

STREETVIBES

Cover Story

Homeless Remembered on Winter Solstice

Each year since 1990, on or near the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, (GCCH) and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) along with numerous other homeless organizations



around the country sponsor the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless friends who have paid

the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness.

Homeless Memorial Day is also a chance to mourn the national tragedy of homelessness in general and bring awareness to the suffering of the 25,000 men, women and children who experience homelessness each year in Cincinnati. "It is great to see the community pull together to help provide relief for the people experiencing homelessness in Cincinnati," stated Georgine Getty, Executive Director of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, "it's just unfortunate that we have to meet on such somber terms. It's a tragedy that people continue to die homeless."

This year's event was held Wednesday evening, December 21st in Cincinnati's Washington Park. Dozens of people listened as the names of the deceased were read aloud. An

ecumenical prayer service was held in Over-the-Rhine's Washington Park at dusk. Supporters gathered around a warming fire in a barrel to remember those who have passed.

In an effort to maximize the impact of the day, NCH, the GCCH and the NHCHC encouraged local and statewide organizations to hold memorials of their own. Last year, over 100 cities across the nation, from Detroit to Seattle to Washington, DC, sponsored events to honor those who had died and to recommit to the task of ending homelessness.

This year, cities across the nation sponsored events, which included candle light marches and vigils, graveside services, plays and other performances and special religious services. Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Dayton all held candle light vigils, encouraging all to attend.

For over 20 years, concerned citizens, religious persons, students, homeless advocates and people experiencing homelessness have gathered on the Winter Solstice in December for National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day.

In Cleveland, the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) in conjunction with Care Alliance held the 19th Annual Candlelight Vigil. The vigil took place at St. Patrick's Catholic Church Meal Site on West 38th and Bridge Avenue. Last year in Cleveland mourners gathered at the 18th annual candlelight vigil at St. Patrick's Church to remember and read the names of the homeless men and women who died in Cleveland over the past year. The 15th annual Teach In was set to follow in January 2005, to raise awareness about homelessness and honor the memory of homeless people who have died.

In Dayton, advocates gathered at Courthouse Square at noon on December 21st for a reading of the homeless individuals' names that have passed away.



Lighting of the candles in Cincinnati's Washington Park

Last year in Austin, Texas for the eleventh year in a row, mourners held a Sunrise Homeless Memorial Service at 6:57 a.m. on November 14. Men and women met at the Homeless Memorial Plaque and Tree of Remembrance to sing, salute homeless veterans, and listen to several speakers. The House the Homeless Curtis Ray Wilson Compassion Award, given in honor of a homeless man who died in Austin earlier that year, was presented to Detective Lisa Morrill. Sara Hickman sang several songs, including "What if God Was One of Us" and "I Wish You Well."

In Indianapolis, Indiana, the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention and The FaithCEP cosponsored a memorial to commemorate the 22 homeless men and women who died in Indianapolis in 2004. Mourners created a large sign to memorialize the deceased, while several homeless and formerly homeless speakers spoke to the large crowd. Volunteers blew out one candle as the name of each homeless person was read. Dan Shepley, director of the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention, noted, "I think it throws a spotlight on the fact that homelessness is a life or death issue."



Gathering in front of the fire barrel, Washington Park



Streetvibes, the Tri-State's alternative news source, is a newspaper written by, for, and about the homeless and contains relevant discussions of social justice, and poverty issues. It is published once a month by the **Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless**.

Becoming a *Streetvibes* Vendor is a great way for homeless and other low-income people to get back on (or stay on) their feet. *Streetvibes* Vendors are given an orientation and sign a code of conduct before being given a *Streetvibes* Vendor badge. Vendors are private contractors who DO NOT work for, or represent, the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless. All profits go directly to the vendor.

The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless is a group of shelters, agencies and individuals committed to ending homelessness in Cincinnati through coordinating services, educating the public and grassroots organizing.

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Each One, Touch One

by **George Herrell**

"Each one, teach one," the saying goes. Well the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless has taken that idea to a whole new level with their "Outreach Speakers Program."

This program enlists individuals who are either presently or formerly homeless to speak to civic groups, sharing their stories and discussing the issues faced by today's homeless population.

I was recently honored with the opportunity to speak to a group of very civic minded young men and women at Shroder Paideia Academy and I must say that the experience was one I'll never forget!

The young people to whom I spoke had set up a "shantytown" at the school and were actually planning on spending the night in it. As I shared my story I looked in the eyes of those youth and I could clearly see the heartfelt interest and compassion.

This was my very first engagement for the Homeless Coalition's Speakers Program and I'm not sure what I expected. All I can say is that if there are more youths out there like those to whom I spoke, then there is still hope for this country!

After I told them my story I

asked if they had any questions and the ones they asked were not only intelligent, some of them were quite challenging.

Monique Little, the education coordinator for the Homeless Coalition had accompanied me to the event and several times I had to refer to her for assistance in answering the questions after which I dedicated both the questions and answers to memory. This was definitely a "sharing experience" where everyone learned something.

I had shared the experience of being an absentee father with a problem of addiction and after the lecture one young lady approached me with tears in her eyes and shared with me that her father was also an absentee father who had suffered with addiction. She said my talk had given her a whole new outlook and left her with the hope of re-establishing an active father/daughter relationship with him. A young man said that he had thought

the issue of beating homelessness was cut and dry - "Get an income, get a place to live." However, now he knew that the problem for some was much more complex.

When I talk about my experiences I'm always very open and honest; I pull no punches and I make no excuses for my own plight. I believe that the only way to educate and to work towards a solution is to keep it real.

Although I much prefer speaking to youth seeing that they are our future, the speakers program is open to all civic groups regardless of age, and never will pass up an

opportunity to share or to learn. after lecturing I always encourage individuals to share their experience with family members and peers. That's how wisdom is spread!

For more information about the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless' Speakers Bureau, please contact Monique Little at (513) 421-7803, extension 14.



George Herrell

Bagel Dude

by **John Hoff**

He would come, you see, with gifts of free bagels, walking down the street handing out this manna. The cult was only known among the street youth until court battles against the Sidran No Sitting Ordinance accidentally revealed its existence to the outside world. Questioned at length about rational reasons for sitting on the sidewalk, a homeless youth confessed...she would wait, sometimes, looking for The Bagel Dude. Like a figure from scripture, he was described as a "Good Samaritan" whose mission, certain evenings, was to walk down University Way, handing out bagels.

Sometimes he would take a while to arrive, and then the youth would wait, congregate, peel eyes and divide up the turning of heads down various directions of the street. You see, Bagel Dude didn't want to cause a commotion and blow his corporate connection to the Big Rock Doughy Mountain of excess bread largesse. So he would

appear quietly, in different spots along University Way. And when he would be maddeningly late in coming (like the Messiah) the youth would, only half jokingly, put all fingers of both hands together in a big thick "O" shape, making The Sign Of The Bagel Dude.

"Bagel Duuuuuuuuude," they would say, making the sign above their heads and rocking, eyes closed momentarily. "Bagel Duuuuuuuuude."

I had not thought about The Cult Of The Bagel Dude for many years, until one recent Sunday when I was in a bagel shop in Dinkytown, which is kind of like University Way, only it's in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I now study Public Administration at the Humphrey Institute. Rather than paying through the nose to have somebody make me a bagel sandwich at the shop, I prefer to buy a bag of day old bagels, a tub of salmon cream cheese (private homage to Seattle, which will always be, at some level, my home) and make my own sandwiches while messing around on wireless internet. But this

particular day the guy behind the counter informed me that he would give me the bagels, since the store was closing early and they would soon be thrown out. In fact, he told me, I could have all the day old bagels.

I obtained a bag and took all the bagels, and there were still bagels left over. I rearranged the contents of my backpack, stuffing bags of bagels between manila folders, and still there were bagels. I rearranged the contents of the bagel bag, again, and miraculously managed to rescue every last bagel. Walking down the street, I remembered the humble, saint-like example of Bagel Dude. Let me be like him—! I thought, looking for hungry people in need of bagels, but the homeless and street youth culture is not so deep in Minnesota as in Seattle...the cold winter kills social roots, yearly. So I thought that I would give the bagels to my classmates at The Humphrey Institute, leaving them in the lounge with a note. But the

Bagel Dude

cont. on page 9

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Compiled by Jimmy Heath

Of all the handwritten signs carried by all the homeless people in Santa Clara Valley, near San Jose California, Cornelius Van Der Vies might have the most original: "Donation for Engine," his says.

The engine belongs to his 1986 Volkswagen van, which is parked on Bassett Street, about five blocks from Cornelius' regular haunt outside a San Jose office building at Market and Santa Clara streets.

And yes, it's got a problem: The engine needs replacement. If it dies, the van might be towed, leaving Cornelius and his dog, Boo-Boo, with no place to sleep.

"If I had an engine that ran good, I'd get around," he says wistfully.

Ah: Another Christmas pitch. Another tear-jerker. The difference in this story, however, is that Cornelius — everyone uses his first name — has a legion of friends in the eight-story office building who have already raised \$700 for his engine.

If homelessness has a hierarchy, the 66-year-old Cornelius might be a count. Every weekday, he sits with Boo-Boo on a low stone wall facing Market Street, sporting a trim gray beard and an American flag in a star-studded cap. "Hi, sweetie," he says to a passing woman. She smiles, not seeming to mind the flattery.

"He's pleasant, he's not aggressive, he doesn't panhandle you," says Jim Sunseri, an attorney in the building, called the Entrepreneur Center. "If you didn't know he was homeless, you wouldn't guess. Everybody in the building loves him."

In Clarksville, Tenn, one of the challenges to serving the homeless is to make sure their varied needs are met. While many social service agencies are available, matching individual needs to specific providers isn't easy.

To meet that challenge, a coalition called Clarksville's Community Service Providers to End Homelessness is joining national efforts to gather volunteers, civic leaders and social service agencies in one place for one day.

"In Clarksville, we're kind of a Project Homeless Connect every day of the week," said Beverly Dycus of Urban Ministries. "We do this every day."

Figures from Oct. 5 show that since Clarksville's Old Firehouse

Day Shelter and Resource Center opened in February, 825 people — none counted twice — have sought assistance. Records show 440 were men and 385 women — 256 were children younger than 17, said Rita Arancibia, community development manager.

In addition to reaching more homeless people, Clarksville's event will unify the Community Service Providers to End Homelessness and bring in new agencies and departments, said Lorraine Pratt, executive director of the United Way.

"The more we work together, the more we find out what the issues are (for those who need housing)," Pratt said.

Coalition members plan to distribute fliers throughout the city to make sure Clarksville's homeless know about the event. Planners are hoping for participation from about 20 agencies, including the Department of Human Services, the Health Department, the Adult Literacy Council, Centerstone mental health services and the Adult Literacy Council.

Arancibia said Project Homeless Connect is helping the group expand its reach.

"It's really opened our eyes to the gaps," she said. "We'll see what kind of a response we get — getting the word out will be the challenge."

