A Futile and Brutal Act
Berkeley’s New Anti-Homeless Laws

“Berkeley continues to outlaw homeless people in the face of overwhelming statements from the federal government and from nearly every university school of health and law school that says that criminalizing the poor is a futile and brutal act.”

— Max Anderson, Berkeley City Council

by Terry Messman

It was the best of Berkeley and the worst of Berkeley. On one side was the Downtown Berkeley Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and a six-member voting bloc of the City Council acting as a political machine to rubber-stamp the directives of big business.

On the other side was the conscience of Berkeley, in the form of hundreds of concerned citizens who lifted up their voices in defense of human rights, international law, humane treatment, justice and compassion — all to no avail.

At a crucial moment when the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have warned U.S. cities to stop passing anti-homeless laws, United Nations agencies have officially declared that U.S. cities are violating international law by criminalizing homeless people.

Mayor Tom Bates and the Berkeley City Council voted 6 to 3 in favor of draconian new measures to persecute homeless people.

Yet, it was the best of Berkeley because so many people cared so deeply about the city’s homeless residents and offered powerful and electrifying calls for compassion and social justice.

Many people present at the council meeting on November 17 said afterwards that they were so moved by the inspiring statements of so many who waited for hours in the council chambers to testify, that it felt like a moral victory for human rights despite the passage of the anti-homeless laws.

Berkeley activist Sally Hindman said it felt like “cognitive dissonance” when immediately after the council listened to several hours of compelling testimony about human rights, the council majority ignored every one of the eloquent voices raised in defense of the city’s poorest residents, and voted to pass the draconian laws.

The City Council’s first vote on November 17 was followed by their second, and final, vote in favor of the anti-homeless measures on December 1.

The new law severely limits the amount of sidewalk space where people can have their belongings to two square feet, and bans lying on the rims of planters.

People with shopping carts will be forced to move all their possessions every hour. The law also bans urinating and defecating in public even though many called that provision a misleading smoke screen aimed at maligning the poor, since it is already illegal.

At one point, Attorney Osha Neumann walked up to the microphone and told the City Council that “the fix is in,” then deliberately turned his back on the council and directly addressed the large number of homeless advocates who packed the council chambers. He said that despite the majority vote for the anti-homeless laws, people had succeeded in joining together in a struggle that would continue to defend the rights of homeless people.

In an evening packed with inspiring speakers, the most eloquent testimony by far came at the very end, when Berkeley City Councilmember Max Anderson called forth memories of an earlier struggle for civil rights in our nation’s history.

Anderson, an African-American councilmember representing District 3, was one of three dissenting votes to the anti-homeless measures, along with Kris Worthington and Jesse Arreguin.

Anderson delivered the most magniﬁcent statement of the evening, a powerful moral indictment of the Berkeley City Council for following in the segregationist footsteps of Mississippi and Alabama.

He put Berkeley’s efforts to punish the poor in historical perspective, reminding everyone that the council has constantly attempted to criminalize homelessness for more than 20 years, going back to Mayor Berkefeld.

“Through our attendance at the City Council meeting, I think we played a role in empowering our clients who spoke out against the criminalization of homelessness. More importantly, we stood in solidarity with them.”

— Vanessa Briseno, Suitcase Clinic

Suitcase Clinic’s Solidarity with People on the Street

by Caroline Pohl

“When homeless people show up, everyone shuts up.” — Dana Minton, a Suitcase client at General Clinic.

On November 17, Berkeley’s City Council met to vote on newly proposed anti-homeless ordinances, which would include criminalizing the placement of a cart for more than one hour in the same area and forcing homeless individuals to confine their belongings to an area measuring only two feet by two feet.

In return, these laws made empty promises to build more restrooms and showers, as well as provide storage places for homeless persons. Undeniably, these ordinances were purposefully constructed to target Berkeley’s homeless community, and to create a new form of criminalization for this already underrepresented group in government.

It was a typical Tuesday night at General Clinic, as Suitcase Clinic members and SHARE coordinators — Brandon Chen, Jenny Liang, and Vanessa Briseno — prepared for their weekly SHARE discussion with our clients.

General Clinic is a drop-in center where homeless individuals can receive medical, optometry or dental care, talk to a lawyer, pick up hygiene supplies or receive other services such as acupuncture, laundry or footwashing.

