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Volume 1 No 6

GIVING A VOICE TO HOMELESS PEOPLE IN NEVADA

AUGUST 2007

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

By Linda Lera-Randle El
—Founder of Straight From the Streets

Someone once said: "No one is truly dead until they are forgotten." All of us at Forgotten Voice want to make sure that the men, women and children of the streets are not Forgotten, even in death. Please take a moment to honor the people of the streets whose journey has ended. And remember, their memory and their struggles live on. We must all keep up the good fight.

Mitchell Morillo, 43 years old
Date of Death: January 13, 2007

Jeffrey Roberts, 37 years old
Date of Death: February 24, 2007

Patrick John Hanley, 54 years old
Date of Death: April 20, 2007

John Douglas Wells, Jr., 59 years old
Date of Death: June 6, 2007

William Morse, 58 years old
Date of Death: January 13, 2007

Allen Robert Humann, 70 years old
Date of Death: March 5, 2007

Ruben Pascual Cruz, 54 years old
Date of Death: April 22, 2007

Gustavo Salinas-Martinez, 42 years old
Date of Death: June 21, 2007

John Doe
(AKA "Drywall Plant"), age unknown
Date of Death: January 31, 2007

Karry Grant Johnson, 52 years old
Date of Death: March 8, 2007

Randy Alloway, 37 years old
Date of Death: April 23, 2007

Francisco Medina-Villanueva, 60 years old
Date of Death: June 21, 2007

Frank Kenneth Franklin, 65 years old
Date of Death: February 4, 2007

Alfred Kanu, 23 years old
Date of Death: March 8, 2007

John Jacob Jacobs, 52 years old
Date of Death: April 25, 2007

Earl Thomas Wisse, 46 years old
Date of Death: June 26, 2007

Robert George Bielaski, 62 years old
Date of Death: February 8, 2007

Nancy Hadley, 62 years old
Date of Death: March 10, 2007

David Swegman, 51 years old
Date of Death: May 14, 2007

Charles F. McHatton, 71 years old
Date of Death: June 26, 2007

Brian Michael Robinson, 36 years old
Date of Death: March 22, 2007

Jon William Webb, 59 years old
Date of Death: May 15, 2007

Joaquin L. Hernandez, 41 years old
Date of Death: May 22, 2007

Andre Rogers, 38 years old
Date of Death: July 3, 2007

Lyle Rogers, 59 years old
Date of Death: February 19, 2007

Bridget L. Briggs, 30 years old
Date of Death: March 28, 2007

Danny Bradshaw, 55 years old
Date of Death: June 3, 2007

John Joseph Peters, 55 years old
Date of Death: July 7, 2007

Stephan Leroy Thomas, 50 years old
Date of Death: February 23, 2007

Paul Andrew Nicola, 38 years old
Date of Death: April 13, 2007

Inside This Edition: A Bit of Respect
Also: A Casual Comment and
Do Faith-Based Organizations Need a "Faith-Lift"?

OUR MISSION IS TO BE A VOICE FOR 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.

FORGOTTEN VOICE WELCOMES ALL SUBMISSIONS IN THE FORM OF FICTION, JOURNALISM, ARTWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND POETRY. WE ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGE THOSE LIVING ON THE STREETS TO USE THIS SPACE TO DEBATE AND DISCUSS ISSUES OF POVERTY, HOUSING, AND HOMELESSNESS. FORGOTTEN VOICE DOES NOT SUPPORT CENSORSHIP, AND THE SELECTION OF SUBMISSIONS FOR PRINT WILL BE MADE BASED ON THE QUALITY OF A PIECE, NOT ITS VIEWPOINT. HOWEVER, FORGOTTEN VOICE DISCOURAGES PIECES INTENDED TO HARASS, INCITE BIGOTRY, OR ADVERTISE FOR PROFIT. FORGOTTEN VOICE WILL NOT PRINT SHORTENED OR EDITED VERSIONS OF WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S PRIOR CONSENT.

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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

A Humble Response

To the Editor:

I just finished reading an issue of "Forgotten Voice," and let me begin by commending everyone who has put their time, money, and voice into creating a remarkable paper, and using their voices to speak about a worthy cause.