In San Francisco, additional emergency shelter beds opened last month as part of the city's annual program to provide homeless people with a warm place to sleep during the winter months.

The program, scheduled to operate through the end of March, provides an additional 260 emergency beds in the city, bringing the total to 1,731, said Trent Rhorer, director of the city's Human Services Agency.

The winter shelter program relies on churches and other religious institutions to provide temporary, overnight accommodations, usually as simple as a cot and a blanket. Meanwhile, the San Francisco Interfaith Council started its winter shelter program last month.

Participating churches include Trinity Episcopal Church, the First Friendship Institutional Baptist Church, Bethel AME Church, Providence Baptist Church, Third Baptist Church, St. Mary's Cathedral and the First Unitarian Church. The San Francisco Islamic Society also will open its doors.

Seattle homicide detectives are investigating the death of a homeless woman whose body was found after firefighters extinguished a small fire under the Alaskan Way Viaduct on Thanksgiving Day.

Initially, police were investigating the death of Davina Garrison, 42, as an accident. But on the following Monday, police received word from the King County Medical Examiner's Office that Garrison's death had been reclassified as a homicide due to blunt force injuries to her head, said police spokesman Sean Whitcomb.

Death investigators have not been able to find family members to notify them of Garrison's death, an investigator said. The medical examiner is awaiting toxicology results before officially determining the cause and manner of her death.

Around 3 p.m. on Nov. 24, Seattle firefighters were called to what appeared to be a small trash fire burning against a building south of downtown. The blaze was quickly extinguished and Garrison's body was found in the fire debris.

In New York City, the comptroller's audit report released last month outlined the details of the conditions at the South Ozone Park shelter, which included roach infestations, backed up toilets, mice, bedbugs and generally unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Congressman Gregory Meeks of St. Albans said they knew from the beginning the facility was too large to be appropriately maintained. With whole families living in single hotel rooms, "it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see what would happen," he said.

The Department of Homeless Services said the audit only confirmed what they already knew. "The shelter was too large and presented unique management challenges—that's why it was the first shelter we closed when the homeless census started to drop," said an agency spokesperson.

The shelter was first opened in 2002 on an "emergency basis" when the numbers of the city's homeless were on the rise. Despite early indications of unsanitary conditions (the shelter saw roof repairs and more frequent pest extermination in December 2004) it was not closed until this past August.

Under the city contract, the Salvation Army received \$72 per day per room to operate the shelter. Prior to its opening, local Council member Allan Jennings warned that the price was too steep.

Meeks agrees the city was paying too much for too little. "As the audit shows, we weren't getting the most bang for our buck."

He blames short-sightedness on the part of the city and the Salvation Army for the failings at Carlton House.

Pittsburgh police have arrested a homeless man in connection with a series of burglaries in the South Side area of Pittsburgh.

Randall Bowen, 41, was arrested last month after police said a state trooper witnessed Bowen and another person break into a home in the 1400 block of Muriel Street.

The home the men entered belonged to a friend of the trooper, police said. The trooper told police he was waiting for his friend to arrive home when he saw the men entering the home.

The trooper called 911 and then confronted the men as they were leaving the home, police said. Police later connected Bowen to other break ins in the area.

Bowen is charged with 14 counts of burglary, two counts of criminal attempt burglary, 13 counts of theft and one count of criminal conspiracy. A hearing was scheduled for Dec. 8.

Darrell Dennis, 36, also homeless, is the second person charged in the break in on Muriel Street. Dennis faces charges including burglary, theft and criminal conspiracy.

Each year, more and more teenage students in The Washington Community School District become homeless.

Homeless youth are individuals under the age of 18 who lack parental, foster, or institutional care. These young people are sometimes referred to as "unaccompanied youth." They hop from house to house, staying with friends or family. When they have nowhere to go, they sleep outside.

"Sometimes they are homeless for one day, one week, one month, or longer," said Julie Gentz, special services coordinator at Washington High School. "When they have nowhere to go, nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep, that's homeless."

Washington Community School District social worker Kelly Swift said that the assumption of many people is often that homeless kids are mentally ill or addicted to drugs. Although that is sometimes the case, frequently there is a cause much harder to remedy at the root of the problem. The cause of homelessness among adolescents in Washington is most often conflict between the child and the parent.

"They are functional kids in non-functional homes, with abusive, addicted parents," said Swift. "They are kids with poor parenting who have fallen through the cracks."

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DC Makes Plans to Protect Homeless From Cold

by Julie Buss

After witnessing an unprecedented demand for shelter on the coldest days of last winter, the District of Columbia has stepped up its plan for this season, in hopes of protecting all the city's homeless from the threat of hypothermia.

The \$1.3 million budget for the 2005-06 Winter Plan would cover up to 110 hypothermia alert days, when the wind-chill temperature dips below 32°F. On hypothermia alert days most shelters will remain open from 7am to 7pm, hours when they would normally be closed.

Although last year there were only 72 days with hypothermia alerts, the previous year a hypothermia alert was issued on 110 days during the November 1 to March 31 season.

According to Deborah Daniels, spokeswoman for the District's Department of Human Services, the Winter Plan is "designed to make sure we do everything we can to prevent homeless individuals from succumbing to hypothermia."

The need for shelter beds has risen each year. Last year saw an unprecedented demand for family housing on the coldest days. An estimated 8,925 adults sought shelter during hypothermia alerts, and the overall demand for shelter increased 23% over the 2003-04 season.

The District has allocated more shelter beds this year in every category—men, women, teens, and families—and has procedures in place to provide further shelter in case of overflow capacity. Housing for women has increased by 25 beds to 290 spaces over last season, while shelter for men has gone up by 63 beds to a total of 1,253 spaces. Housing for families has increased by 75 beds over last year.

These beds may not meet the growing need, however. The Southwest section of the city has only 25 beds—not even close to the 100 beds that were available last winter at the Randall School Shelter. (Randall was shut down in the spring.) Many shelters in other parts of the city were already at capacity on November 10, as Street Sense went to press. The New York Avenue Shelter for men counted 365 people for its 360 spaces, and the Franklin School in downtown DC was full.

Some people expressed skepticism that the District is doing enough to help during the winter season. Donald Brooks, a Street Sense vendor who sleeps at the Center for Creative Non-Violence shelter downtown, said that the city needs to provide more and better transportation to shelters in the winter, especially since many of them are far from downtown. He added that the shelters also need to have better facilities.

"They can't just warehouse people," he said. "We also need showers, meals, and much better security."

Asked whether he would go to a shelter on cold days this winter, a homeless man said, "I prefer to stay on the street than to go in there," referring to the often overcrowded and unclean hypothermia shelters. He hopes to find a single room he can afford before Christmas, but admits that it is unlikely because of rising rental prices.

Daniels, who has managed the public outreach campaign for the Winter Plan since 2001, said she believes the message for the public to be vigilant and active is getting out. "The absolute evidence of that are the calls placed to the United Planning Organization for van service" she said, in reference to the transportation service contracted by the District.

Precarious Lives

by Paul Rogat Loeb

“Advice to Retirees: Embrace the future,” syndicated columnist Tad Bartimus recently wrote in my local Seattle paper. Sounds good, but for Bartimus the future was a layoff, in a corporate cutback, from a 25-year career at the Associated Press news service. Faced with the Hobson’s choice of agreeing to it or losing all health care access and pension benefits, she suddenly had to find ways to reinvent herself and survive, with less than half of her previously promised pension. She explores how her situation echoes the predicament of more and more Americans, like those who took middle-class futures for granted at companies such as General Motors, Delta Airlines, and Ford, but who now scramble to get by at jobs paying a fraction of the wages they were used to. America’s social contract is being ripped apart, she writes—then she backs off to counsel individual adaptation and seeing life as “a banquet,” where we need to savor even the unexpected courses.

I know lots of people like Bartimus’s friend Sue. Sue worked for United Airlines for 23 years, lost her savings when the company’s

stock crashed, may lose her pension in the current bankruptcy, and has to supplement her now part-time wages with a second job cleaning houses. I recently spoke in Kokomo, Indiana, where a major Delphi plant is likely to be closed, devastating a once-secure community of decent blue-collar jobs. My brother-in-law, now eking out a living as a substitute teacher, has been out of full time work for almost a decade now, in part because of a heart condition which would saddle any but the largest employers with prohibitively unaffordable insurance costs. Everywhere I go, I encounter people with once-comfortable lives who are borrowing on their houses, running up their credit cards, losing their health insurance, and generally running faster and faster to avoid the economic abyss.

Bartimus highlights a real and urgent problem. The promises on which many of us have based our entire economic lives are no longer being honored. We’re increasingly a winner-take-all society, where those at the top gorge on luxury consumption to an extent that makes the Robber Barons look like paupers, while those at the bottom scramble for crumbs. But the solutions Bartimus counsels are exclusively individual. “The trick,” she writes, “it so figure out what comes next,” and to focus “on possibilities, not regrets.”

Maybe, she writes, she’ll forge a new future in woodworking, or open a gardening shop.

I hope Bartimus keeps landing on her feet, and I bet that she will. Of course people should, like her, be optimistic and muster all their resourcefulness, creativity, and tenacity to deal with the cards they’re dealt. But we should also work together to help insure a future where everyone gets dealt a decent hand.

The problems Bartimus describes can’t be solved by quietly accepting the global corporate mantra: “It’s here. It’s the future. Get used to it.” It’s not our individual decisions that are gutting our pensions, raising medical costs sky high, and making our lives on this rich and fruitful earth increasingly precarious. The economic squeeze faced by everyone except a handful of individuals at the top comes from thirty years of deliberate political choices—union-busting, regressive tax and trade policies, an eroding minimum wage, and a collapse of moral and political restraints on destructive greed. These pressures have been accelerated vastly since Bush took office. Think of the moral obscenity of funding the rebuilding of New Orleans by cutting food stamps, Medicaid, and low-income energy assistance. They’ll only be reversed by common effort.

I worry that by framing the solution totally in terms of individual adaptation, Bartimus steers her readers away from the major lesson of the stories she tells: that ordinary citizens must join together and speak out on the larger roots of these problems, on the choices we’re allowing to be made in our common name. If we simply buckle down and accept our fate, some of us will indeed find ways to adapt and survive, but many more will fall through the cracks. In a time when we’re taking The Apprentice as a national model, we need less silent adaptation, not more. Life should indeed be a banquet—for all of us. Whether we make it so is contingent on our common actions, not just how well we handle our individual challenges.

Paul Rogat Loeb is the author of The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen’s Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear, named the #3 political book of 2004 by the History Channel and the American Book Association, and winner of the Nautilus Award for best social change book of the year. His previous books include Soul of a Citizen. See www.paulloeb.org To receive his monthly articles email sympa@onenw.org with the subject line: subscribe paulloeb-articles

The Need for the Family Violence Option in Ohio

Lynn Williams, Lead Organizer, Ohio Empowerment Coalition

Christina never planned to end up in a County Department of Job & Family Services applying for cash assistance and food stamps. She also never planned to end up divorced. She got married with the outlook that life is good and her husband would be the breadwinner for the family. He made enough income so that she could stay home with the children.