This week, however, the SHARE discussion group would be held at the City Council, providing clients with a literal voice in politics and their community. The SHARE coordinators had reserved a place to speak at the meeting if our clients so desired.

Before we left, the conversation at General Clinic gradually drifted toward the unavoidable topic at hand. In reflecting on a previous council meeting on different anti-homeless laws, Dana Minton discussed the positive response met by the activism of 200 homeless individuals.

“Empathy shows,” said Dana. “When the homeless show up, everyone shuts up.”

Rafael Dang, another regular at General Clinic, agreed. Having moved to the United States quite a few years ago, Rafael was concerned about the city of Berkeley infringing on our human rights. “I believe everyone is free to be homeless,” said Rafael.

Christopher Cort, previously a professor at UC Berkeley and another client of General Clinic, summed up the conversation nicely as we started out towards City Hall, declaring that he “opposed everything that makes life harder for the homeless.”

“A view from the steps of City Hall at the Berkeley City Hall Occupation. The occupation has given homeless people a voice and a visible presence.”

— Lydia Guara, photo

See Solidarity of Suitcase Clinic page 11

See A Futile and Brutal Act page 6
A Column on Human Rights

by Carol Denney

A small news item showed up in The Berkeley Daily Planet around the same time as Mayor Tom Bates and his team methodically passed their law criminalizing having more than two square feet of belongings in public. A local artist had all of his work stolen from a storage facility. He had property stolen as well, property which apparently showed up later for resale at Moe’s Books and Amoeba Music. But his original art—works, a colorful collection including unique prints and monographs (perhaps without the same immediate resale value)—appear to be gone forever.

Berkeley City Councilmember Linda Mastronardi and her co-workers have their stuff in parks, they can sleep in parks, they can hang out in parks,” to excuse her two-square-foot sidewalk law, generating a park-protective backlash that she used to grease the way to criminalizing more obvious attributes of homelessness with the usual sweeteners, such as non-existent bathrooms, storage, and services.

People who attended the overflowing City Council hearing on November 17 were treated to a letter from the business (oh yes, it is a business) run by Jack Petranker called the Mangalam Research Center for Buddhist Languages which claimed their business (yes, it is a business) was down because of the terrible homeless problem. They are, of course, not too sure, but might be stealing bicycles and are just soicky anyway.

This would be the new Buddhism, since the old Buddhism had a slightly different perspective on the poor. And it was especially interesting to those of us who have had the police explain that as a matter of policy, they are purposefully moving people from Shattuck Avenue down to Harold Way. I’m not suggesting this is a nefarious conspiracy. I’m just saying.

None of the anti-poov stuff was particularly original or unexpected. Criminalizing poverty has become a holiday tradition in Berkeley as predictable as Muzak in retail stores playing “Silver Bells.” Some wondered if the official statements from the Department of Justice and the Department of Housing and Urban Development advising against criminalization measures would have any effect. They didn’t. People who criminalize poverty are great at characterizing it as a safety or public health measure, and the new burden it puts on grant writers is apparently not a compelling concern, even though it affects around seven million dollars of our HUD funding.

But the real public health crisis is the fact that our current housing policy — the result of 30 solid years of Mayor Tom Bates and, before that, his wife, former Mayor Loni Hancock’s complete neglect of affordable housing and homeless residents in Berkeley — presumes that having people sleeping in parks, under bushes, and tucked away as best they can under ever overpasses and in every alley, is just the way things are. Wave to your nearby homeless people in your park as you and your kids enjoy a picnic, brought to you by the developer friendly policies of your local and state politicians.

But the neighbors are right. No park is designed as a campground, and the necessity of clean, safe parks is better understood in Berkeley than most places, although park maintenance is still woeful underfunded. None of them, by the way, spoke directly in favor of the criminalization elements in Maio’s proposal, just in favor of the same things any home- less person living unhappily in a park wants — safe surroundings, convenient, available bathrooms, and the enforcement of the laws we already have.

The campground of necessity should be the City Hall grounds, where there are no more green lawns to confound any more with tarps and tents, thanks to the drought, and where public officials have to meet the people their luxury-housing-only policies have affected.

The little news story about the local artist who lost all of his work was probably too small to capture much attention. This man’s artwork was in a fully paid U-Haul storage locker. Many artists use storage lockers after generating an inconvenient amount of canvases, especially those who work without dedicated studio space once plentiful in a now priced-out Bay Area.