I'm not anyone important. I'm not on any homeless advocate boards, or on homeless advocate committees, or a lobbyist for homeless rights.

I'm just a girl who grew up in poverty and who has been on the verge of being homeless a couple of times. I'm just a girl who understands the voice of the homeless. I'm just a girl who drives down the street and sees someone homeless and tears well up into my eyes. I'm just a girl who will take the time to roll down my window and either give money or, if I have none, which is often since I'm a full time student, give a smile, a greeting, or a kind word.

I'm just a girl who counts my blessings every single day.

Homelessness is color blind, gender blind, and educationally blind. It does not discriminate. It can happen to me or you or perhaps it was me or you on the corner last week. I pray that this paper will be read by not just homeless people or poor people but by ALL PEOPLE. It is so important to hear the stories of these people. It is so important for people to get a chance to walk in their shoes, if only for a moment. It is important to erase the ignorant stereotype that people hold relating to the fear that all of us hold deep down inside: "That could be me pushing that cart and sleeping on the street." Ignorance leads to fear;

truth leads to empowerment. I pray this paper is distributed to all residents of Southern Nevada so that they can become empowered, so that they may one day take a stand against homelessness. Not because they pity the homeless, but because they *are* the homeless and the homeless is them.

--Jasmine Herbert

A Rebuttal

Briefly scanning "Homeless vs. Senseless" by David M.—it is replete with error. A voice of an angry person who would or could not follow simple regulations. I can only suppose he was in their recovery program for a few days—then asked to leave.

This article is his payback. Sad.

Though a senior at UNLV and in an internship, I am technically still "homeless." I celebrated 26 years C&S last April Fool's Day (appropriate?). I volunteer time at STEPS Club. It is the only 24-hour such facility in Las Vegas. It is located in the midst of Gentlemen's Clubs (CanCan, Spearmint Rhino, Diamond Cabaret, and Foxy Girls) at 3044 S. Highland (364-1212). I do not have a schedule of meetings, but most are offered: AA, NA, CA, GA, EA, and OA. AA and NA at 0800, 1200, 1830 and 2400 every day of the week. The Club itself is a private business—while anyone can attend meetings—one cannot sleep in the building. Stop by.

--John F. Goodwin
AKA "Reno John"

State of Emergency

Most condominiums in Las Vegas are expansive and beautiful, aren't they? The buffets are fabulous and painstakingly prepared, isn't that right? In contrast, the shelters accommodate at the most 100 persons, and no females or children. There are three in Las Vegas and four counting City Mission, which has no overnight stay for anyone. Food is prepared to feed livestock and not human beings; only when homeless advocates pass out lunches is there any sense of care.

There are over 12,000 homeless in Las Vegas alone.

Billions of dollars are allocated to various overseas agendas and government research and development institutions, and not even a million dollars to cure a common ill in our own backyard (homelessness). Las Vegas has the means to solve this issue within a year and set the standard for other cities all across America to follow.

Compassion, cooperation and commitment are the keys needed to lay the groundwork. I recommend we (a) use Randy B's solution, (b) centrally locate all help agencies, and (c), instead of imploding casinos, turn them over for employment and housing for homeless persons, renaming them the "Urban Pride Resort Hotel and Casino," an establishment subject to the same rules and policies and contributions as all the other casinos.

Las Vegas' image needs a makeover, and this is one way to right a serious wrong. Isn't it true that bees are attracted to honey and not vinegar? Instead of trying to murder people, kill them with kindness. Wake up Mayor,

Governor, business owners and community; sound the state of emergency call and begin to remedy what is wrong with society.

--Charles McClarty

We welcome and encourage feedback and letters to the editor. Please keep your letters brief, and email them to:

amanda@forgottenvoice.org

with "letter to the editor" in the subject line. Please include your first and last name, or a nickname if you prefer to remain anonymous. You may also mail letters to:

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Ste. 105 — #155
Las Vegas, NV 89117**

**Thanks to all of our readers!
We look forward to hearing from you!**

Want to pick up a copy of each issue hot off the press? Want to hand-deliver a submission or letter to the editor? Meet our team as we distribute the paper each first Sunday of the month! We start at Frank Wright Plaza (next to the bus station and City Hall downtown) around 2 p.m. and then work our way over to the Main and Owens area. We'd love to meet you!