However something went tragically wrong. Her husband started drinking heavily and when he did, Christina tried to stay away from him as far as possible. If she didn’t get away in time, he would knock her to the ground, bludgeon and ram her head in the walls of their house. Her daughter witnessed the beatings. At one point the daughter tried to call the police for help to protect her mother. Her father tore the phone wires out of the wall. Another time he hit his daughter when she was trying to protect her mother from being beaten.

Christina said, “That was the last straw for me, to see my daughter struck. That’s when I decided to leave for good.” They went to the nearest battered women’s shelter, and from there, ended up at the county welfare

department only as a last resort. She felt it was better to apply for assistance than risk her life and her children’s lives living with a breadwinner who was abusive. No one at the welfare department ever asked her if she was a victim of domestic violence.

The Federal government allows states to choose whether or not to adopt the Family Violence Option as part of their states’ public assistance programs. The designers of this policy, one of whom was the late Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, recognized that domestic violence affects a high number of families in low-income families, although battering occurs at all income levels. Sen. Wellstone recognized that battering is a main obstacle to holding down a job or even being job ready. If a main goal of “welfare reform” is to assist low-income parents in getting and keeping jobs, domestic violence issues must be addressed. Domestic violence is a huge obstacle to “work success” for thousands of low-income mothers.

The Family Violence Option would ensure that public assistance recipients in Ohio are screened for domestic violence by trained caseworkers, ensure that victims receive referrals for care and support services; and allow

caseworkers to grant waivers exempting recipients on a case by case basis from program requirements if the requirements would place a victim’s family in danger. These waivers will allow battered victims time to access the supports needed to successfully mend their lives back together without jeopardizing their safety.

In August 2005, the United States General Accountability Office (GAO) released a report: “TANF: State Approaches to Screening for Domestic Violence Could Benefit from HHS Guidance” (GAO-05-701 that detailed information on how states address domestic violence in their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, including the Family Violence Option. **The report’s findings showed that Ohio ranked among three states that had not**

adopted the Family Violence Option and did not have comparable policies in place.

The other two states were Maine and Oklahoma.

The Family Violence Option does not claim to be the end all solution to battering in our society. To end battering, it will take a tremendous united effort by all sectors of society: churches, law enforcement, private agencies, concerned citizens, as well as the government. **The Family Violence Option helps the victims and their children to get the help and support services they need to get on with their lives in safety.** That in itself is a tall order. If Ohio has this choice, why not take it? Let’s err on the side of doing too much rather than too little on behalf of Ohio’s battered women and children.

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Happy New Year To All

by Ms. Mary Gaffney

As we enter the year 2006, to you the monthly purchaser of Streetvibes, (and also the homeless vendors), I hope that you continue to support the paper.

As we look forward to the New Year, let there be Peace toward each other, and also the foreign countries that make up this world.

Show more love and concern to the person's who do not have a place to call home, or a table to sit down to with thier families.

To you, my homeless friends, as you travel through the New Year

remember, don't give up. Keep the Faith. There is a brighter day ahead.

Remember, a ball can fall or it can be thrown very hard. But when it hits the ground it always bounces, whether hard or softly thrown. If you are in this situation, just hold on and never say, "I can't, I am not able."

It will bounce back because this is a New Year, a new day in your life, and this year, you will succeed.

We are all children who were placed in the garden of life.

Until next time, peace to all.



Miss Mary Gaffney

Union Steamed

by Cydney Gillis

That's the position of Seattle's world-renowned coffee company, which faces charges from the National Labor Relations Board in the wake of a union organizing drive this summer in New York City by the Industrial Workers of the World.

The NLRB has charged 15 Starbucks officials with anti-union activity. The IWW says that includes firing one union member, giving another a bad performance review because of her union membership, and sending another home for wearing a union pin.

Starbucks, which now owns or licenses 9,671 stores worldwide and had nearly half a billion in profit in the fiscal year that just ended Oct. 2, says the charges are only allegations, which the company intends to defend in a hearing Feb. 7.

In the meantime, "We firmly believe that our progressive, positive work environment, coupled with our outstanding compensation and benefits, make unions unnecessary at Starbucks," says Audrey Lincoff, vice president of Starbucks' global media relations. "We believe we do not need a third party to act on behalf of our partners."

National News on Homelessness and Poverty

State Beat: Indiana

Look on the web site of the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homelessness Issues (ICHHI) (www.ichhi.org) for a new report "Ensuring a Hunger-Free Indiana." The report has generated significant media attention on hunger in the state, including how mounting energy costs are affecting families' food security. "Pointing to previously released statistics such as the 75.3 percent increase in food stamp participation from 2000 to 2004 in Indiana, report author Jill Nielsen, a senior policy analyst at the coalition, notes the continued growth of poverty in the state. As heating costs skyrocket, even more Hoosier families this year will face the painful 'heat or eat' decision, she said. Economics is at the core of the problem, Nielsen said. 'The reason why more people are becoming eligible (for assistance programs) is that Indiana has been slow to recover from the economic downturn,' she said. 'Hunger is an income problem. People don't have enough money to buy the food that they need.' The Food Research and Action Center, a national advocacy organization that works on public policies aimed at eradicating hunger in the United States, issued a report titled 'Heat and Eat: Using Federal Nutrition Programs to Cushion the Shock of Skyrocketing Heating Bills.' It is available at www.frac.org."

Congressional Spotlight: Protect the Food Stamp Program

On December 2nd, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) and House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) reported intentions to wrap up budget legislation in December. "Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., expressed optimism Friday that Congress will complete work on its budget savings package before adjourning for the year, but he was decidedly less certain about a companion tax-cut bill. Frist said the spending-cut bill should be cleared

'hopefully by the 19th or 20th of this month. Notably missing was a tax cut reconciliation bill." See "Frist Says Congress Will Finish Budget-Savings Bill But Tax Cuts Uncertain," by Liriel Higa, CQ Today, 12/2/05.

Behind-the-scenes maneuvering over the Conference Report on the FY 2006 Budget Reconciliation Bill reportedly has started at the staff level in advance of formal Member-level negotiations. Keeping any budget conference agreement closer to the lower overall Senate cuts level of \$35 billion rather than the House level of \$50 billion would improve prospects for protecting the Food Stamp Program.

In response to questioning at a press conference, Senator Frist reportedly stated, "That progress, once conferees are appointed — and I think they'll appointed here shortly — means the conference can actually begin. But the work that's been done at the staff level, in terms of taking some very different approaches to accomplish the \$35 billion and \$50 billion in spending, I believe can be reconciled in the conference. There are different approaches on things like Medicare and Medicaid and on welfare and on LIHEAP, but all of which can be resolved. And I went through the list yesterday afternoon with the speaker, with the conference, and just read through the list. And on each one, although we didn't come to specific decisions, there is a sense that once conference begins formally, that we can accomplish that. And that will be our goal."

Food stamp funding got an important boost last year with Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) making public his opposition to a conference agreement if it makes the House food stamp and Medicaid cuts.

While senior Members of the House and Senate Budget and Agriculture Committees likely will have the most direct voices on the

nutrition cuts issues in the conference negotiations, the views of all Members of Congress will be influential as leaders assess how many votes for or against a final conference package would be gained or lost by including food stamp cuts.

Editorial: Congress Fails the Poor by not Providing Heating Aid

As the winter looms, Congress has not yet managed to approve any money to help poor Americans pay for their heating bills, editorializes The New York Times. "They failed to pass the bill that included \$2 billion in home heating subsidies . . . last spring. They also failed to come up with the additional \$3 billion that is needed to cover the big price jumps in various fuels since Hurricane Katrina." A majority of senators support heating subsidies, but such subsidy approval needed a supermajority vote, which did not occur. Besides adding an extra billion dollars for heating assistance to one bill by cutting a billion from other anti-poverty programs, the House by and large ignored the issue. "The intended recipients of federal heating subsidies include millions of low-income Americans who are old and disabled, as well as poor families with children - people who cannot afford heat often make trade-offs that risk their health or safety: deciding between heating or eating, between heat or medicine, between turning on the heat or resorting to oven flames or dangerous kerosene heaters."

Donations Down, But Need Still High for Northern Kentucky's Charities

This holiday season, Northern Kentucky's faith-based nonprofits reported as much as a 50-percent decrease in donations as more people instead help causes assisting tsunami victims in Asia and hurricane victims along the Gulf Coast. While donations were down

this fall, the Fairhaven Rescue Mission provides meals and grocery and clothing vouchers to more people than it has served in its 31-year history. Difficulties in obtaining government commodities — such as canned meats and vegetables, fruit, cheese and bread — have only exacerbated this situation, according to Tom Dorman of Action Ministries, which operates a food pantry in Latonia. In the past, the pantry offered 22 commodities. Now it offers only one item — boxed raisins. Dorman and other nonprofit directors were disappointed with the House of Representatives' budget votes that might result in cuts for food stamps and other social programs. "Politics aside, people in need should not starve," said Dorman.

Indiana Needs to Expand Anti-Hunger Programs, Study Finds

With poverty on the rise, Indiana needs to expand and improve its anti-hunger programs, such as food stamps and school breakfast and lunch programs, according to a report released by the Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues. As winter approaches and heating costs are expected to skyrocket, even more Indiana families will be forced to make the "heat or eat" decision. Report author Jill Nielsen urges program expansions that would not require additional state dollars but rather use federal funds. The report also argues for public-private partnerships to educate low-income people about existing benefits, and recommends that Indiana make the school breakfast program available to all students. Families moving out of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program should be allowed to keep receiving food stamps for at least five months to ease their welfare-to-work transition. "Hunger is an income problem. People don't have enough money to buy the food that they need," Nielsen said.

Vendor Story: My Name is Ray and I'm an alcoholic

by *Jemal Swoboda*

My addiction is what put me out on the streets – I mean, it really tore me up pretty bad. There was a long time where I didn't care about myself or anything else. In my early age, my dad was an alcoholic and he used to beat on me anytime he felt like it and it didn't help that he used to hide my grandmother's nerve pills in the booze he drank. Well, needless to say, the old bastard died and I'm glad of that. But before he did, I moved out to get away from it with a girl I got pregnant. But it didn't matter. He used to go out of his way 30 miles to come beat on me. Now, he got by with it the first time – but the second time I warped him pretty good.

Well, back then when I was drinking it was a lot of fun. I was the bully of that town, and there wasn't much I couldn't do that people could do anything about. I used to go around and shoot at people and the whole time I be eating handfuls of pills and drinking handles of vodka. I was like that until I was about 30 and then my addiction got real bad – and believe it or not that is when I met somebody and we got married and stayed together for almost 11 years, until my addiction ran me out of there. I lost the house, car, boat, and eighty acres. And with me being drunk and never there, I guess she found herself someone who would take care of her and provide for her. That pretty much blew it up right there and I found myself homeless. Now momma didn't want me at the house anymore with the way I'd been acting - then somehow I met another girl and stayed with her five years and eventually pissed that away too.