But the item I read and re-read like a powerful book was the perfect morning news story to end my sad council meeting in which hundreds of people brought compelling testimony to a council majority that ignored them.

A friend of mine’s roommate and close friend died unexpectedly a few weeks ago, and even more unexpectedly, her landlord told her to vacate the apartment at the end of that month, ostensibly for repairs which need a permit she has yet to pull.

My friend is a disabled senior on a fixed income in one of the few remaining rent-controlled apartments in Berkeley. Even if she can struggle through the difficulties of finding some disabled woman trying to establish many years of tenancy on paper and establish her right to stay, she faces living on a pittance, earning every dollar, and hoping for the best.

Her top concern, when we speak, is making certain that her roommate’s artwork is preserved, and that the work is organized and recognized so that her roommate’s value as an artist is not overlooked.

My friend is an artist herself, as am I, so there flows between us, even in a time of community and personal crisis, an understanding that some things are just things you do because you care.

To the man who lost so much of his personal artwork in the U-Haul robbery, thank you for personalizing what our City Council majority (Max Anderson, Jesse Arreguin, and Kris Worthington excepted) does not seem to grasp about the perils of storage even in the best of circumstances — even in one of the few City of Berkeley gets itself into the business of trying to provide it, since right now no storage exists for people who can’t pay the cost. Because his story helps those who need to think about it crystallize one clear thought: nothing quite works so well as housing.

Berkeley’s Sleep-In Occupation Has Location! Location! Location!

by Carol Denney

A creative group of people has solved the storage problem for about 50 people without homes in Berkeley, California. With no money, no forms to fill out, just a spirit of fellowship and cooperation, the sleep-in (or occupation) on the steps of old Berkeley City Hall which claimed their business (yes, it is a business) was down because of the terrible homeless problem. They are, of course, not too sure, but might be stealing bicycles and are just soicky anyway.

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Berkeley’s Sleep-In Occupation Has Location! Location! Location!

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A creative group of people has solved the storage problem for about 50 people without homes in Berkeley, California. With no money, no forms to fill out, just a spirit of fellowship and cooperation, the sleep-in (or occupation) on the steps of old Berkeley City Hall which began on November 16, 2015, in response to new anti-homeless laws, solved an issue which Berkeley city leaders have been unable to solve for more than 30 years.

These people are working together with community support to build a cooperative community occupying the old City Hall steps on Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

The location of the colorful tents and tables has a lengthy list of advantages over the City Council majority’s plan for homeless people, which for 30 years, has been to chase people all over town, constantly change both written and unwritten rules, and provide assistance to an extremely small ratio of the people in need, with no storage or safe place to rest for anybody else. For about 30 years, it’s been a shell game where the respite is temporary, the stakes are high, and the disinterest from Berkeley voters is deafening.

A sign bears a message: “This is an occupation, not an encampment.”

Lydia Dans photo

The occupation at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, on the other hand, is storing gear for about 50 people near transportation and services and has a grassy area for tents with soft lighting at night from near-by streetlights. There are two port-a-potties right across the street in a public park right by City Hall, the main library, and the Public Safety Building.

It’s right by the farmers market, out of the way of shoppers and tourists, and located on public property near an almost unused building where the City Council meets in the old council chambers.

It may not be perfect, especially in the near-freezing temperatures the occupants are enduring, but the creativity and poetry is top notch, and the environmental standards would give it a platinum LEED rating.

Bring some hot food and come on by.

Two weeks into the occupation, they have developed a proposed government they shared with supporters, declaring: “Our first proposed government here at the Berkeley City Hall Occupation is done with listening, a commitment of consensus as we develop and grow. Self rule with consensus. A desired 100% consensus.

Their plan details intricate and thoughtful gradations of consensus, such as: “70% minimum to approve, but must be revisited within two months to review and improve consensus percentage. At 80% approval, item gets revisited every two months to revise and improve consensus percentage. At 90% approval, item gets revisited every 6 months to review and improve consensus. Once 100% approval is reached, the one who wishes to revisit is with 51% approval to revisit.”