A BIT OF RESPECT

By Rick Rosser

It was July 2, 1998, a blistering hot summer day on Owens Avenue in North Vegas. My belly was full from the meal of burgers from the dumpster at McDonald's. It was my first such meal, but Bobby had been there before, and knew wherein to find the best the dumpster had to offer. I had been beaned in the head with a Gatorade bottle from a passing car earlier, and had about a half-bottle of water left from the nice lady at the Utotem. My head hurt, but not nearly as bad as the ruptured disc in my neck. And neither hurt as bad as when the man in the silk suit had spat on me the previous day.

I was walking down the hill toward the railroad bridge. I had never seen this old black man walking before; he had always been sitting in his spot under the bridge, watching the world pass by. But today, with his horribly broken right leg, probably from some long ago tragedy forgotten by everyone but him, he was struggling with his homemade crutch—a forked tree branch—to get up the hill I was easily going down.

Bobby was about ten steps ahead of me, and stepped out onto the blacktop to pass him. I envied Bobby for his socks; someone had stolen mine the night before. As I approached him, he looked up, and struggled to take a step to the side so I could pass. He knew that the blacktop street was about 15 degrees hotter than the sidewalk. He could probably see the sweat running from my oversized leather shoes. I could have stepped to the side for him, but he beat me to it. As I passed him, he looked me right in the eye, slightly nodded, a bead of sweat on his forehead turning to a rivulet, and smiled a strained grin wide enough to show the few of his remaining teeth. He was the only man in over a month to show me any respect at all, including myself. I

stopped dead in my tracks and looked back as he passed, and saw the dirt and twigs in the back of his hair. He did not look back. I figured he was going to the shelter for some water. I felt a cold chill. I closed my eyes, but all I could see was his face, and that look, and I felt something new . . . I looked at my watch; it was about 3:00.

Bobby said “That’s just Billy, he ain’t nothing. Come on, let’s go . . .”

* * *

On July 4, 1998, I spent the night at the Salvation Army homeless shelter in North Las Vegas.

The lights had been out for about half an hour. I was grateful for the shower and the thin foam pad between my skinny ass and the vinyl floor. My mind was racing so fast I couldn’t slow it down long enough to sleep.

POP! POP! POP! POP! We all heard the shots. The 6-year-old boy next to me on the floor said to his father on the other side: “Daddy, them was gunshots.”

His father replied: “No, son, this is the fourth of July. Them’s just firecrackers.”

“No daddy, them was gunshots. I know.”

“Hush, son. We are safe here. Go to sleep.” I looked at my Seiko, but the crystal was cracked and fogged over. I looked at the clock on the wall; it was 10:55. “The big hand is splitting the aces,” I thought to myself. I wondered who might be driving the BMW I had lost a year earlier.

The next morning we were gathered for a breakfast of Malt-o-Meal and powdered eggs when someone yelled “Hey, somebody shot Shuffles!” I didn’t know who Shuffles was, but I went with the crowd around the building and started down the hill. The old crippled man was lying on his back in the dirt under the railroad trestle, with four large bloodstains on his shirt in a diamond pattern. The

crowd gathered behind me on the other side of the street, completely silent. Wolfman seemed to have a lucid moment, and was the only one who spoke, “He only had \$42.00.”

First the sound of the siren, then the first police car arrived. The policeman halfway ran up to him and checked for a pulse. He was obviously dead. The policeman carefully backed down the hill, walking in his own footsteps, careful not to disturb the crime scene. As he went back to his car, he hesitated at the back and started to look up at the silent crowd gathered at the line where the curb ended and the blacktop started. He started to look up at us, but then just looked back at the ground. After a short hesitation, he went inside his car and got on the radio.

I looked at the large pool of blood that had rolled up in the dirt as it rolled down the hill . . .