My first wife, who was 7 years older than me, drank a little wine but with my habit it just got real old, real quick for her. My second wife wouldn't drink at all – she was a very religious person, but I couldn't get along with her young boys – mainly because of my addiction. So, after all these relationships disappeared, I found myself at 42 and I was seriously homeless. So, I got a bright idea to come to St. Louis, but I didn't know how things worked and to feed myself I ate out of trashcans – and to this day I'm not ashamed of it. But I wasn't taking care of myself physically and I never bathed and was scruffy all the time – and just slept wherever I could find a place to lay my head. I guess I was scared of the shelters, mainly because I didn't trust myself. When I got wound up and drunk there wasn't anyone who could stop me and I was afraid I'd hurt

somebody.

So, the shelters were out – because life is just not sacred there and they're just dangerous places. If a man wants to hurt you – they'll just do it. I mean, if they like your shirt or anything else...it doesn't matter they will take it. On the streets we would sleep in a circle to protect ourselves, but I got tired of relying on others for my safety, so I went and got myself a tent and decided to get away from the streets. The only thing I would come back downtown for was to get together enough money for food and booze.

The first place where I set up my tent up was doomed from the beginning just by the mosquitoes. They were just bad, but for nearly three years I didn't mind, because I was buying four gallons of vodka a week and that is all I would drink – just lay there, get sick, sober up and do it again. The funny thing about alcohol is that it's legal, it's easy to get, and if you keep enough of it in you – it's almost like heroin.

When I was 46, I decided I needed to get cleaned up and I tried doing it on my own. That worked for a month or so, but then I was at it again for about six or seven months. It was about this time that I met Tom from St. Patrick's Center and we seemed to hit it off good, and when he saw how badly off I was he took me down to the Harbor Light and I got through their program and was clean for almost a year when my mom told me I could come back home.

Once I was back in Summerfield, Illinois it was tough getting around without my driver's license. I tried working at a McDonald's, but it just didn't make any sense having to go so far (regardless of the weather) to get paid nothing for doing nothing. Then I had someone give me an old, beat-up push mower and I started getting customers and building up my own business. I was making \$1,000 per month and within six months time I was up to around \$6,000 each month and was doing real good. It was a time where I was able to gain back a lot of the respect I had lost when I was living in the town ten years ago and that just really made me feel good. But then my lawn mower started breaking down and I without work to do I would just sit in my room for 7 or 8 hours and my mom figured I was back drinking again – but I was just down. I told her that I was an ex-alcoholic and I was just broken to a certain extent – it wasn't like I was going to be brand-new again just like that - I guess I was just depressed.

I finally got my lawn mower back running again and just about the time things started looking up, the guy I had working for me got killed in a car accident. I just went downhill from there. My mom put me out and I headed back to St. Louis to my current campsite and started drinking again. After I got my campsite set up I happened to run into Tom from St. Patrick's again and he told me about a program that St. Patrick offered as a refresher course for ex-alcoholics and I got myself enrolled in the eight-week BEST program.

One of the big things I've learned is that my ability to stay cleaned up and take care of my hygiene makes a huge difference on how I feel about myself. I just don't think many people understand how important it is for homeless folks who are trying to put down the bottle to keep cleaned up and shaved – it makes a huge difference. Well, this BEST program pays \$160 each week and I've been able to pay for my asthma medicine and even though I'm living in a tent, I come to St. Patrick's cleaner than most of the other folks.

I'm hoping I won't have to be in the woods much longer, but then again I've gotten pretty comfortable with living outside. I just don't know if I'm ready to be around people again. Sometimes I wonder whether I'm going to be able to survive with a roof over my head. It is going to take an adjustment, but this is not a fun game out here and I'm ready to get up and do something about it. I'll miss the solitude, but if a change is necessary to get clean then I'll do it.

I guess the most important thing I've started doing is to start caring about myself, even though I'm old and tired. I can't take back what has happened and I don't blame anyone but myself, but you can do what I am doing now and stop using the drugs and alcohol and keep your nose to the grindstone and don't give up – and don't pick it up. I guess that is what I'm doing. I'm trying real, real hard – I guess that is all I can do.

JS - Roy was about to move into an apartment when we last spoke and was doing very well thanks to hard work and the help of St. Patrick's Center and the BEST program.

21 YEARS SERVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Empowering our neighborhood children through peace, art and education
Peaslee Neighborhood Center
215 East 14th Street
Over-the-Rhine
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
(513) 621-5514

A Call to Greater Cincinnati Poets For the 2006 annual Book of Poems and Drawings on Peace and Justice

- 1) Call for poems from any poet from the Greater Cincinnati area
- 2) Poems to relate to themes of peace and justice
- 3) Poet may submit up to 3 poems
- 4) All submissions will be considered. The editors will be looking for quality, inclusiveness, and appropriateness to the themes of peace and justice.
- 5) If space becomes limited, priority will be given to poets not published in previous books
- 6) Poems selected will be illustrated in B&W by Greater Cincinnati artists (one drawing per poet)
- 7) Poems and illustrations will be printed in For a Better World 2006, a book to be available April, 2006
- 8) Book will be launched and available for sale at SOS ART 2006.
- 9) Poets included in book will be invited to read their poems at SOS ART 2006
- 10) Proceeds from sale of book will finance publication of future similar books to accompany annual SOS ART events. (Note: this is the 3rd annual book)
- 11) Submission deadline: February 3, 2006
- 12) Please send submissions in full text and as a Word attachments by e-mail or by US mail (on a floppy disk) to: Saad Ghosn (saad.ghosn@uc.edu), 216 Erkenbrecher Ave, Cincinnati, Oh 45229

Remove low-income voter restrictions

from *Street Roots, USA*

It was out of the ordinary, to say the least, but considering what the Republicans see as politics as usual, it was a noble act. Our case in point is the new Federal Housing Finance Reform Act. This bill would create the Affordable Housing Fund, an estimated \$600 million dedicated to creating affordable housing for extremely low-income families through nonprofit and for-profit housing providers. But after emerging from committee, Republicans in the House added a provision that would prohibit nonprofits that engage in non-partisan voter registration activities and get-out-the-vote efforts from receiving a dime of this money. They are even forbidden from having participated in these efforts in the 12 months prior to receiving funds. For-profit organizations have no such limitations.

To clarify, the bill dedicates the fund's money exclusively to creating affordable housing; none of it could be used for voter registration activities. Yet even if the

organization uses its own funds to distribute and display voter registration information, or help people register to vote, they would be disqualified, including if they invited in a third party, such as the Oregon Bus Project, to distribute voter registration forms at their facilities.

A for-profit organization can conduct initiatives with impunity, but it is the non-profits that provide the bulk of affordable housing opportunities to the poorest of the poor.

The National Low-Income Housing Coalition calls it an unfair and unnecessary restriction and an assault on low-income people and the non-profit organizations that provide their housing. Nearly 700 national, state and local organizations, including faith-based and civil rights groups, signed a letter that was sent to every member of the House, calling on them to drop the gag rule from this bill. Their request went unheard. It now falls to the Senate, and you, to stop this provision from becoming law.

This provision flies in the face of the Motor Voter law of 1993 that required certain low-income housing providers to make voter registration access a requirement for receiving state funds. This cripples the entire network of nonprofit organizations that incorporate voting rights in their work to empower people disenfranchised from economic and social inclusion. This places another obstacle between people experiencing homelessness and poverty and their rightful participation of the democratic process.

This is a poison pill with win-win implications for the Republican Party. If this absurd provision clears the Senate, it means a suppression of voter registration and consequently votes from the low-income constituents targeted by federal policies. If it fails, it means the party can claim

martyrdom for trying to provide an Affordable Housing Fund, only to have it blocked by the opposition.

This, over \$600 million a year, a drop in the bucket compared to the housing needs among extremely low-income families. And the Democrats were audacious enough to demand answers for the more than \$100 billion spent on invading and occupying Iraq. But to the Republicans, stunts like that only interfere with the work at hand — to suppress low-income people from going to the polls; to discourage non-profit organizations from engaging people experiencing poverty in the democratic process; and to scuttle the effort of a much-needed national trust fund dedicated to ensuring affordable housing for people on the brink of homelessness.

Shameful political stunt, indeed.

Reprinted from Street Roots

Can't Go Home

by *Mecello Barrar*

Lord, why am I walking your streets at night?
Did you know that homeless days
Started with a homeless night
Rain pouring down on my head, but where can I go?
I know one place where I cannot go
And that's home for sure.
Cause for some reason they wanted me gone.
Will tomorrow be a better turn?
Cause I can't go home.
This homeless life can't be true.
Whatever happened to my life?
How did it ever come to this?
Wasn't poor nor either rich.
I be down on my knees just asking the Lord to
Please give me a place to sleep.
People looking at me like I'm dirty
Because I'm all on the street.
Living in boxes and buildings
Make what I can to feed the children.
Wife die 2 years ago.
Hard to explain to my baby boy that mama won't be back
No more,
And we can't find a place to call home
Can't find a job
And we forced to be gone.
Lord, all I ask of you
Is to open the hearts of all your children.
Make them help one another
Stop looking down at my kind,
And give just a little change
Before it's somebody in their lives
Living this homeless life.

**More Poetry
on Pages 14
and 15**

**Send your letters or
comments to
Streetvibes, 117 East
12th Street,
Cincinnati Ohio
45202,
or email to
Streetvibes@juno.com**

Got The Vibe?



This beautiful, original artwork depicts the vibrant role that *Streetvibes* plays in downtown Cincinnati and neighboring communities. Created by local artist and activist Mary Ann Lederer in collage form, this colorful 18" X 10" reproduction can be yours to own for only \$10. Commemorating *Streetvibes* 100th issue, proceeds from this limited time offer will go to support the *Streetvibes* Program and Vendors.

Coalition Annual Dinner Faces Challenge From Mother Nature



Georgine Getty, executive Director of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, addresses dinner crowd

An unexpected “surprise” snow storm from Mother Nature forced the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless to postpone the majority of its 21st anniversary dinner “Ripples of Hope, Waves of Change.” About 70 people braved the weather and were able to attend. The mass amounts of left over food were sent back to member agencies, Bethany House and the Drop Inn Center for residents to enjoy. The event was held December 8 at Xavier University’s Cintas Center.

The dinner is normally a chance to extend awards to exemplary homeless advocates. Due to the cancellation, the award ceremony will be held at a potluck on March 16. Awards will given in the following categories: Service Provider of the Year to McMicken Dental Clinic, Streetvibes Vendor of the Year to Alford Woolfolk, the Jimmy Render Award to Robert Brown of the Drop Inn Center, and the buddy gray Award to Dr. Robert Donovan. *buddy gray* was a grassroots activist who saved housing in Over-the-Rhine and helped found the Coalition.



