

Delora Carter spent a lot of time at the office before and after her media coverage.

All who participate in the cleanup effort, seem to be the least likely to be harassed or cited by the police and rangers. They receive garbage bags at this office, mostly. (Jack of the Neighbors Program gives some people their bags).

Paula Lomazzi has been involved in the office work for some time but more recently has been working more hours on the river cleanup project. She is on the steering committee and holds office of General Assistant.

Christyne Welsh is the steering committee's Secretary and has been attending meetings, taking and typing minutes, making mailing labels for Homeward and spending time as receptionist at the office.

Trapper was the steering committee's Sergeant of Arms, but hasn't been involved much in SHOC since he was hospitalized and released 2 months ago. He did recently fill up a couple garbage bags on the river cleanup.

A lot of the people who filled out complaint forms have attended general SHOC meetings.

## **9. HOW HAS THE PROJECT HELPED, CHANGED AND/OR AFFECTED THE PEOPLE?**

There's been a great deal of personal growth going on in the people involved with this office. Sometimes, interpersonal relations can be tough but we have all seemed to make it through those times and have remained effective coworkers. We have become, most of us, better at interpersonal relations, active participants in attaining our goals, business skills, life skills, helping others, seeking help through access to resources, etc. Sharing of viewpoints and exchange in education has helped our growth.

We are less oppressed and more confident.

Our environment is becoming more pleasant because of the cleanup project. SHOC is giving the homeless a positive direction in which to go which will give an inner satisfaction in taking responsibility for the cleanup of the environment.

People are taking more responsibility for their lives and active in solving their own problems.

**9A. HOW HAS THE PROJECT HELPED, CHANGED AND/OR AFFECTED THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY?**

Homeward articles informed the community about important issues. For example, TB has been going around, so a piece on TB was put in Homeward.

The environment is getting cleaner. It is very good for our moods.

Harassment by officials of the homeless people has lessened. Maybe the official community is also changing their stance.

More people are getting involved in our organization, widening the pool of diversity amongst us.

The homeless people are widening their positive influence on the community. More of the non-homeless people are coming in contact with us and we are integrating more with our whole community.

The immediate community has more confidence since there is a place they can go to work with others to do something about the conditions we face.

Hopefully, more people found a place to live.

As a liaison between the homeless community and other agencies and populations, there has been a lessening of the gaps between us.

**9B. HOW HAS THE PROJECT HELPED, CHANGED AND/OR AFFECTED THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY?**

Homeward articles inform the community about important issues and about homelessness.

We have served as a great resource for news, information, referrals and ideas about homeless people and the condition of homelessness. We have provided community groups with suggestions on how to help the homeless, what items are in short supply, for example.



The American River Parkway Foundation's brochure says that there are 5 million visitors to the Parkway. Our river cleanup will be making a more beautiful place for them to visit. Also, we are lessening the load of work that the Park Rangers are responsible for. They must be in a better mood since the cleanup project began.

WEAP, CHCROP, NHCROP, NASNA, NCH, all organizations involved in helping the homeless situation from a larger geographic scope, are all benefiting from our work and participation. We are sharing our accomplishments and the experiences we have gained with them. We hope to be helpful to all who can benefit.

The reputation of homeless people are improving. Little by little, more and more are changing their minds about the homeless, and are seeing them in a different light, through our education efforts, and the activities we have been participating in. The media has been running very many news items about the homeless. We serve, often, as resources for the media.

The City Councilmembers are hearing our views on the issues, mostly through J. Parsons' participation in council meetings

#### **10. EVALUATE THE PROGRAM'S PROGRESS THUS FAR.**

Membership may change but its always amazing that whomever that membership consists of, there always seems to be one wonderful accomplishment after another coming out of this office. There seems to be great things in store for SHOC, with its recent participation with its new State-wide and national affiliates. Though some agreed upon goals are not accomplished, those unreachd goals seem to make way for more pertinent or immediate accomplishments.

The Homeless people involved in the river cleanup effort are getting credit for their work, since its now an official effort. In the past, the homeless people that would clean were not given recognition for their efforts or the police would stop them from picking up garbage.

#### **11. WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THE PROGRAM TO CARRY OUT THIS QUARTER?**

- 1) Gaining better access to the office.
- 2) We have recently experience theft of many things in our office, including the petty cash box. We don't want to limit access to the office to just the old-

timers (who are the least suspects. We believe it may be someone who spends time in the office. We wouldn't like to cast unfounded accusations on anyone or suspicions.