The statement concludes: “As the village evolves, these guidelines will allow for the government and community guide lines to evolve.”
The Management of Redwood Gardens Threatens Senior Residents with Eviction for Speaking Out

The lawyer warned tenants to “cease and desist” any and all criticism of management. Must they surrender their freedom of speech and right to privacy when living in the project?

by Lydia Gans

The residents at Redwood Gardens, the HUD project on Derby Street in Berkeley for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, have long been reminded that they have little power to control their living conditions. Their lives are in the hands of the management, and they’ve found that expressing opposition to the actions or policies of management can have serious consequences.

The building owners recently hired a new on-site property manager and her relations with the residents got off to a bad start and have not improved. When she came to the project, the members of the Residents’ Council were interested in getting acquainted and suggesting changes to their next meeting. Council Co-chairs Eleanor Walden and Gary Hicks sent her an invitation.

Walden reported to the members on the response. “The newly hired Acting Property Manager, Liana Bates-Hall, just paid me a visit. In response to our invitation to come to the next Residents’ Council meeting she cate- gorically refused. She said she had no responsibility to meet with us as ‘we don’t sign her pay check.” She defined her job solely as carrying out the rules of those who sign her pay check.’ She defined her job responsibility to meet with us as ‘we don’t do the same, including, but not limited to calling her a bully, making false accusations against her, and all communications of such views expressed to other residents.”

The management’s lawyer charged that Gary Hicks, “through your affiliation as a member of the Redwood Gardens Residents’ Council, have continually, fre- quently and on a consistent basis harassed her... as well as instigated other residents to do the same, including, but not limited to requesting evidence of her qualifica- tions for her employment position... name-calling her to other residents includ- ing but not limited to calling her a bully and making false accusations against her, such as that she was hired by a company with a suspended license.”

As a matter of fact, this last item came from an article by reporter Lynda Carlson in Bay Area Independent Media (Indy Bay), certainly not from Hicks.

The lawyer’s letter refers to the Lease Agreement stating that a tenant can be evicted for noncompliance which includes “repeated minor violations of this Agreement which disrupt the livability of the project, adversely affect the health of safety of any person or the right of any tenant to the quiet enjoyment of the lease premises and related project facilities...”

People might recall the actions of the management last year when they engaged in a massive remodeling process requiring tenants to move their belongings, staying away from their units in some cases for an extended period of time, and in general creating an extremely stressful situation. Regarding project facilities, they moved a laundry to an inconvenient location and closed off the popular community room for over a year.

It seems that it was acceptable for management to “disrupt the livability or the quiet enjoyment of the lease premises.”

Furthermore, addressing the Residents’ Council, the lawyer writes that the fact that some residents disagree with the “dis- paraging views or actions expressed by your organization disrupt the livability of the project... (and) disturbs the peace and quiet of other residents...”

Several paragraphs are devoted to dis- cussing Ms. Bates-Hall’s refusal to attend meetings of the Residents’ Council. “Her refusal is not grounds to make or express false negative inferences to act as manager of the community and you must cease any and all communications of such views expressed to other residents.”

The management’s lawyer appears to be denying the First Amendment right to freedom of speech for the tenants. They have been warned that they are not allowed to express an opinion about the management, and are not allowed to speak out about the policies that affect their daily lives. It is difficult to believe that this suppression of First Amendment rights is occurring in Berkeley.

There are other references to conversa- tions about management among residents. Does this mean that people must surrender the freedom of speech and their right to privacy when moving into the project?

Basically, the charges and accusations made in the letter are easily challenged and the residents do have some access to legal aid. But the underlying message is the reminder that they have no power over their circumstances. They have no choice but to “pay the rent and obey the rules.”

Noncompliance can result in “termination of tenancy.”

And the final kick is in the last para- graph, in bold print, headed with the warning to CEASE AND DESIST.

Street Spirit
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Gimme Some Truth
Compiled by Daniel McMullan
I’ve had enough of reading things by neurotic, psychotic, pigheaded politicians. All I want is the truth, just gimme some truth... — John Lennon
Home is a notion that only nations of the homeless fully appreciate and only the uprooted comprehend. — Wallace Stegner
It is forbidden to kill; therefore, all mur- derers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trum- pets. — Voltaire
I am convinced that imprisonment is a way of pretending to solve the problem of crime. It does nothing for the victims of crime, but perpetuates the idea of re- trIBUTion, thus maintaining the endless cycle of violence in our culture. It is a cruel and useless substitute for the elim- ination of those conditions — poverty, unemployment, homelessness, despera- tion, racism, greed — which are the root of most punished crime. The work of the rich and powerful go mostly unpunished. — Howard Zinn
Man is the only animal that deals in that unpunished. — Voltaire

Street Spirit Editorial Advisory Committee
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Santa Cruz has enacted bans on sleeping in parks and in vehicles, bans on blankets, and bans on sitting-panhandling-breathing-eating-sleeping-dreaming-and-existing.