Three more police cars showed up and blocked the scene. The policemen gathered in the middle of their parked cars and began to talk and laugh. And I felt a kind of anger building in the pit of my stomach that I had not known before. Then I realized that the policemen were probably laughing and joking as a way to keep from going nuts over stuff like this. Wait a minute, now I’m getting mad.

I took off down the hill, went to the park and tried to cry. I couldn’t. I needed to puke, but I couldn’t. Was that going to be my fate? Would I end up that way? I had learned to play the role of the victim without even knowing it. No More. I hadn’t been good and mad in over a year; I couldn’t defend myself without anger; this felt good, and hurt, and confusing, and . . .

* * *

It is now April, 2007. Almost a year since I found out that Bobby was

the one who killed Billy. Nine years of wondering if I had stopped that day and offered him some of my water, would it have made a difference? Waiting to find out if Bobby will go to trial, knowing I need to be there. It was not Billy's death that changed my life; it was that bit of respect he showed me that miserable day.

I’m still tired from last week’s 1200 mile drive to Vegas, from seeing first hand that the number of people suffering that misery and despair has at least doubled. Still seeking answers I do not have, still holding onto the faith I found on the street. And still wondering if I would ever finish the book I started writing in 1998.

“Whataya doin’, dad?” my six year old son just asked. “I am writing about a man I once met who lived under a bridge,” I reply.

“He lived under a bridge? Why didn’t he just go home?”

“Well, son, that was kinda his home.”

“Well, where did he go to the bathroom?”

“I don’t know, son. Sometimes the most important parts are what you leave out.”

“He died, didn’t he?”

“Yes son, he did.”

“Can I play my computer game now?”

“Sure, son, just give me a minute.”

I stop and thank God for this life, this home, this crappy old computer, the broken washer in the backyard, and the one in the house that works. I hug my woman and tell her I love her, and she tells me the same. I wonder if I am worthy of what I have. And although I never spoke with Billy Ray Owens, I see his face every day. And as long as I can wake each day and take a breath, his voice will not be forgotten . . .

DO FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS NEED A "FAITH LIFT"?

By Linda Lera-Randle El
—Founder of Straight From the Streets

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

We have been hearing that there are homeless programs that are not supplying and are actually denying water or food to homeless people camped outside their properties. If this is true, then please do not call yourself a faith-based organization.

If your mission or charity or business is guilty of withholding life-sustaining supplies—especially such necessities as water or food—and you consider yourself

faith-based, then you need a FAITH LIFT!! I do not profess to know a lot about the Bible, but somehow I doubt that within the pages of the Bible it gives any license to starve or deny water to hungry and thirsty people.

If your charity is denying water, food, bathroom services, or rest to the people of the streets and you consider yourself faith-based, think again. And think about this: You may actually be contributing to the death of a person! Water is not a luxury item!!

*If you are homeless and have had an experience like this with a charity, please submit an article about your experience for future print in *Forgotten Voice*.*

FROM A MAN WHO HAS WORN YOUR SHOES

By Rick Moore

First of all, let me give you a little background concerning me and my history as a homeless man. The vagabond lifestyle called me in 1993 when my father passed away. I couldn't deal with the passing. I was raised in the Las Vegas area since moving here in 1964. I attended all my schooling here in L.V. and went on to join the U.S. Army in 1978. There had always been some magic and mystery associated with the life away from society, so in 1993 having given up on myself, I moved to a field at M.L.K. and Bonanza.

I spent a year there dodging the police and working off the corner. Some weeks were really good money-wise, but after doing drugs to forget and gambling away my money in hopes of getting rich, I ended up either eating at the L.V. Rescue Mission or the Salvation Army. Now back then it was a blessing when there was peanut butter at the Mission or the Salvation Army. Well, let's just say I was fed.

I hopped a freight train headed for Salt Lake City where I spent the next 13 and a half years living in a tent down by the river. If you ever wore my shoes, then you can imagine the things I put myself through.

Well, enough about the bad, let me tell you about the good.

Today I celebrate 5 months sober and gambling free.