3) Paula Lomazzi had difficulty catching up on work she was responsible for because she was unable to work in the office very much for a 2 month period.

4) The budget was not strictly adhered to. Money was not spent frivolously--needs just changed. We hope it doesn't go against our future relationship with the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People.

5) The river cleanup project had to work quickly to get as many old blankets, etc., before the rains started, because when they got wet they would be too heavy for the bags.

## **12. WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO EASE THE DIFFICULTIES?**

1) We now have access to the office the hours we need. We still do not have a key to the door, but we now have a way to lock the door without a key, so we are able to work the hours we wish. We are satisfied.

2.) We first noticed our cash box was open and the money gone, previously we suspected money was missing but weren't sure.. We bought a new box with a jimmy proof lock and put in a different place until we could get a padlock or something for one of the drawers. The day after that happened, someone took the whole box. We have since then arranged with Loaves and Fishes to install a lock on our closet. SHA's Director and one or two SHOC members, only, will have a key. We will be purchasing locks for our file cabinets, too. We now take the precautions of not leaving anyone alone in the inner office, and try to have someone at the front desk. Meanwhile, until the security measures are completed, we are not keeping money in the office.

3) Paula is now able to devote a great deal of time to catching up on the work. In the mist of her work schedule, she is finding it necessary to assign tasks to those around her. In the process, others are required to learn what needs to be done to administer this office. We received a donated new filing cabinet and are going to be organizing the files better so all will know how to access them (currently our files are in many different cabinets). We are streamlining office procedures so that others may more easily participate in office work. We are seeking funding for at least part-time paid positions.

4) We have made estimates of amounts spent that weren't on the budget and have made plans to send proposals for a more accurate amount needed to cover the costs of our operations. We will be attending financial meetings to come up with better financial strategies and a more realistic budget.



5) Most of the items that might get heavy when soaked with water have been picked up first (at least in the area we have been concentrating on.)

### 13. WHAT ARE THE PROJECT'S GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING QUARTER?

CHCROP (California Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project)- Increase involvement. Continue to document violations of civil rights. Educate others in civil rights. Provide technical assistance and resource development to the project.

Members will travel on WEAP (Women's Economic Agenda Project) Freedom Bus.

Seek and acquire more funding sources. Get funding for equipment and paid positions (part-time to start). J. Parson is seeking funding for affordable housing situations (rehab and alternative) and will continue to follow up on his progress.

Expand Homeward, enlisting new writers. Meet deadlines.

Clean and maintain mile 2-3 of the American River Parkway, to meet and surpass our agreement as land stewards.

Expand our internet capability by getting additional phone lines and computers to access the internet. We wish to help others access the internet and to list resources that would be helpful to them. Get involved in HPN (Homeless People's Network)

Get the office better organized and establish procedures that will better facilitate the amount of people we now have using the office. Paula Lomazzi will put more effort in delegating office responsibilities and training others.

Help homeless veterans receive more attention so that more funding may be allocated for shelters for them.

We are looking into starting a community garden for homeless people.

We will continue our efforts to end oppression and help the homeless people of our community have more of a voice in our community.



## NARRATIVE REPORT OUTLINE

EACH QUESTION MUST BE COMPLETED WITH DETAILED AND SPECIFIC ANSWERS FOR THE PROJECT CURRENTLY RECEIVING SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE FUNDS

1. PROJECT NAME, REFERENCE NUMBER, ADDRESS AND CONTACT PERSON:

Project Name: Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
(S.H.O.C.)

Project No.: 99-W-0

Address: Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee  
c/o Loaves and Fishes  
P.O. Box 2161  
1351 North C Street  
Sacramento, CA 95812

Phone No.: (916) 442-2156

Fax No.: (916) 442-2851

E-mail: shoc\_1@yahoo.com

Contact person: Paula Lomazzi (General Assistant)

2. INDICATE WHAT WERE THE MONTHS THIS REPORT COVERS. IF THE REPORT COVERS MORE THAN ONE QUARTER, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY.

June 1, 2000 through September 30, 2000

# The Great American River Cleanup

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

The American River Parkway  
Foundation

ENDORSED BY:

The Sacramento Homeless  
Organizing Committee

*Join the community at large  
(or let the community join you)  
in cleaning up the American  
River Parkway!*

Saturday  
Sept. 23, '00

WARNING: If you don't want to join in,  
it might be advisable to clean your area  
before some well-meaning idiot tries to.