Guests at GCCH Dinner



Sr. Mary (right) leads prayer at “Ripples of Change, Waves of Hope” dinner celebration at the Cintas Center

Bagel Dude

cont. from page 2

Humphrey doors were locked, which drove me into an area across the street called The West Bank, where the nation’s largest population of refugees from Somalia have built an amazing culture, and mingle with hip college youth, some of which took over a failing cafe and made it into a cooperative called the Hard Times. It is like nothing so much as the old Black Cat Cafe from the Seattle University District.

Back in the old days, when there were more street youth in the Seattle University District, and you could buy plenty of vegan food at The Black Cat, there was a kind of schism among the adherents of The Bagel Dude

Cult. There was, you see, another Bagel Dude...some called him Old Bagel Dude. He was known to trash dive his bagels, not liberate them fresh from the source. Some were grateful for the lower quality bagels, but others swore they would have faith in none but The One True Dude.

Now, outside the Hard Times Cafe, I noticed where the hip and earthy had congregated and, trying to walk in the footsteps of The One True Dude, I offered bagels. One guy quickly accepted my offer, wondering aloud if there were onion bagels. There were, as a deep sniff right through the plastic confirmed. A young woman with skin art all about the face looked through all the bags...she asked about pumpernickel, what on earth was THAT?

“Kind of like rye,” I explained.

And what about the poppy seed bagels, she wondered, what were they like? I explained that the poppy seeds had no flavor, really, but just imparted a kind of pleasant crunch. How about some onion, maybe? I asked, but she would have nothing to do with onion, and hoped that nothing had TOUCHED the onion, and finally settled upon a bag of...plain bagels.

I went inside the Hard Times Cafe and explained the deal about the bagels to the girl behind the counter. Everybody who works there is an owner, and 10 people work there.

“You’re not selling them?” she asked. “You’re giving them away?” I confirmed that was the deal. She grasped the bag and pulled it behind the counter, saying only, “People will eat them.” What more needed to be said?

Walking back to where my bike must still be chained near the bagel place, a mile or two away, I thought how I would go back to the shop and discreetly tell the young man behind the counter how happy I would be to take more bagels off his hands...in fact, he could even call me on my cell phone. I thought how I would take the bagels to the Hard Times Cafe, stopping first on the exterior where people congregated and I would give away a few bags, also offering bags to anybody I might see on the way, who might look in need of free bagels. I would, I thought, try in my unworthy way to follow the example of The One True Bagel Dude.

And then it hit me, and I realized...I had become The Bagel Dude.

**Visit the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless website at - <http://www.cincihomeless.org>
Visit the Streetvibes archives at - <http://www.cincihomeless.org/content/streetvibes.html>**



Farrah Gray Signs on as Spokesperson for National Coalition for the Homeless

The National Coalition for the Homeless is pleased to announce Farrah Gray as a new spokesperson and partner in the fight to end homelessness. Gray will be the honorary chairperson for the Bringing America Home Campaign, a comprehensive effort designed to end homelessness in the United States and includes housing, health, income and civil rights components.

Gray is no stranger to the issues of poverty and homelessness. As a native of inner city Chicago, he both experienced and witnessed the effects of inequality. When he was just six, Farrah's mother became seriously ill, prompting his decision to help provide for his family. He made hand-painted rocks and sold them door-to-door as paperweights, doorstoppers and bookends. He spent the first \$50 he ever made taking his family for a real sit-down dinner. By age 14, he had an office on Wall Street and was a millionaire, founding and fostering companies as diverse as publishing and venture capital. Now, at 21 years old has become one of the great business minds and icons of his generation. He has served as the youngest member of the United Way Board of Directors and created a foundation, which provides seed money to youth aspiring to create legal means of acquiring additional funds for their struggling families through entrepreneurship.

"We are very excited about Farrah's commitment to the cause of ending homelessness. He is a role model that has experienced poverty and hardship firsthand. We are confident that he will be able to apply the vision and determination that has made him successful in business to make a difference in the struggle to end homelessness around the country," says Michael Stoops, Executive Director of the National Coalition for the Homeless.

The National Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1984, is a national network of people committed to ending homelessness by creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness. Additionally, NCH works to meet the immediate needs of people who are currently experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of doing so. We take as our first principle of practice that people who are currently experiencing homelessness or have formerly experienced homelessness must be actively involved in all of our work.

The Peace Village



by Steve Sunderland, Ph.D., professor, Educational Foundations and Peace Studies, College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services

The war in Iraq continues with the president announcing the deaths of 30,000 Iraqis and over 2100 American soldiers. Violence and bravery seem to also fill our media as the election occurred in Iraq. And, we hold our breath for the four Quaker peacemakers who are currently being held hostage by an Iraqi terrorist group. The announced date of their death has already passed but there is no word. So much news to digest and grieve about this brutal way of solving problems and conflicts.



Steve Sunderland

Hidden from view is the toll that terrorism is taking on Moslems who do not identify with the terrorists and those Moslems who feel that Islam has been deeply dishonored by those using violence in the name of this holy religion. "My children are being threatened and hardened by having to defend our religion," Ms. Zeinab Schwen, co-founder of the Cincinnati based, Moslem Mothers Against Violence, says with a bitter and strong passion. "We are Americans, full citizens of this country, and my children were born right here in Cincinnati," she continues, "and I do not like how we are being treated by either Americans or terrorists." A group of 14 people listened to her stirring presentation last December at St. Johns Unitarian Church.

Ms. Schwen and the Peace Village have agreed to visit schools, colleges and religious institutions to discuss the irrationality of responses to all things Islamic. Our goal is to increase peace through understanding, through sharing stories of fear and ignorance, and it joining together in partnership to educate about Islam our fellow students and members of religious institutions. (Please write me if you would like us to visit for a conversation.)

Ms. Schwen, a Palestinian by birth, raised in Egypt, possessing graduate degrees in pharmacy from

both the University of Cairo and the University of Minnesota, is an American citizen, married and the mother of 3 high school and college aged children. Zeinab, as she prefers being called, is a very attractive woman in her 40's, with blazing brown eyes, a wonderful bright smile, and a fearless soul. She wore a lovely suit and, around her neck, a lovely light brown and white scarf. Our group met with the Rev. Frank Carpenter, as kind host, in a large meeting room in his church. This was the first of a hoped for series of discussions in many sites. Zeinab gave us the history of this new organization, founded immediately after and in response to the bombing in London, England, in July, 2005. "The bombers were home grown young British people, average and well educated members of the London community. If they could turn to suicidal bombing, what would prevent our children from going that route?," she asked in a way that both dumbfounded us and brought questions of what could motivate young people to take this course of action.

We didn't know what brought young people to such a level of sacrifice and to violence, and we were eager to hear what

Zeinab could do to help us understand. "Since September 11, 2001," she said, "women wearing the head scarf and men who have been identified as Moslem have been subjected to an experience of hatred, distrust, and frustration." Zeinab had noticed, as had other Moslem mothers in our area, that their children were being placed in school situations that they were unprepared for. No longer seen as Americans, or as regular kids, they were now the victims of hard looks, prejudiced comments, and scary actions that brought a new pressure to their relationships. How much pressure could they take? Would their good hearts be changed by the dramatic shift in symbols and actions of their fellow schoolmates? "What would keep them from turning violent?," Zeinab asked with heartfelt concern.

"We are good Moslems, and believe that Islam is a religion of peace, and means, "inner peace by following our God," she began an answer to what were the principles of her religion. "Any action that links violence to Islam is wrong, and what the non-Moslem world is seeing is the opposite of our teaching about being a good Moslem," she continued. "No one is to be treated violently, Moslem or non-Moslem, according to our teaching," she said with determination to us, "and non-Moslems are to be treated with kindness and gratitude, especially if they are of a different faith."

Clearly, her grip on her strong feelings was relaxing as she felt that we could hear what was giving her heart so much pain.

Clearly, her grip on her strong feelings was relaxing as she felt that we could hear what was giving her heart so much pain.



A Rain to Remember You By

by Jay Thiemeyer (*Street Roots, USA*)

With a roof these days, it's easy to forget what it was like being out in this crap. A memory best remembered as a plaque on the wall, gathering the dust in only two dimensions. Being out in it the whole day long. Then flopping on a thin mat on a chapel floor with a hundred others, wet and worn out. Too exhausted and bones aching to sleep. Spend the whole night decompressing with the two hunks of beef pressed against each side. The snoring men, grown men mumbling in their dreams, men who no longer felt like men, the explosive coughing and abrupt cries; no one would sleep most of the night. Then out in it again. To find a doorway to drink some instant coffee and watch the buses pass. How would that old man over there make it through the winter? Of course, he wouldn't make it. There was a given handful who wouldn't be there next spring, and that man over there was surely one.

Sitting in the shelter I, for no seeming reason, begin remembering women known on the street and wondering briefly what might have become of them. Particularly in Atlanta and St Augustine. And one old woman in No'fuk.

I didn't wonder long where they would be these days, 20 years or more down the road. A yearly handful of departed accumulating over two or more decades amounted to something worth remembering.

I remember in Hotlanta Ober-Lynne, as I called her. She'd been an English major at Oberlin, once upon a time. When they were describing Rosa Parks on Democracy NOW coverage, I was reminded of her. And in the shelter I was reminded of her again. Slight, with delicate features, according to one speaker. Quiet, dignified.

I met Ober Lynne in the Fulton County detox in '84. Taking the cure. Cure number the fourth. I wasn't there on a research project, as Jerry Jeff Walker put it. Early in the morning she was brewing coffee and I joined her. We had the place to ourselves and it was quiet. A temporary sanity for us. I don't remember anything more about our conversation than that it was a peaceful one.

On the bus now, people are talking, animated about the foul weather: "When I got up this morning it was awfully dark and it was raining, just a-coming down! cats and dogs.." followed by the requisite nodding of bent wet heads.

Just like church to the preacher I remember being put out of Harbor Lights at 5:30 in the

morning, with the hundred of the rest. And all of us dispersing to go our own separate way. And the women off their blankets — they slept on single folded blankets, not even mats — rising like haunts off the floor of the kitchen of the shelter. Dispersing to wander or wait for Blanchet to feed.

The streets were beautiful in the rain. There was a vet who lived in a wheelchair, slept close to the solitary bathroom, his house folded next to him, against the wall. All night people would step over him on their way to the head. God knows how he slept or what's become of him.

What's become of him could be any of a number of fine things. In the morning I remember he, like the rest, would disappear for the day to re-appear to move past the line of us and into the door.

The door separated the rain from the not-rain. He had the privilege that came with his wheelchair, his house.

Last time I saw Ober Lynne, she was all drunk and ugly, stumbling around — no longer slight or delicate-featured. She was yelling at the fountain in the downtown plaza of Hotlanta, not even at the passing suits who did their best, their very best, to ignore her.

When she passed, she looked right through me.

She disappeared like something briefly seen on the water. Here, not here. Like walking through a door leaving the rain.

