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Volume 1 No 10

GIVING A VOICE TO HOMELESS PEOPLE IN NEVADA

February 2008



Why are the City of Las Vegas'  
public parks being over-watered  
while Southern Nevada is currently  
under a Drought Alert?

## Inside This Edition:

Shelter beds, so... how many do we have?

Also: So Simple, It's Elementary

and

They Took First My Coat and Then My Trousers



Photos by Gail Sacco

OUR MISSION IS TO BE A VOICE FOR THE HOMELESS PEOPLE.

OUR GOALS ARE:

- 1) TO PUBLISH A STREET NEWSPAPER WRITTEN MAINLY BY HOMELESS PEOPLE, FORMERLY HOMELESS PEOPLE, AND HOMELESS ADVOCATES IN ORDER TO EMPOWER THEM AND GIVE THEM A VOICE;
- 2) TO BUILD AND ENHANCE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND FACILITATE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOMELESS PEOPLE, HOMELESS ADVOCATES, SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC;
- 3) TO BUILD AWARENESS OF SOCIAL SERVICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO POOR AND HOMELESS PEOPLE, AND OTHER SUCH INFORMATION THAT WOULD BE EDUCATIONAL TO THE HOMELESS POPULATION; AND
- 4) TO EXPAND AND REDEFINE OUR CHARITABLE, EDUCATIONAL, AND LITERARY PROGRAM FROM TIME TO TIME AS NECESSARY TO MEET THE CONTINUING NEED TO EMPOWER HOMELESS PEOPLE.

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9101 W. Sahara Ave.  
Ste. 105 — #155  
Las Vegas, NV 89117

# Shelters beds, so... how many do we have?

**Where are they, when are they available, and how much are you charging?**

**by Gail Sacco, homeless advocate**

Each year it seems like we keep repeating the same scenario when it comes to the homeless shelters. Winter shelter; summer shelter; emergency shelter. And during different parts of the year, the number of beds change- day to day, week to week, and month to month.

Also each year, Dr. Leroy Pelton and other homeless advocates try to get the approximate number of shelter beds that will be made available, and they never receive a clear answer.

"We've taken away 200 beds but added 200 beds." What the heck does that mean?

Which brings me to this editorial.

At the Annual Homeless Vigil on December 20th, I spoke with Michelle Fuller-Hallauer, Clark County Social Service Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator, and asked her a few questions about men being turned away from Catholic Charities' night shelter. She told me that *she* was told by Catholic Charities that no one had been turned away from the "winter shelter" so far this year. This is in complete contrast to the many phone calls, e-mails, and letters that I have been receiving.

So I e-mailed Sharon Mann, Community Relations Director of Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada. I asked her about a dozen simple questions. Well, they should be simple questions when you've been working for the same organization for years.

I wanted to inform the readers in the *Forgotten Voice* January 2008 issue as to what services were available NOW. Instead of answering any of my questions, she sent me a "one-liner" inviting me for a tour of Catholic Charities: "Dear Gail - At your convenience, please

be our guest for a tour of Catholic Charities. Sincerely, Sharon Mann"

So for future reference, I would like to make something perfectly clear. I am not a paid employee of any city, state, county, federal or any other agency- public or private, but you are. My unpaid time is very valuable to me and my homeless and poor friends. It probably would have taken about 15 minutes of your paid time to answer the dozen or so questions.

And, being on the receiving end of hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax-funded contracts, grants provided by the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition and (HUD) U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, I feel that the least you could do is provide the public with a few answers.

So, now that the January issue of *Forgotten Voice* has come and gone, maybe you could answer the questions for the March issue. And then maybe the April issue, May issue, etc. since these services and available number of beds are constantly changing.

To be fair, Catholic Charities is not the only agency that does not get pertinent information out to the homeless within a reasonable time--like in July when we found out about the extra "cooling stations" when they no longer existed.

At the very least, all government funded agencies should provide us with the information on available services WHEN WE NEED THEM. Seems we are always getting this information from the local newspapers AFTER the fact.

So, here are the questions for Catholic Charities and any other agency who would like to get this information out to those in need--

in a timely fashion:

- Could you tell me if sixty men were turned away on December 18 and 19 due to a lack of beds or for some other reason?
- Has anyone been turned away yet this year because of a lack of beds?
- When did the winter emergency beds open up?
- How many beds are available now including the emergency beds? And how many beds were available before the emergency beds were added?
- Do you have "pay beds" and how many and what is the cost?
- What time does someone have to line up for a pay bed or free bed?
- Do you still have the Crossroads Transitional Program for Senior Men? It is still being advertised on the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas website.
- Does the Residential Work Program still have 200 beds set aside over and above the free and emergency beds?
- Do you have shelter space for women? Families? If so, how many beds?
- Do you have shelter space for couples?
- St. Vincent HELP Apartments: Is there a waiting list? What is the procedure? Does one have to have an income? Or, do you have case management to help with (SSI) Supplemental Security Income and (SSD) Social Security Disability, etc?