9-12 cleanup

CHECK IN NEAR NORTHGATE & DEL PASO BLVDS.  
FOR BAGS & RIVERFEST MEAL TICKET

1-4 Riverfest AT WILLIAM POND  
(THAT'S ABOUT 10 MILES UPSTREAM)

Festivities include food, music, entertainment, "weirdest item  
found" contest and trash sculpture contest. (If you need trans-  
portation contact the S.H.O.C. office, corner of N. C & Ahern St.  
442-2156. Can't guarantee a ride, but we'll try.) Paula

PARTY  
AT THE  
RIVER!





# ADOPT THE PARKWAY

*South Bank*

**Financial Sponsor:**

*American River  
Parkway Foundation  
Board of Directors*

**Volunteer Steward:**

*Sacramento Homeless  
Organizing Committee*





*Join the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee in the --*

# **American River Cleanup**

Become a Volunteer Land Steward Of Mile 2-3 of the  
American River Parkway

**1 PM**

**Saturday**

**March 24, 2001**

**Meet at the end of Northgate Blvd. by the 16th Street Bridge**



# American River Cleanup Day

**Friday, July 6, 2001 is the date  
1:30 thru 3:30 PM is the time**

**Let's meet by the 16th Street (160)'s Northgate Blvd. off-ramp  
Near the corner of Northgate and Del Paso Blvds.**

*Hey! We finally got our official Adopt-the-Parkway sign at the Mile 2 marker along the American River Parkway bike trail. It says that Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee" is the land steward for Mile 2-3 of the parkway. It totally insinuates that homeless people are volunteering to take care of this piece of land, don't you think?*



**Bags and gloves will be provided. Participants will receive an American River Cleanup T-Shirt, as supplies lasts (If we run out we'll order more). Also, a sack lunch, water and sodas.**



KCRA Channel 3 - 6:30 PM - January 17, 2000  
Transcript of News Program

(missing some of preview)" ...buy them a little privacy. They're cleaning up the river to clean up their image."

Roy Sterns: We're out here along the American River where literally hundreds of homeless people have been living in among these trees and dumping their trash for several decades. Now they want to clean it up and they want to keep living here. I'm Roy Sterns with that story tonight.

Sarah \_\_\_\_\_: They just want to be left alone. That is the plea being made tonight by a group of homeless people living along the banks of the lower American River in Sacramento. Now they're trying to earn their privacy with acts of good will. Homeless people have been roused from that area in the past because of all the trash they left behind. But now some of the homeless are working to clean up the trash, hoping their good work will allow them to stay. KCRA's Roy Sterns has the story.

Blake Smith: If you look hard enough you will find hypodermics, you'll find human filth, you'll find all kind of garbage that you don't want nobody to touch.

Roy: Blake Smith is with the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee. He is giving us a tour of an area along the lower American River inside the American River Parkway adjacent to the Camp Pollack Boy Scout Camp. It is an area dotted with trash everywhere around dozens of homeless campsites. From a startling number who have lived here.

Rev. Snow: Whew! It's been years. We have anywhere from two to 700 people that live out here.

Roy: Backing up to May of last year KCRA's cameras followed a Sacramento Police Officers swept the area to move people out because of the trash and pollution problems created.

Lance Casie (Sac. Police Dept.): Usually the the ones that are are have a lot of trash and debris and human waste and things like that are not the overnight ones, Those are the ones where they've been there for several weeks.

Roy: Jumping back to today--some here have decided if trash is the issue they'll get rid of it.

Blake Smith: Well, basically there's a systematic harassment that's been going on of people who are camping out here and what they keep telling us is that the garbage is the issue, that its all the garbage, and its a good one. So, um, if this will help to get, um, the police off our backs, we're going to clean it all up, every stitch of it.

Roy: They're saying that everywhere they go they get pushed out. And so there is no place to go. And so they want to make this the place they can stay and call home.

Al Rasmussen: I mean I have parents that live in Utah I mean I have a place to go. I guess you could say, by choice, I'm out here. Yes.

Roy: On this holiday, those who have wanted them out were not available for comment, so we shall see if this cleanup continues and the mood of moving them is changed. In Sacramento, Roy Sterns, KCRA 3 reports.

Sarah \_\_\_\_\_: Those who operate shelters for the homeless say the dilemma is this--there aren't enough shelters for all the homeless so they are going to go somewhere.



Channel 10 - ABC NEWS - January 17, 2000  
Transcript of News Program - 6 PM

News 10 at 6

Dave Schornack and Jennifer Smith in News room.