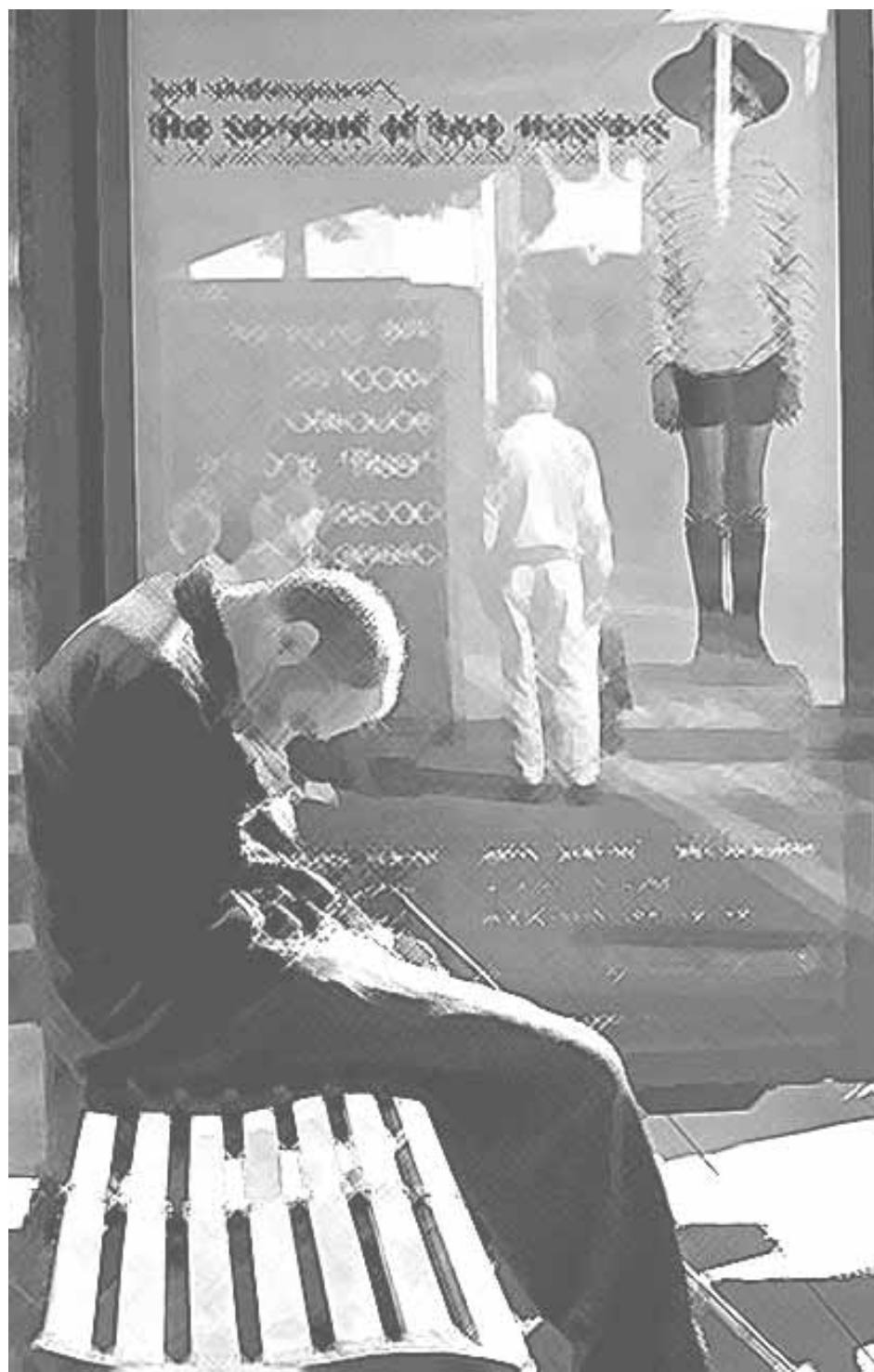
When I watched the tribute to Rosa Parks, I thought of her and that empty stare. It was unavoidable. Never forget that look and what it signified. She was gone. Her fine Atlanta family shunned her for her "lifestyle."

Well, if it matters, wherever you might be now, you do remain in one person's memory. Ober Lynne.

I was raised like her, a Southern Baptist. I was taught like her to believe there is no rarer punishment than shunning. But I know there is no greater victory than the final one, to prevail, not merely endure, as Faulkner said, and he was indisputable on this, over whatever degradation, insult or unkindness is heaped on a person, any person.

And to prevail, I know for a fact, takes a movement.

Rosa Parks on Dec. 1, 1955, was not about a single day, a single action or least of all, a single person acting alone. She was part of a powerful movement and knew it and had had enough of insults to her dignity. She acted on what she knew and inspired the movement she was a part of.



Ober Lynne, listen to me! You are not, you were NEVER alone! WE ARE NEVER ALONE!

One of the speakers called Rosa Parks not the mother of the civil rights movement but the mother of her country. It's hard to argue

with that. She was not a wealthy white man like Geo. Washington, (who freed his slaves — after he was dead and they were no longer at his beck and call, but still), she was a woman of color who refused indignity.

Last Night

by *Melissa Mosley*

Last night, I found myself someplace I usually don't frequent - a bar. My already inebriated girlfriend ordered a Chardonnay and I had my ever popular soda pop. After just a few moments, I wanted to leave.

This bar is on Main Street. I am homeless on Main Street. The patrons of this bar have never seen me inside. They see me outside on the phone, hanging around, washing cars, trucks, bikes, dogs — whatever I can do to earn dollars, food or clothes. They see me trying to maintain a sense of enterprise and self-sufficiency. We've never spent social time or frolicked playfully. My impression of them was that they were wary of me, looked down on me, looked through me, disregarded me. A lady I know came and stood next to me. Ah, a friendly face and only one! I expressed my discomfort and desire to jump ship. Through patience and an earnest desire for me to feel welcome, we openly discussed my perspective, (the beer helped).

The evening wore on and I tactfully disengaged from my now drunk girlfriend. I wandered about and spotted the lady I know. We began talking and soon a guy she knew joined us. We all had being an artist in common (besides being human being living in OTR). They took interest in me. I know that my feelings of discomfort were evident. They overlooked it. There were moments when I was so awed by simply being there, being welcome, and feeling connected that I'm sure they thought I wasn't even listening. I was.

My heart was heavy even as I felt the sense of belonging they emanated. They encouraged me. They offered their knowledge (which was immense) of opportunities in which I could expand the breadth and audience of my writing.

We connected. We conversed. We vibed. We liked and encouraged one another. We were people. I felt like a person and that's such a wonderful feeling. As I said, last night I found myself someplace I usually don't frequent.

Streetvibes Vendor Code of Conduct

All Vendors Sign and Agree to a Code of Conduct
Report Any Violations to GCCH - 421-7803

1. Streetvibes will be distributed for a \$1 voluntary donation. If a customer donates more than \$1 for a paper, vendors are allowed to keep that donation. However, vendors must never ask for more than \$1 when selling Streetvibes.
2. Each paper purchased from the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless (GCCH) costs 25 cents. Papers will not be given out on credit. Old papers can not be traded in for new papers.
3. Streetvibes may only be purchased from GCCH. Never buy papers from, or sell papers to other vendors.
4. Vendors must not panhandle or sell other items at the same time they are selling Streetvibes.
5. Vendors must treat all other vendors, customers, and GCCH personnel with respect.
6. Vendors must not sell Streetvibes while under the influence.
7. Vendors must not give a "hard sell" or intimidate anyone into purchasing Streetvibes. This includes following customers or continuing to solicit sales after customers have said no. Vendors must also never sell Streetvibes door-to-door.
8. Vendors must not deceive customers while selling Streetvibes. Vendors must be honest in stating that all profits go to the individual vendor.
9. Vendors must not tell customers that the money they receive will go to GCCH or any other organization or charity. Also, vendors must not say that they are collecting for "the homeless" in general.
9. Vendors must not sell papers without their badge. Vendors must present their badge when purchasing papers from GCCH. Lost badges cost \$2.00 to replace. Broken or worn badges will be replaced for free, but only if the old badge is returned to GCCH.
10. Streetvibes vendor meetings are held on the first weekday of the month at 1pm. The month's paper will be released at this meeting. If a vendor cannot attend the meeting, he or she should let us know in advance. If a vendor does not call in advance and does not show up, that vendor will not be allowed to purchase papers on the day of the meeting or the following day. Five free papers will be given to those who do attend.
11. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in termination from the Streetvibes vendor program. GCCH reserves the right to terminate any vendor at any time as deemed appropriate. Badges and Streetvibes papers are property of GCCH, and must be surrendered upon demand.

About the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless and Streetvibes....

The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless (GCCH) was formed in May of 1984 for one purpose: the eradication of homelessness in Cincinnati. What started out as a coalition of 15 volunteers meeting weekly in an unheated church basement has since grown into a Coalition of over 45 agencies and hundreds of volunteers dedicated to improving services for homeless individuals, educating the public about homelessness and empowering homeless individuals to advocate for their civil rights and housing needs.

Streetvibes is a tool of GCCH used to help us achieve our goal of ending homelessness. On the one hand it is a self-sufficiency program geared towards the homeless and marginally housed individuals who are our vendors. Streetvibes vendors buy the paper for 30 cents per copy and sell it for a suggested one-dollar donation, keeping the profit that they have

earned. This program has helped hundreds of people find and maintain housing. The vendors also sign a code of conduct stating that they will behave responsibly and professionally and they proudly display their official Streetvibes badge while selling the paper. Our vendors put a face on "the homeless" of Cincinnati and form lasting friendships with their customers.

On the other hand, Streetvibes is an award-winning alternative newspaper and part of the international street newspaper movement. Focusing on homelessness and social justice issues, Streetvibes reports the often-invisible story of poverty in our community. Streetvibes is also proud to include creative writing, poetry, articles, photography and interviews written by homeless and formerly homeless individuals. Streetvibes enjoys a loyal reader base that respects the honest portrayal of the joys, sorrows, and challenges facing the people of Cincinnati.



The mission of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA) is to support a street newspaper movement that creates and upholds journalistic and ethical standards while promoting self-help and empowerment among people

living in poverty. NASNA papers support homeless and very low-income people in more than 35 cities across the United States and Canada.

Streetvibes is a member of the:



www.street-papers.org

The International Network of Street Papers (INSP) unites street papers sold by homeless and people living in poverty from all over the world. INSP is an umbrella organisation, which provides a consultancy service for its partner papers and advises on the setting up of new street papers and support initiatives for marginalised people.

Streetvibes

Vendor: 75 Cents
(75 cent profit goes directly to the vendor)

**Homeless Coalition
25 Cents**
Printing and
Production:
25 cents (this
cost does not
cover
expenses)

Where Your Dollar Goes...

The Streetvibes program maintains a minimal overhead cost so that our vendors can keep as much of the proceeds as possible. Please call our office at 421-7803 for more information about the program. Many thanks for your support.

Don't be Squirrely!



Buy Streetvibes!