(Editor's note: This article was written in June.) You have no idea how wonderful that is; that is, unless you wore my shoes. On January 10th of 2007 I surrendered and finally got sick and tired of being sick and tired, and joined the 1 year program at the L.V. Rescue Mission. You can't imagine how many times I have been ready to leave, but hey, listen, for me, I have to stay. When I first got here I couldn't believe all the stuff they were making me do. Reflecting back I could have left at any time. Since walking through the gate I have been saved, baptized, and now I have the best job at the mission. I get to coordinate the evening meal.

Around the first of the month we serve about 200 to 300 people. Towards the end of the month that number grows to around 500 people. Nowadays it's not just soup in the soup line. Through the numerous donations there is usually something besides soup and coming from the streets, I know what it's like to walk in your shoes. Well, I don't want to sugar coat it, but let me just say, "There's a better way. All you have to do is decide that you are worth it." So come on over to the mission. I won't promise you the moon, but I will promise you a bowl of soup and an open mind because I've worn your shoes.

Let's talk.

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PROFITABLE REFLECTIONS

By Tyrell Cacye

The need for right and appropriate action requires us to address those things that seemingly hit the mark, but leave much to be desired.

Don't get me wrong. This is not an indictment of non-profit organizations that consistently produce the results stipulated in their grants, but an inquiry into why so many nonprofits pop up to address a need only to shrink into a system of self preservation and funding opportunism.

It seems true to me that branding is important. One of the single most important factors in an organization's success is its ability to define who it is and systematically offer the service it specializes in consistently. Having defined goals and focus in service implementation shapes the public's opinion about what, when, how and why organizations perform. This alone serves as testament to a given organization's commitment to its mission and the solidarity in the stakeholders who defined that mission. Too many nonprofits, in an effort to stay afloat, seek to be all things to all people. Putting the cart before the horse, they hire development personnel to seek out monies available for the next great cause. Is it any wonder why our clients have little respect for us who don't realize that, as organizations, we are their reflections? We who administer the programs and are in charge of funding are the first to be critical of the opportunistic nature of clients who, "spread the info on the hook up," yet we do the same thing with funding sources in networking meetings and incestuous collaborations to fit the requirements of the grant opportunities.

Program Managers, Administrators, Development Officers and line staff: how does it feel to have a mirror held up that shows the reflection of a process you are trying

to alleviate? If this makes you uncomfortable, welcome; you are in the right place. Why? Because your discomfort shows that you are not so removed from the dynamic that you can't take an honest look at your place in it. If, however, this article puts you off and into a tirade of justifications and minimizations of the facts, well . . . I could list the number of nonprofits who have bitten the dust under such responses. Say what you will, at some point in your existence, the actions you have wrought will judge you and result in your sustenance, vindication or demise. To doom and gloom? I can think of some board chairs that needed this information before the enlightened state of 20/20 hindsight. Can you?

That being said, all things must be put into perspective. Nonprofits are businesses that support everyday people. Everyday people want security and the ability to use their resources, economic or otherwise, as they see fit. We who provide services are the resources for the needy. Isn't it ironic that service implementation is wrapped up in continuing funding; wrapped up in supporting everyday people who are wrapped up in manipulating their resources to acquire status and objects that promote a removal from the people they serve? Why else would managers, politicians and nonprofit line staff need to camp outside in Carson City in tents? A fundraiser? Okay, I'll buy that one. To experience what homeless people go through? Interesting. Especially since no homeless person has exactly the same story or experience.

Why even pose these questions? Because I am a formerly homeless person who worked with nonprofits and experienced first hand the apathy and malaise, the hypnotic suggestion of doing a public service, which is

really empowering the haughty and accomplished people who matter at the expense of those who don't.

Is it any wonder why some people find it easier, socially, just to "check out?" The double standards of those who propose to help you, but don't want you on their boards or planning committees. Who want to see you in need, but not see you in stakeholder meetings reminding you of how you've failed this or that one.

Again, this is not meant to be an indictment, just a perspective for reflection and organizational introspection.

CALL FOR ARTICLES!!!