As always, my sincere thanks to all those individuals who go out of their way to make life just a little bit easier for our brothers and sisters on the streets and those in need. My best to you.

***Let Your Voice Be Heard!***

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***We especially encourage those living on the streets to use this space to debate and discuss issues of poverty, housing, and homelessness.***

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***We look forward to hearing from you!***

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***We look forward to hearing from you!***



# ***SO SIMPLE, IT'S ELEMENTARY***

by Charles McClarty

Ask any homeless person how he or she would solve the homeless problem, you will find the answer. Isn't it amazing how it has befuddled the politicians and society's help agencies? To solve the homeless situation- provide homes. Builders can build Condominiums and resort hotels that holds thousands and shelters build only for a few hundred. There are over 15,000 men, women and children that do not have any place to call home, in the valley region. Whatever happened to "Habitat for the Homeless?" Refugees can relocate to the United States under Asylum protection and live in 2 story homes complete with patio and pool. Russian refugees are in mansions and Americans are in the streets. Isn't it ironic that a percentage of the homeless are

camped around the very agencies that are suppose to help? Stop the bureaucracy. Give the people what they need. Stop letting the law enforcement agencies and Department of Transportation and the City's Rapid Response clean up crews do your work for you by absconding away with homeless personal belongings which is not trash in an attempt to drive the homeless away or expire due to the extreme weather conditions in Las Vegas.

Suppose for the moment that the homeless person is your favorite relative that has fallen on hard times. Everything possible to do for that person would be done. Isn't that right? Of course it would. Lets go a step further, suppose the homeless person is you. You would want emergency assistance.

Isn't that right? Of course you would. Let's give the homeless what they need, and that is a home. Don't you agree? Of course you do.

Rising prices at the pump, rising crime, rising foreclosure, devaluing of the dollar and stocks are warning signs of an impending recession. The homeless are at a depression. By helping the helpless you are taking stock in helping yourselves by having contingencies for such a state of emergency. Not just for them, also for yourself. Do not let greed and corruption stop a humane venture to solving the homeless crisis. As I've said before, it takes compassion, commitment and cooperation, don't you agree? Of course you do. Have a good day.

## ***HOMELESS***

***AND***

## ***SMOKING CRACK***

by "P"

I was homeless and smoking crack. It seemed like I would never get my life back on track. Smoking crack morning, noon and night it was my friend as long as I would spend.

Then, from deep within my mind, crack would call me to commit a crime. What can stop this beast perverting my heart and mind? It's **MY** decision to stay clean before I run out of time.



## ***UNDER THE STARS***

by Brian Thrasher

May the people sleep under the stars and in a bed w/roof when the clouds come to stay warm and dry.

## ***SIN CITY***

Artwork: by Brian Thrasher

# SOUTHERN NEVADA DROUGHT ALERT?

by Gail Sacco, homeless advocate

Over a year ago on Thursday, November 23, 2006 (Thanks-giving) at Huntridge Circle Park, the park sprinklers were on morning, noon and night even though the "Winter Irrigation Schedule" was suppose to be from 10:00 am to Noon. This was the beginning of the argument that led to the homicide on November 24, 2006 which in turn led to the indefinite closing of Huntridge Circle Park.



Just a few weeks ago on Sunday, January 6, 2008 at Baker Park, the sprinklers were on non-stop. In addition to watering the dead grass, many of the sprinklers were watering the picnic tables and concrete.

As you can see, the picnic area was so wet that my husband, five year old grandson and myself could not have lunch there as we had planned.

At first I thought that maybe this was just a one-time incident. But then, we witnessed this same over-watering for the next three weeks.

Why is the City of Las Vegas doing this?

The photos in this Forgotten Voice issue were taken on four consecutive Sundays in February. All were taken between 10:00 am and 11:00 am. On January 6th, the sprinklers were still on when we left the park at about 11:30 am.

If anyone else did this, they

would be fined.

According to the Southern Nevada Water Authority:

## "How the SNWA handles water waste reports:

When someone reports water waste to SNWA, we forward the complaint to the member agency that serves as the water provider for the property that is reported.