Cincinnati is moving up on the list of “most dangerous cities.”

According to the latest statistics, Cincinnati ranks 20th on among the nation’s most dangerous cities, up from 25th last year.

Other Ohio cities on the list include Cleveland at 12th and Dayton at 17th.

For the second year in a row, Camden, New Jersey is ranked the most dangerous city. Detroit is second.

Newton, Massachusetts was ranked the safest.

Safest Cities:

1. Newton, Mass.
2. Clarkstown, N.Y.
3. Amherst, N.Y.
4. Mission Viejo, Calif.
5. Brick Township, N.J.
6. Troy, Mich.
7. Thousand Oaks, Calif.
8. Round Rock, Texas
9. Lake Forest, Calif.
10. Cary, N.C.

Most Dangerous Cities:

1. Camden, N.J.
2. Detroit
3. St. Louis
4. Flint, Mich.
5. Richmond, Va.
6. Baltimore
7. Atlanta
8. New Orleans
9. Gary, Ind.
10. Birmingham, Ala.



Drop Inn Center Shelter Report

Crowding: Our number of residents jumped to 268 on a cold Wednesday night last month.

We are also looking at a long streak of cold weather which usually pushes up our numbers even more. For that reason...

Donated Items Needed: Frozen hams, oatmeal in bulk and paper products are much needed items.

But, if you’re stuck inside with just an envelope, stamp and checkbook...

Please Support Holiday Drive: Just send your support to the Drop Inn Center, 217 W. 12th St., Cincinnati, OH 45219

The Heart of War

by *Laura Kelly*

Just as in Iraq, we flew into the war on the wings of lies,” says Peter Davis. The veteran filmmaker and journalist is in the UK to promote his Oscar-winning 1975 Vietnam documentary, *Hearts and Minds*, which has just had a long-overdue release on DVD. Essential viewing for anyone who wants to understand the Vietnam war and its effect on the US, it is the film’s relevance to the current war – and the support of one Michael Moore, who says Davis’ film is the reason why he picked up a camera – that has led to the release.

“In Vietnam, the soldiers did not know which Vietnamese peasant was on their side and which wasn’t. Well, it’s the same thing in Iraq. We have completely misunderstood the ethnic, religious and political realities of Iraq, just as we did in Vietnam,” he adds.

As the horrific images of lives destroyed flash past on the screen, there’s a sense of amnesia that has allowed these things to happen all over again. A Vietnamese man, stripped from the waist down, lies on the ground as a US soldier kicks him in the stomach and chest; another man is held by his hair and then shot in the head, his blood spurting out on a dusty road. How could anybody who saw what happened in Vietnam – or even this film – decide to wade in for another go?

That was not the question on Davis’ mind, however, when he arrived in Vietnam in 1972. As he stood in a crater that was once someone’s home he looked at his watch and became fixated on the next 10 minutes. “In the crater was a bicycle wrapped around a tree; some shards of pottery that a woman had used to cook meals in,” he recalls, “then I saw an arm, and a leg, and then finally a torso and a head.” He pauses, sniffs and continues, “of a little kid’s doll. I hadn’t seen any human damage or even a dead animal but I was quite horrified.”

At that moment, Davis says, all political feeling drained from him. “I remember looking at my watch and it was 10 minutes before noon and I thought, well it doesn’t really matter about opinions any more, I’d like someone to be declared the victor. I don’t care if it’s the North Vietnamese Communists, I don’t care if it’s just a stalemate, but in 10 minutes it’ll be noon and at noon this should all stop.

“The next feeling I had was – well, here’s how to make the film.” Of course, at noon the war

did not stop. It would be three more years, but Davis’ incendiary film would play its part in the end of the violence.

Turning conventional network wisdom on its head, Davis removed the narrator from his film, stringing together interviews and images without a guiding voice. He describes his whole two-hour documentary as being akin to the 10 seconds of scene-setting shots you get at the beginning of a network news item.

“In a television report,” he explains, “you would have had a close-up of that bicycle wrapped around a tree and you’d keep pulling back until you see the reporter.

“He’s not damaged. His arms and legs haven’t blown off, in fact he looks fine. He becomes the medium through which you know about the war, and he’s alright. You had 12 seconds of the war before he started to talk and then he did away with all that.

“What those first 15 seconds are called in America by network executives is dead air. And they hate dead air. But I decided at that moment that that was how I would make the film. I would make a two-hour film about those 15 seconds.”

The result is a very direct experience of the conflict: we see soldiers in the middle of combat, mud smeared across their face as the interview is interrupted by gunfire, then two GIs in a Saigon brothel, playing with the prostitutes like toys – then a bereaved father in the wreckage of his home screaming “Nixon murderer!”. Meanwhile, in the US, we’re shown the cult of victory played out on the football field, limbless veterans bewailing their country’s desire to forget the war they fought, and a general’s racist proclamations against the “Orientals”.

Some of this is stock footage, but the bulk was filmed by Davis and his three-man team. In our age of embedded reporters and PR control, it seems incredible that Davis was allowed to capture these images, and that his subjects were willing to be so open on camera.” A documentarian learns very early on to be as little as possible an intruder and as much as possible a companion,” says Davis. “In the case of those two GIs in a brothel, we had been filming with them for several days and they had gotten completely bored with our presence. They had to get on with their lives.”

Their lives at that moment are nothing much to brag about. They talk to each other as they play with the women’s nipples, discussing how to get one of the prostitute’s bras off. As Davis puts it, “they are no longer human

beings, and they are not treating the prostitutes like human beings either. That’s what war does.”

Watching these gangly lads at play, and the prostitutes at work, is uncomfortable. It feels like intruding, just as viewers intrude on a man’s death later in the film and on a father’s grief. “First they bomb us,” the stricken man says direct to the camera, “and then they come and take pictures of us.”

While acknowledging that his documentary is a further invasion of these lives, Davis stands by his choice to film and show these images. In fact he defends the decision passionately. “The only way to be honest about a war is to show what it does to people,” he says.

But does he just show what was there, or are his artful juxtapositions – such as setting General Westmoreland’s testimony that “Orientals” don’t value life as much as Westerners against a Vietnamese woman wailing at her son’s funeral – a kind of counter-propaganda?

“I didn’t want to seem neutral because I was very much engaged in the war,” Davis acknowledges. “Certainly, I had all kinds of feelings that I hoped other people would have too. Feelings of how cruel and unnecessary war is.”

By making such an overtly emotional statement Davis defied traditional assumptions about the value of impartial news, and for it he faced the same kind of criticism as his successor Michael Moore received for *Fahrenheit 9/11* or *Bowling for Columbine*. At the end of the day, though, the viewer must decide whether it is more ‘real’ to be forced to feel outrage and grief at the US actions or to listen to the man in the pressed suit giving a detached overview.

In any case, Davis is happy with his choice, and has continued to come up with challenging journalism that goes beyond fact. As he said in a recent article for left wing US magazine *The Nation*, “enough facts. Now for opinion.”

Still, all the opinion in the world does not appear to stop wars happening. Does he ever feel his role is pointless? “I think we did learn some lessons from the Vietnam War,” he begins, “but they were knocked out of our head by 9/11. We learnt some things about not fighting wars of choice, but 9/11 caused amnesia.”

Despite the “hard, bitter pill of King George’s coronation” and the forgetfulness of his fellow citizens Davis is not discouraged, “I’m not tired, but inspired,” he says. “Power and its excesses and absurdities are very inspiring to a certain kind of journalist and perhaps I am that kind who just loves to scrutinize power.”

The Homeless Man

by *Angela C.*

A homeless man
Scavenges
In trash barrels
And envies
People who look down on him
With scorn
As they hurry home
To their evening meals.
He crouches
In a rat infested corner,
Content to be with creatures
That don't cringe
At the sight of him.

Angel

by *Erin C.*

Although I was young I remember
Memories shared,
Games played,
Times spent talking,
All in the distant past now
That you are gone away,
Watching from above,
Loving, caring,
An angel in the heavens
My grandpa

My Mushroom Toad

by *Sarah M.*

Beady brown eyes
Mushroom-like hat
"No smoking," he says.
Now how about that!
He lives on my shelf
With the other knick-knacks
Funny like me
But life, yes, he lacks

Bought at the mall
On a day of pure fun
Only one dollar
My love had begun

He sits on the rocks
Amongst the nice flowers
Too bad my good toad
Has no magical powers

He looks oh so real
But has a bar code
I love him to death
He is my little stone toad

The Clock

by *Kevin G*

The Clock
Ticks,
Counting out bits of time.
Monotonous and never ceasing,
making minutes seem eternities
or a day of fun only a minute long.
It is our master, we its slaves.
From its place on the wall
the clock rules our modern world,
counting the seconds toward eternity.

My Silver Lining

by *Chase D.*

In my pocket
On the chair
Shiny as a rocket
I take it everywhere.
Size of a hand
Size of a shoe
Loud like a band
Loves to play U2.

It's a palm pilot
Never shuts up
Doesn't come in violet
Feels like a porcelain cup.

Both like music
Listen all day
To use it,
You simply push play.

Like my mother
Treats me right
Annoying like my brother
All family at the end of the night.

It's my silver lining
On each and every day
When I'm whining,
I just push play
My iPod

The Winds of December

by *Michael Henson*

The bitter winds of December
curl around the towers of City Hall.
Knives of the snow,
breath of the lords of ice,
the winds sweep across the roof slates
as over a prairie.
Pressed and pried,
a single slate loosens its grip,
slips an inch,
but falls no further for now.
The November leaves in the gutters
raise their red hands
and would fly off
but they are frozen to the mire
of the rotting leaves of October.
Justice-in-the-stained-glass
winces at the naked blast;
the scales tremble in her hand.
On his perch, the gargoyle shivers.
He tightens the muscles
in his stony wings.
His claws grip tighter at the parapet.
He bares his long, stone teeth.

Me!!

by *Robin Remy*

Me (Mother)
Through my addiction I
Manage to be a Mother and only by
the grace and mercy of God
I made sure of the essential things
In my sons' lives in order for them
(1) to become men, and
(2) to be able to survive.

Me (Friend)
I'm a good listener.
I have very profound advice.
Always willing to share even my last.
I must have been a good friend,
Because my friends have been with
me for the last 30-40 years.

Me (Robin)
I'm a giving person.
I'm a no-nonsense person.
I'm very strong with inner strength.
I have a lot more to give from my
spirit and my soul.



Writers!
Submit your
Poetry to
STREETVIBES -
email your writing
to
Streetvibes@juno.com

A Story

by *Booger Love*

I live a hell of a life everyday. I lost hope a long time ago. My life is nothing but a game. Sometimes, it's a bad game. I will lock myself away from my self and other people, sometimes for days. Right now, I'm feeling that way – To just lock people out. It helps to walk around alone. But I manage to carry on time-to time, as I slowly go out of my mind. My life is no good for anyone, not even me. I can't put up with myself sometimes. I give up on everything, including life itself. I've never had hope in anything because there is nothing to hope for. The life that I live everyday should not be lived by anyone. It's hell out here but fun also, sometimes. Sometimes it's bad for me to stay the same all the times. Hey, it's hell living the way I do – don't let it happen to you.