Jennifer Smith: [missed part of previews)...Their attempts are being thwarted.

[shot of Blake]

Blake Smith: It's going to take as long as it takes. We're committed to clean it up. We've got a lot of people already signed up.

[Shot of mess]

Jennifer Smith (voice from the station): Sacramento's homeless say they're determined to clean up this massive mess along the American River no matter who stands in their way.

[News room]

Jennifer Smith: Thanks for joining us. An operation to clean up that land along the American River began today.

[news room]

Dave Schornack: This effort targets areas that are frequented by the homeless. But the clean-up volunteers are the homeless themselves. News 10's Karen Massie joins us. Karen, why are they working on this project?

[news room]

Karen Massie: Well, the homeless say not all the stories about them leaving trash behind are true and they hope to prove it with a clean-up campaign. They also hope to spread the message to other transients living along the American River and they'll do it no matter what anyone says.

[Blake picking up trash]

Blake: I just don't want to get my hand on a hypodermic and there could be some in here.

Karen: Cleaning up homeless campsites along the American River can be dangerous. These homeless people say it has to be done.

[Snow]

Rev. James Snow: We have a whole committee of us, about 40 to 100 that want to come out here and clean up all this mess.

[trash]

Karen Massie: All kinds of trash can be found here.

[Al]

Al Rasmussen: Today I pulled up 200 lbs. of glass. And just bottles, beer bottles and stuff. I took them down and recycled them.

[mess]

Karen Massie: But the homeless contend they are not responsible for all the tires or refrigerators and a lot of the mess.

[Snow]

Rev. Snow: And we're going to show that all this mess including that truck behind you wasn't put here by a homeless person. We're going to clean it up anyhow.

Karen: SHOC, the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee put the effort together. Members say they would have started two weeks ago but were thwarted by

the Sacramento Police.

Blake: The police showed up that same day, here, where we were going to start with guns drawn.

Karen: SHOC maintains the cops were called in by the Salvation Army which has its own cleanup program. The Salvation Army says feelings were hurt because the agency couldn't help with this operation.

Robb Bowman (Sally's): In this particular clean-up effort today is outside the jurisdiction of our contract.

Karen Massie: The Salvation Army adds it backs efforts like this.

Robb: Its not pretty work but its very meaningful work and if the homeless can find it meaningful, too, that's great.

Karen: I talked to the Sacramento Police Dept. today and it says it did not have any officers pull any guns on any homeless people conducting a cleanup campaign but the cops do admit that since August they have had weekly sweeps along the rivers and levees. What they're trying to do, they say, is move the homeless into housing and shelters. In Sacramento, Karen Massie, News 10.

Dave: The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee says its cleanup campaign is backed by the Sacramento County Park and Rec. Dept. Members say that the county provided them with the large trash bags and have also promised to remove those bags when they're full.

# River Cleanup

Camp Pollock Area  
by road (S)

8/7/00 1/2 hour Pollack  
(1 bag)

PL (CI) (1 camp area clean)

8/9/00 2 bags  
PL (CI) 1/2 hour Pollack

8/10/00 1 bag Pollack  
(CI) 45 min

8/12/00 hauled 19 bags  
to street Pollack  
5 hrs

Jack picked up 8/13

8/15/00 1 bag (cut up box)  
Pollack  
(CI)

Sample of clean up work logs



# RIVER CLEANUP NEWS

JULY 2, 2001

*written by Paula*

## ADOPT-THE-PARKWAY

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC) adopted a mile of the American River Parkway from the American River Parkway Foundation's Adopt-the-Parkway program. SHOC adopted it last year, and I wonder if controversy delayed us getting the sign erected sooner. Well, its up and official. We are signed up as volunteer land stewards, responsible for having 4 organized cleanup events per year, participate in the Foundation's annual event, attend a workshop.

Our mile is Mile 2-3. That covers about a quarter mile west of the Northgate overpass all the way to the railroad tracks. Each land steward has a financial sponsor. Ours is the American River Parkway Foundation Board of Directors. Our partner happens to be the boss of the program.

Mile 1-2's financial sponsor is

Mayor Heather Fargo. Last year's sponsor for Mile 4-5 was Bob Slobe (see Bee article "Paradise lost-illegal campers threaten to spoil parkway"-June 23, 2001). He's been complaining to City Hall about the police and rangers not "doing their job". I wonder if the Foundation became our sponsor because no one else would?