A representative from the appropriate water agency contacts the property owner to inform the customer of the water waste problem. The customer is given time to correct the problem. If the water waste continues, the water provider may issue a citation that requires a mandatory court appearance, or the provider may charge a water waste fee on the customer's water bill.

You can help curb water waste by reporting violations. Call the SNWA Conservation Helpline at 258-SAVE, or fill out our water waste form. Contacts are confidential." [http://www.snwa.com/html/drought\\_waste.html](http://www.snwa.com/html/drought_waste.html)

So, if "we the people" own the "public" parks and the City of Las Vegas wastes water and we report this to the Southern Nevada Water Authority, will "we the people" get fined? Or, will this be one of the causes of our taxes being raised?

The following is the watering schedule for this time of year, November through February, and also which stage of drought we are in.

**Stages of Drought:** The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has developed four drought conditions for the purpose of drought control: (Editor's note: SNWA Website information- As of January 6, 2008)

1. No Drought
2. Drought Watch
3. Drought Alert
4. Drought Critical

## Find Your Watering Group

[http://www.snwa.com/cfml/new\\_watering\\_group.cfm](http://www.snwa.com/cfml/new_watering_group.cfm)

## Address of Baker Park:

1100 E Saint Louis Ave  
Las Vegas, NV 89104-3250

Water Provider: Las Vegas Valley Water District

Winter: Nov. - Feb.

You are in Watering Group D

Landscape watering is permitted only on the following days:

Thursday

## Sprinkler Watering

Water your lawn using the cycle and soak method.

3 times a day

4 minutes each watering

1 hour apart



## Drip Irrigation

The mandatory watering schedule also applies to customers with drip irrigation.

1 day a week

So, if you are concerned about water waste, and you want to put in a complaint about this unnecessary over-watering in this public park, please contact the Southern Nevada Water Authority at 258-SAVE (258-7283) or call Mayor Pro Tem Gary Reese (Ward 3) Phone: (702) 229-6405, Fax: (702) 382-8558.

# "THEY TOOK FIRST MY COAT AND THEN MY TROUSERS" - PAUL KRUGER

by Philip Lundquist

It's been a busy 24 hours for me. Yesterday I both learned that Forgotten Voice editor, Gail Sacco had been arrested for "obstruction" while trying to help a homeless man, and about an hour later, I met Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman at his monthly gathering at a Summerlin coffee & tea shop where he avails himself to the public. We spoke for several minutes. We talked about you - the homeless.

He paid me what I regarded as a compliment at the end. I mentioned a quote which - at last telling - has been attributed to (former Israeli Prime Minister) Golda Meir - "As a leader, you meet people in the morning and become friends, only to have them become enemies by evening."

He smiled a little..... I'm writing this article on Nevada's Caucus Day, as citizens turn out to express themselves for the various candidates for President. I have not heard a single candidate go out on a limb to say what he will do for the homeless. One thing they could do would be to reform the criminal justice system, so that you wouldn't need any money at all to expunge a criminal record after a

set number of years - particularly in the case of arrests not resulting in convictions.

The candidates will not come to your assistance, because they want the votes of the middle class. The middle class think they are better than you, and they do not care about the abuses you suffer at the hands of authority - no matter how punk. What most of them do not realize is that they are being punked too - only with a little more class. You get punked by cops and punk security guards. They get punked by people with names like Rockefeller, Cecil, and Mazerati - the great banking families of the world.

Forgotten Voice is dedicated to you, the homeless, because you have no other outlet for your experiences and concerns, other than a personal blog on the Internet. And as someone recently commented, "there are 70 million blogs, most of them read only by their author." So hats off to Gail Sacco, and to all those who contribute to Forgotten Voice, and to those who read it.

Now, would you like me to explain the article title above? This will get your mind off dreary

Nevada politics for a few moments, and focus on dreary politics elsewhere.

America's history was greatly affected by England's Charles II, who sabotaged much of the early settlers' intent by shipping hordes of England's criminals here. His contemporary across the English Channel, Louis IV of France, shipped out many of France and Holland's most productive farmers, the Huguenots. The things kings do. The Huguenots went to South Africa. They built farms. They struck Gold. Everybody wanted to come to South Africa to get rich.

The Huguenot (now called Boers) leaders had some tough decisions to make about how to handle the newcomers. Some - like Paul Kruger - wanted to exploit them in every possible way. Others - like Piet Joubert - wanted to be fair with them and allow them to become part of the national fabric. An election was held. It was rigged in Kruger's favor (he received 7911 votes to Joubert's 7246).