Homeless/formerly homeless? What are your ideas for possible solutions to end homelessness in Nevada? If you were a mayor, governor, or some other political leader, how would you address homelessness? We're looking forward to reading your ideas!

"Love is free; it is not practiced as a way of achieving other ends. Those who practice charity in the Church's name will never seek to impose the Church's faith upon others. They realize that a pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven by love. A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak."

—Pope Benedict XVI, from his first encyclical "God is Love".

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TALKING WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE

By Kurt Borchard

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

PICTURES AND WORDS

I have seen several photographs in *Forgotten Voice* that have reminded me of homeless life in Las Vegas. I want to try to write some words that might be worth a few pictures. I want to describe the courtyard outside of the Salvation Army Day Shelter that I observed last fall.

Between three and four-dozen people usually sit here during the afternoon. Many sit on the curb just outside the building, or under the two covered areas, or around the two-foot tall brick circle wall surrounding the dirt where five emaciated shrubs grow. In the heat of the early fall almost everyone is searching for shade. A two-foot tall concrete brick fence surrounds the courtyard, and on top of that stands a three-foot tall metal fence. Although the concrete under our feet is spotted and filthy, there isn't much trash on it—today a man with a Salvation Army badge frequently comes by with a dust broom to collect small refuse in the courtyard, particularly the dead matches and the absolutely unsmokable, abandoned cigarette butts no one wants. Other days, no one comes around and the garbage lies uncollected which, if wet, the flies enjoy.

During one of my visits, a Cheeto lies in the courtyard for a spell, but is then suddenly snatched up by one of the pigeons that had been resting on top of the large coverings in the shade of nearby roofs. An army of pigeons stands on the edge of the roof and day shelter door overhang when they are not grousing in the center shrubs, or dive-bombing for edible trash. The word someone in the yard uses to describe those pigeons and the sparrows beside them is “bold”—they regularly fly at the people I talk to and at me. It's a game of chicken I find so

convincing that I regularly duck. The pigeons walk in the yard with very little regard for their safety, sometimes wary of the children, but otherwise ignoring the homeless people around them like so much of this city does.

The birds snack on garbage in the brick circle, pushing around the inedible cans, paper, and butts, and then fly right at your head. The ones on the edge of the roof or on the overhang sometimes turn around to relieve themselves. A guy I know, Jimmy, points out a guy who has been shit on, who is now cleaning brownish green spots on his shirt. Jimmy chuckles at his misfortune. I too have come away with such spots on my clothing after sitting in the yard. Jimmy says people who are more observant, or who can find alternate space in the shade, learn to both look up for the birds and look down at the ground before sitting.

A little girl with light brown skin and braids wearing light blue shorts and a T-shirt plays in the center area, causing more dirt to accumulate on her pink tennis shoes. She plays hide and seek with six other kids, and is easily found in the emaciated bushes. An older boy, playing soccer, kicks his flat ball high into the air, and hits a seated man directly on top of his head, who then admonishes the boy. Several kids don't seem to want to play, but simply sit with their parents, or occasionally wander. Other adults sit, have conversations, eat food out of Styrofoam containers and sandwiches out of plastic wrap, lie wrapped in blankets, roll cigarettes, smoke, read, pace, hold their bags, talk, and wait.

There is a patch of dirt about five feet wide between the concrete and the fence. Homeless people store things there—bicycles, the remains of bicycles, wheelchairs, baby strollers,

luggage, bed rolls, milk crates, cardboard boxes, black garbage bags filled with things. People lie down in this area, sometimes on their stuff or near it. Several couples lie together often under separate blankets, holding hands or talking. A man sleeps with his pants down past his underwear (which might have once been white) and a shirt that cannot contain his stomach rolls. A family tends to a baby in stroller, while adults come over to make faces and noises at the baby, complimenting the parents. Whole parts of this area are abandoned when the sun shines directly on them, but then are reclaimed when the sun hides.

I have been amazed at the sleep people have managed to get in the yard. More accurately, I have been amazed at coming across someone almost daily that manages to sleep without any padding between his or her clothes and the concrete.

You have to wonder how tired someone is who can pass out on concrete.