Butt Prints in the Sand

by *Cheryl (Sunshine) Effiom*

One night, I had a wondrous dream,
One set of footprints there were seen,
The footprints of my precious Lord,
But mine were not among the shore.

But then some strange prints appeared,
And I asked the Lord, "What have we here?"
Those prints are large and round and neat,
"But Lord, they are too big for feet."

"My child", He said in somber tones,
"For miles I carried you alone,
I challenged you to walk in faith,
but you refused and made me wait."

"You disobeyed, you would not grow,
The walk of faith you would not know,
So I got tired, I got fed up,
And there I dropped you on your butt."

"Because in life there comes a time,
when one must fight and one must climb,
When one must rise and take a stand,
Or leave their butt prints in the stand."

How I Became A Man

by *Maurice Wheeler*

It's been said before that when you are a child you do childish things, but when you become a man you grow up and leave your childish ways behind. I remember someone telling me that it's a cold-hearted world and once you are no longer under your parents' wings that no one gives a damn about you. But I was young and didn't quite understand. I was too busy having fun and chasing girls. Needless to say, the fun stopped when a young girlfriend of mine told me that she was pregnant. Being young and full of fun I had a choice to run and hide. But I chose to take the responsibility. I got a job and decided to be a dad. Anyone can make a baby, but it takes a man to raise one.

I Will Never Be Homeless

I will never be homeless,
It won't happen to me.
I will never be homeless,
I'm doing so well, don't you see?
I have a good job, a nice house and a car,
I have everything I need to go far.
I am not like those Welfare bums,
To whom prosperity never comes.
You know, the ones who don't want to work,
Any kind of physical labor, they shirk.
All they want to do is drink,
Some are not clean, and they stink.
Then, I see a man, lying in the street,
A tattered coat around him and no shoes on his feet.
But, I sense that something is wrong,
That somehow, this man does not belong.
So, I decide to stop to say hello,
And ask him why he fell so low.
He once worked on a street called Bay,
Making good money every day.
Then, one day his job was gone.
He was told, "just go on home."
He soon just didn't care,
His purpose in life no longer there.
He lost his family, his home, and his car.
In just a few months, he fell so far.
So here he was, on the street,
With a tattered coat around him and no shoes on his feet.
Then I saw the lines on his face and the pain in his eyes,
I will never be homeless, will I?

by *Tonya Haley*

I only want relief,
Life is full of pain,
Not just for me,
Look around – we're all to blame

Now, some of us are homeless
And we don't even know why,
Whenever I think about this,
I just break down and cry.

You want to know and understand,
Why we do what we do,
Close your eyes and visualize,
You as me and I as you.

I just know that your prayers
will help us through.
We all have done wrong,
But to God we all belong.

by *John McKay Withey*

She left her home in her early teens,
In torn shirt and faded jeans.
Looking for the love she was never given,
Away from her family she was finally driven.

She sits by the fountain every day,
Her lovely young face looking cold and grey.
Her sad blue eyes slowly searching around,
Looking for coins dropped on the ground.

With pleading eyes she holds out a hand,
In pouring rain for hours she will stand.
All she wants is a little respite,
And something warm for her teeth to bite.

Uncaring people pass her by,
They see her plight and wonder why,
So young a person has no home,
And around the streets aimlessly roam.

Addicts and prostitutes, she knows them all,
They tell her the dangers, if her pride should fall.
Often tempted, her back to the wall,
When deep inside she hears a call.

Her bed is a box propped in a door,
Often her body is tender and sore.
But when she sees those ever so younger,
She forgers the pain caused by hunger.

Up to the skies she will often look,
Remembering words she read in a book.
The meaning now she can clearly see,
"Suffer little children to come unto me".

Need Help or Want to Help?

If you need help or would like to help please call one of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless members listed below.

SHELTERS: Women and Children

YWCA Battered Women's Shelter 872-9259
(Toll Free) 1-888-872-9259
Bethany House 557-2873
Salvation Army 762-5660
Welcome Hse. 859-431-8717
Women's Crisis Center 859-491-3335

SHELTER: Men

City Gospel Mission 241-5525
Garden St. House 241-0490
Joseph House (Veterans) 241-2965
St. Francis/St. Joseph House 381-4941
Mt. Airy Center 661-4620
Volunteers of Amer. 381-1954

SHELTER: Both

Anthony House (Youth) 357-4602

Caracole (AIDS) 761-1480
Friars Club 381-5432
Drop Inn Center 721-0643
Haven House 863-8866

Interfaith Hospitality 471-1100
Lighthouse Youth Center (Teens) 961-4080
St. John's Housing 651-6446

HOUSING:

CMHA 721-4580
Excel Development 632-7149
Miami Purchase 241-0504
OTR Housing Net. 369-0004
ReSTOC 381-1171
Tender Mercies 721-8666
Tom Geiger House 961-4555
Dana Transitional Bridge Services, Inc 751-9797

TREATMENT: Women

First Step Home 961-4663
Full Circle Program 721-0643

TREATMENT: Men

Charlie's 3/4 House 784-1853
Prospect House 921-1613
Starting Over 961-2256

TREATMENT: Both

N.A. Hopeline 820-2947
A.A. Hotline 351-0422
C.C.A.T. 381-6672
Talbert House 684-7956
Transitions, Inc 859-491-4435
VA Domiciliary 859-559-5011
DIC Live-In Program 721-0643

OTHER SERVICES:

AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati 421-2437
Appalachian Identity Center 621-5991
Beech Acres 231-6630
Center for Independent Living Options 241-2600
Churches Active in Northside 591-2246
Cincinnati Health Network 961-0600
Community Action Agency 569-1840
Contact Center 381-4242
Emanuel Center 241-2563

Freestore/ Foodbank 241-1064
Franciscan Haircuts 651-6468
Goodwill Industries 771-4800
Coalition for the Homeless 421-7803

Hamilton Co. Mental Health Board 946-8600
Mental Health Access Point 558-8888
Hamilton Co. TB Control 632-7186
Health Rsrc. Center 357-4602
Homeless Mobile Health Van 352-2902
House of Refuge Mission 221-5491
Legal Aid Society 241-9400
Madisonville Ed. & Assis. Center 271-5501
Mary Magdalen House 721-4811

McMicken Dental Clinic 352-6363
Our Daily Bread 621-6364
Peaslee Neighborhood Center 621-5514
Project Connect, Homeless Kids 363-1060
St. Vincent De Paul 562-8841

The Emergency Food Center 471-4357
Travelers Aid 721-7660
United Way 721-7900
VA Homeless Women Helping Women 872-9259

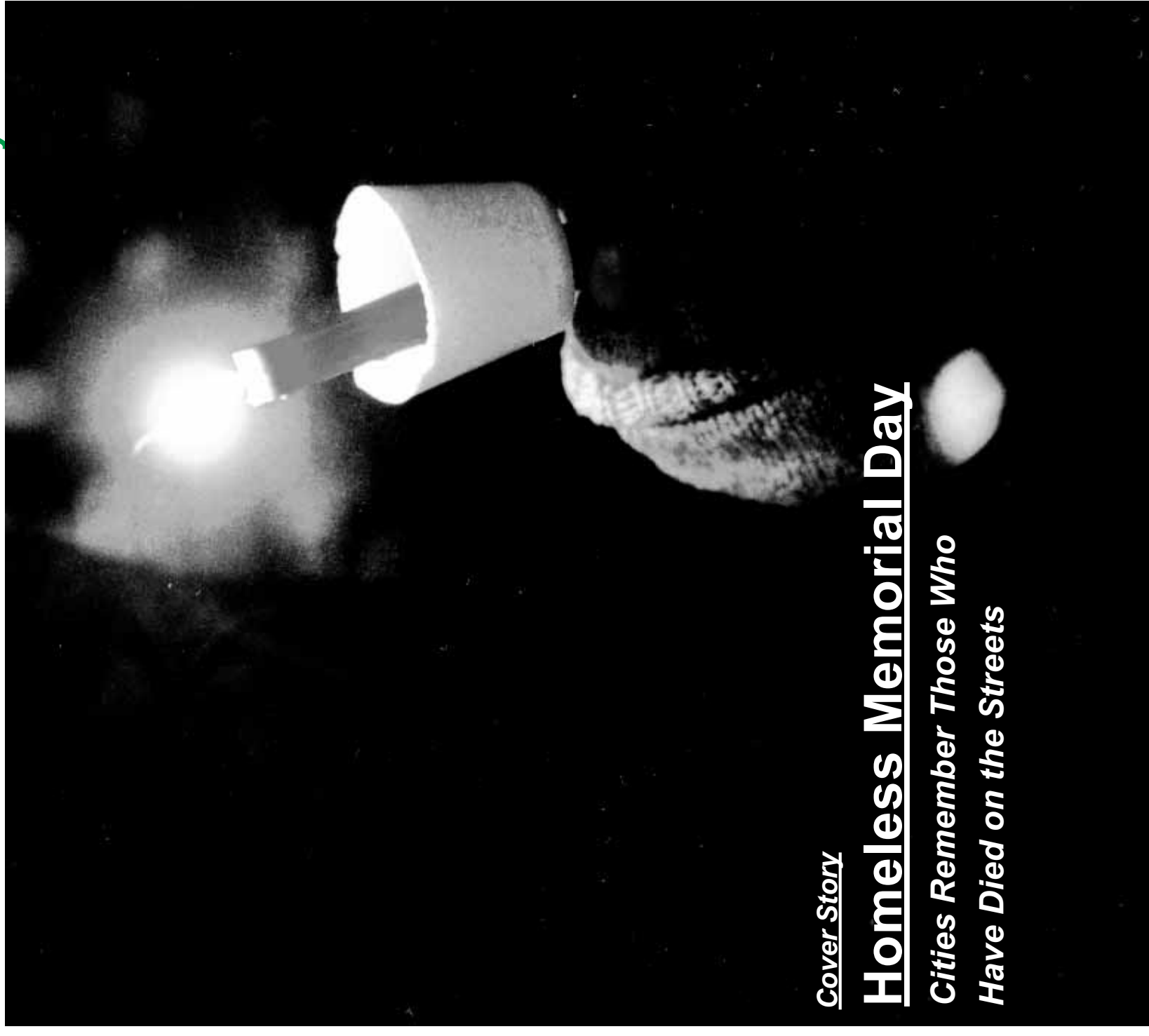
MIDDLETOWN/HAMILTON (Butler County)
St. Raphael's (Food Bank/Soup Kitchen) 863-3184
Salvation Army 863-1445
Serenity House Day Center 422-8555
Open Door Pantry 868-3276
New Life Baptist Mission (Soup Kitchen) 896-9800
Hope House (Homeless Families/Singles) 423-4673

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January 2006



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Cities Remember Those Who Have Died on the Streets