What resulted was a President of the Transvaal state who wouldn't know how to negotiate with the British (who held the other part of

South Africa, and who were preparing to respond to the complaints of their citizens being ripped off by Kruger & Co.) if his country depended upon it. Which it did. His only reaction at the end to British requests for policy changes was to accuse them of stripping him naked (the article title).

But, then, what would you expect from someone who, in 1893, believed the world to be flat (<http://www.eldritchpress.org/js/a18.htm>)?

I've tried to do several things in this brief article for you, the homeless - let you know what some of us are trying to do in approaching those in power, help you see the larger setting in which you suffer injustice, and to distract you briefly from your miseries.

Now.....my only advice is to save a couple hundred dollars, go down to the local truck stop, and arrange to get a deposit ("offline") Mastercard. Some of these are called a Fuel Card. It'll make you look good next time a punk security guard or a cop wants to treat you worse than the residents of the Lied Animal Shelter.

## *Community Empowerment, Phil Bartle, PhD*

**Factors of Poverty; The Big Five-** The factors of poverty (as a social problem) that are listed here, ignorance, disease, apathy, dishonesty and dependency, are to be seen simply as conditions. No moral judgement is intended. They are not good or bad, they just are. If it is the decision of a group of people, as in a society or in a community, to reduce and remove poverty, they will have to, without value judgement, observe and identify these factors, and take action to remove them as the way to eradicate poverty.

...we can not fight poverty by alleviating its symptoms, but only by attacking the factors of poverty.

...If each of us make a personal commitment to fight the factors of poverty at whatever station in life we occupy, then the sum total of all of us doing it, and the multiplier effect of our actions on others, will contribute to the decay of those factors, and the ultimate victory over poverty.

<http://www.scn.org/cmp/modules/emp-pov.htm>

**Further Reading:** Revealing Hidden Resources, sustainable development, avoiding charity;  
<http://www.scn.org/cmp/modules/emp-hid.htm>

# BIRDS OF A FEATHER

by Kurt Borchard

—author and associate professor of sociology at the University of Nebraska-Kearney

I met Karen and Karl in February 2006. They were panhandling at the corner of Maryland and Flamingo. She took a break to tell me about the plutonium she discovered in the motel where she had worked and lived.

“I was working at a motel on Boulder Highway in 2000, and I'd noticed that people were getting lethargic, couldn't get out of bed. Then the manager asked me, ‘Could you get a ladder out of the attic,’ and I said ‘Okay.’ I got up there. I seen something green. It looked like neon lights, 'cause the attic's dark, but I could see a film of white. You know like when you're in a snow blizzard, it's all white, or snow on a TV? My efficiency was below the attic, [and] I would hear (she makes a noise), and I thought, ‘What is that thing I'm hearing?’”

“Then I thought to myself, ‘When I wake up in the morning, is there going to be a white film in my room?’ Because there was only a piece of plywood between the attic and my roof in my room. I thought, ‘Okay, they're making drugs, they're doing something like that.’ [Then I thought] ‘No, I been around drugs, and I know what drugs smell like. This ain't drugs.’”

“Then I started getting fevers, I started getting hot, and I thought, ‘Oh, something's not right here.’ [Then the] lady in Number 18 with

the three-year-old come to me, and he had the fever for six, seven, eight days. . . . So I got the baby's fever down with the alcohol rub and fed him four pancakes. But I seen his eyes going cross-eyed, so I knew something was desperately wrong.”

“So the mold. . . was already in the walls, but my concern was what was in the attic that he was keeping, and I can tell you why I know that it was plutonium, something you make [for] germ warfare.”

She then described how she tried to have the motel shut down for having mold. She and Karl endured harassment from the motel's owner, who she said had a personal vendetta against them, and who began spying on them. She had contracted a rare disease from the mold that had caused her to lose her memory. She became pregnant. The owner kicked her out of the motel, causing her homelessness.

Karen had a knack for a dramatic story. She had met Karl, her husband, when they were children. They had grown up together in the south, had separated for several years, but then found each other again. Their mutual paranoia was odd to be around. I am used to talking to single individuals who seem mentally ill, but Karen's and Karl's mutually reinforcing worldviews caused me to doubt my own interpretation of their bizarre stories. She and Karl told me, for example, about her previous job:

“I did profiling for five years, so my name was changed,” Karen told me.

“She used to work for the FBI,” Karl added.

“I used to profile,” she said. “I would see, after I could touch something, I can see, maybe not

then, but after I'd go to sleep, I'd see the vision.”

“The vision?” I asked.

She explained her visions, then returned to why her name was changed.

“Well, that's something they did, not being on their payroll, but to keep me safe. Eventually I quit, I had enough.”