A CASUAL COMMENT

By Raymond Esquivel

The Casual Labor Office located on A St. is very discriminatory, in my opinion, because of their lottery program. The number I draw determines when a slot will be available if a job is offered. If the employer refuses to hire me because of my handicapped status, what happens to my lottery slot for the day? Do I have to repeat the process all over again, waiting all day long, only to get turned down because the lottery process only gives me one shot at a possible job?

My handicap status, which is deafness, means that the employees or staff members should reserve an open slot for work at the earliest possible convenience as the job slot opens during the following day or days. I feel that the lottery system of the Casual Labor Office should be changed to meet the needs of the handicapped who wait all day only to get turned down because of the incompetence of the system.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

August Announcements

Meet the Mayor!

Mayor Goodman is hosting several Open Door Meetings in order to hear your concerns and answer questions about city government. The meetings are open to all and your participation is encouraged! The next Coffee With The Mayor will take place from 7:30 to 9 a.m. on Friday, August 10, at the Starbucks, located at 751 N. Rancho (at Bonanza). The mayor's Open Door meeting will be held the same day from 10 to 10:30 a.m. in City Council Chambers, located at 400 Stewart Ave. For more information call the mayor's office at 229-6241.

Free Community Legal Education Classes

Classes offered until August 20:

Bankruptcy: Thursdays at 8 a.m. & Spanish Family Law: Fridays at 1 p.m.
(Clark county Legal Services, 800 S. Eighth St.)

Small Claims: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
(Nevada Legal Services, 530 S. Sixth St.)

For more information and a complete list of classes, call 386-1070, ext. 155

Kathleen Dye

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**Founded in 1989 in Southern California,
HomeAid partners with homeless housing
providers and the building industry to build
housing for America's homeless.**

MISSION

to build housing where homeless families and individuals
can rebuild their lives

VISION

to be a vital force in eliminating homelessnesscurrent

PROJECTS

- st. jude's ranch for childrenrenovation of 40-acre
campusequal to 56 shelter beds
- women's development centerrenovation of 5 apartment
buildingsequal to 74 shelter beds
- boys hope girls hope new construction of an 8 bed home
for girls
- girls and boys town new construction of 2 homes for 12
youth

Paid Advertisement

LABOR DAWGS: PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOMELESS

By Mike Lee, Facilitator

Note: *This article and our present efforts are made possible by the generous support of the community. We want to especially acknowledge Premier Staffing who have truly given us hope for a better day. Our Day Will Come.*

Present efforts to address homelessness overlook the fact that many homeless people are currently employed, underemployed or have just recently attained a job. Numerous shelter rules penalize employed homeless people by imposing non-yielding shelter curfews and allowing basic services to be provided only at specific times.

Last year, Clark County spent 25 million dollars and reduced the homeless population by about 10%. In order to eradicate the scourge of this extreme type of poverty it stands to reason the County Commissioners would need to spend 250 million dollars, cross their fingers, and hope that no one else lacks the resources to buy their own housing. This wish and hope strategy is best exemplified by the current funding of a summer day shelter at the cost of thousands of dollars which does nothing more than give single men a place to watch TV. If followed to its logical conclusion, the current strategy will make it necessary to escalate fees and taxes to astronomical levels.

What is never spoken about—except in quiet whispers—is the hidden cost of homelessness. There is no scientific method which can calculate the cost of homeless people sleeping in a business doorway or loitering in a parking lot or outside a shop

A new effort by Father Flanagan LTD, entitled Labor Dawgs, was launched recently to address the predicament of the working poor. Declaring that it is good business to end homelessness, the mission of Labor Dawgs is to provide employment opportunities and direct services to homeless people. Working with local faith-based organizations, Labor Dawgs is currently recruiting on-call convention workers for Premier Staffing. These positions pay no less than \$9.00 an hour and some pay as much as \$15.00. It is this type of partnership between a non-profit and a for profit enterprise that promises to have an immediate and lasting impact on the number of people living on the streets of one of the wealthiest cities in the world.

For more information, log on to www.labordawgs.citymax.com or call (702) 968-5341.