I hope we can get a lot of work done and show them that homeless people can be an asset to the Parkway. I plan on spending more time out there, passing out bags, studying nature, etc..

If its too hot or whatever for you to join us this Friday (see back cover), come to the SHOC office on the corner of North C and Ahern and get some bags if you'd like to help clean on your own, or clean an area outside the designated mile. It's not only good for our image, its nice to have an uncluttered view of nature.

## MEETING WITH RICHARD - ARPF

I met with Richard Martin of the American River Parkway Foundation in June. We drove out to the adopted mile so he could point out the territory of Mile 2-3. During the drive we talked about the parkway. There are plans of altering the landscape, that I don't necessarily approve of. The Sacramento Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan on clearing a great deal of shrubs. Richard states their plans are to remove plants that are not natural to the area (fennel, for example); they want to cut alot of the vines, leaving them hanging; they want circles cleared around the base of most trees so tractors won't harm the trees, especially around the oaks. The Parks and Rec.'s intentions for this, according to Richard, is to reduce fire hazard, make the area more parklike (not with lawns but a nature park so visitors can "enjoy the area more"), get rid of invasive plants that the wild life doesn't depend on for survival, and to keep views open for easier visibility by park rangers for "safety rea-

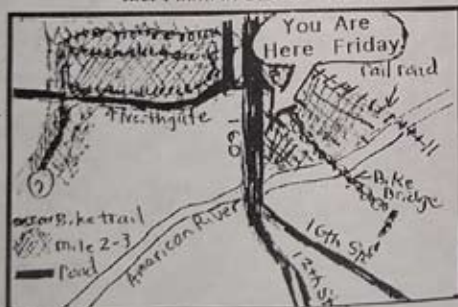
sons". That last reason, we can guess how that will effect camper's invisibility.

He asked that if we get alot of volunteers, they may clear around trees and dig up fennel, eventually, after training.

I'll be looking into the proposed alterations and how it will effect the health of the land and wildlife. It disturbs me, but Richard told me not to worry. [Cringe]

Later, the Foundation will offer a class on plant identification or invasive plant removal, that I will take good notes on and share with Homeward readers. Richard said he will try to dig up some books and other literature on the natural life of the parkway and some literature from the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

To get or give more information, contact Paula at SHOC - 442-2156



## CAMP PARADISE

Along the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz, a group of people decided to make one spot their home. In an area heavily trashed for years, the homeless people started cleaning up the area, which is reported to have been left ungroomed for 20 years. Six months ago, residents of Camp Paradise removed an estimated 4800 lbs of trash and debris from the riverbank. Since the original 4800 lbs., they have been regularly filling up bags of trash. They estimate they have removed a total of 24 tons of trash. (We can only estimate a total of 10 tons removed by Sacramento campers. We're slacking.)

Last winter the Paradisian campers put up a big canopy and 3 or 4 tents pitched below. They felt safe in numbers. All were trying to quit drugs and/or alcohol so they had support living together. More people joined. Each made improvements. Someone built a foot-bridge over an eroded area and added a goldfish pond to pre-

vent further erosion. The paths from the street were widened and smoothed out so it was wheelchair accessible for one resident. They run a no-cost bicycle repair shop. They planted a vegetable garden. They paid for a portapotty and bought trash cans.

It started becoming more well known when there were about 23 people camping there. Now there are over 40 people. The overcrowded shelter refer people to the camp, regularly.

It sounds like a good story but a neighbor complained so everyone was told they have to leave by July 1st.

They contacted media and got a lawyer. They had a Potluck Bar BQ on June 23rd, attended by 300 people. They have gained a lot of community supporters who have formed "Friends of Camp Paradise".

As of today, I haven't heard what has happened. There'll probably be more information in the next issue of Homeward.

*Special thanks to Donna who has filled up about 45 bags of trash since March!*



# American River Cleanup Day

Friday, July 6, 2001 is the date  
1:30 thru 3:30 PM is the time

Let's meet by the 16th Street (160)'s Northgate Blvd. off-ramp  
Near the corner of Northgate and Del Paso Blvds.

Hey! We finally got our official Adopt-the-Parkway sign at the Mile 2 marker along the American River Parkway bike trail. It says that Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee" is the land steward for Mile 2-3 of the parkway. It totally insinuates that homeless people are volunteering to take care of this piece of land, don't you think?



**Bags and gloves will be provided. Participants will receive an American River Cleanup T-Shirt, as supplies lasts (If we run out we'll order more). Also, a sack lunch, water and sodas.**