“She got out,” Karl added.

“Pedophiles. Murderers.”

“Necrophiliacs,” she said.

She and Karl described how she tried reporting the hotel to the health department. She said the Indian-born owners of the hotel then harassed and intimidated her and Karl. The District Attorney got involved. The manager of the hotel was eavesdropping on their phone calls. Karen and Karl filed for worker compensation and disability. They contacted FEMA. Eventually, she felt blacklisted from local doctors of Indian decent.

“They send me to. . . an internal medicine doctor,” she said. “I go in, I came in ten minutes early for the appointment. He has me walk a diagonal line, come back, and says I can go.”

“I looked at him, I said, ‘You didn't swab my mouth for no saliva, you didn't take any blood, you didn't even weigh me and I can go?’ He said ‘You can go now.’ Then I looked back at the picture on the wall—he's Indian. Every doctor I was getting directed to was of [the motel owners] ethnic race. I know they're going to stick together.”

The strange thing is, there were kernels of truth in parts of what they said. Local motels have been closed because of mold. Sometimes people of the same race tend to “stick together.”

And people of equal mental health also tend to gravitate toward each other.

## RESOURCES

### Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth

Services for homeless youth under the age of eighteen or have been in the Nevada foster care system.

Phone: (702) 383-1332

Email: [info@nphy.org](mailto:info@nphy.org)

### Street Teens

Helping homeless and at-risk teens, ages 12-21, in the Las Vegas Valley.

Phone: (702) 215-4171

24 Hour Hotline: (702) 809-3585

Email: [StreetTeens@Earthlink.net](mailto:StreetTeens@Earthlink.net)

### Las Vegas Rescue Mission

Reaching the lost and serving the homeless with the Gospel of Jesus Christ since 1970.

Phone: (702) 382-1766

### Shade Tree

Shelter for homeless and abused women and children.

Phone: (702) 385-0072

Email: [va2@theshadetree.org](mailto:va2@theshadetree.org) or [ad@theshadetree.org](mailto:ad@theshadetree.org)

### The Rape Crisis Center

Provides crisis intervention, advocacy, support and education to those affected by sexual violence.

Phone: (702) 366-1640

Email:

[staff@therapeccrisiscenter.org](mailto:staff@therapeccrisiscenter.org)

Hearing Impaired Services: 1-800-326-6868, 24 hours a day or if in Nevada call 711.

National Domestic Violence Hotline TTY 1-800-787-3224

Language Line: National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) - free 140 language line

### Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN)

Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN) provides support and advocacy for adults and children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in southern Nevada.

Phone (702) 382-2326

Email: [afan@afanlv.org](mailto:afan@afanlv.org)

### Thought of the Day

Be Good to Yourself  
and to Others!

Submitted by-- Gluskab



# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**City Council Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month except on holidays.**

City Hall Council Chambers:  
400 Stewart Ave., Las Vegas, NV

Morning session begins at 9:00 am  
Afternoon session begins at 1:00 pm  
(public comment is at the end)

## **Meet the Mayor!**

Generally, every month Mayor Oscar Goodman has a "Coffee with the Mayor" followed by an open door meeting. These meetings are open to all and participation is encouraged.

For date and place, call the mayor's office at: 229-6241

**Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition's Committee on Homelessness**

Meets every third Thursday of the month at 2:00 pm at the Clark County Government Center Commission Chambers, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, NV.

## **High School Students / Nonprofit Organizations**

High school students who are interested in volunteering their time and nonprofit organizations looking for assistance are invited to the second annual Project: Volunteer event from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday, April 10, at the Veterans Memorial Leisure Services Center located at 101 North Pavilion Center Drive. The event will provide a venue where nonprofit organizations can provide individuals with information on volunteer opportunities. The event is free for both organizations and individuals seeking information. Call 229-4645 for more information or visit [www.lasvegasnevada.gov/projectvolunteer](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/projectvolunteer)



NEVADA HOMELESS ALLIANCE

**Nevada Homeless Alliance includes service providers and consumers in the region working together as resources and advocates for the homeless.**

**For more information and a schedule of upcoming meetings, please contact**

**Kim Amato via email at [nvhomelessalliance@yahoo.com](mailto:nvhomelessalliance@yahoo.com) or phone at (702) 455-2699.**

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Help Hope Home by phone at (702) 455-5832, email at [caw@co.clark.nv.us](mailto:caw@co.clark.nv.us) or visit [www.helphopehome.org](http://www.helphopehome.org)



**Help Hope Home**

*Helping the Homeless in Southern Nevada*  
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