Commentary by Terry Messman

Santa Cruz Mayor Don Lane released an open letter last month that took a thoughtful look at the suffering of homeless people in his city, and compassionately urged the city and its policymakers to resist repressive measures against the rights of homeless people.

In Lane’s letter, the mayor acknowledged his city’s failure to provide adequate shelter for the people trapped in poverty on the streets. He also noted that recent federal appeals court cases that question local laws that prohibit sleeping outside when those who are sleeping outside have no legal alternative. The feds have also started to intervene in court cases that question local laws that prohibit sleeping in public places for people who have no place else to sleep.

It is a positive sign that Lane is calling for greater public compassion and is re-examining and repudiating some of the mentalities that lead to the criminalization of people living on the streets. It is worthwhile to look more closely at the most illuminating points in Mayor Lane’s public letter — and then at the terribly flawed wording of his statement. The best part of Lane’s letter is simply its candor in taking a hard look at the alarming lack of shelter and services for homeless people in his city. He reports that even though County officials have increased funding for homeless services, the City of Santa Cruz has significantly reduced its funding, jeopardizing winter shelter programs and resulting in the loss of meals, restrooms and showers for hundreds of homeless people.

The mayor has praised the City Council for the nineteen emergency warming centers, expanded shelters, legal aid for homeless people, and an end to the ban on sleeping. [Mayor Lane’s letter was published in the November 2015 issue of Street Spirit.]

Lane’s statement is a significant exploration of the issues surrounding homelessness — especially in light of the vote on November 17 to criminalize homeless people by Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates and the majority of the City Council. The refusal of Berkeley officials to listen to the concerns of people who spend their days with intelligence and compassion in defense of the human rights of the poorest citizens is a travesty. In this climate, the open letter from the mayor of Santa Cruz takes on even greater importance.

Mayor Lane described the enormous suffering of homeless people and acknowledged his city’s failure to provide adequate shelter for the people trapped in poverty on the streets. Even more surprisingly, the mayor of Santa Cruz, who has spent his career policing and criminalizing homeless people and their acts of desperation, questions the validity of his own past actions.

What makes Lane’s statement so meaningful is that he is in the face of Santa Cruz’s appalling police attacks on its homeless residents. For the past 30 years, Santa Cruz, to its absolute disgrace, has compiled one of the worst track records of anti-homelessness legislation in the nation.

The city’s inhumane policy of police repression has been carried out by self-avaowed liberal-to-progressive municipal officials who have enacted a seemingly endless series of cruel laws to banish homeless people from public spaces in what can only be called a deliberate campaign of de facto segregation — segregation based on economic class, race and disability.

As a result, many Santa Cruz advocates and homeless people are understandably suspicious of Mayor Lane’s sincerity and good will, given the city government’s unbroken record of persecuting and outlawing nearly every facet of the existence of homeless people.

But there is another way to look at Lane’s statement. One way that social-change movement work, is by gradually educating and awakening public officials to the injustice of oppressive laws.

In Santa Cruz, dedicated activists have carried out a long-lasting and hard-fought struggle to expand the rights and opportunities of the most vulnerable segments of our society. This effort has resulted in a host of significant victories that are making Santa Cruz a model for other cities, and a light ahead by which others can measure their own cities’ accountability to the rights of all of their citizens.

Santa Cruz has enacted bans on sleeping in parks and in vehicles, bans on blankets, and bans on sitting-panhandling-breathing-eating-sleeping-dreaming-and-existing.

Mayor Lane has maligned the very activists who have done the most to keep the human rights alive for all these years in Santa Cruz. Have they been noisy and “boisterous” in advocating that poor people not be criminalized? Thank God they have.

Lane’s letter is simply an echo of the mayor’s statement that even though County officials have increased funding for homeless services, the City of Santa Cruz has significantly reduced its funding, jeopardizing winter shelter programs and resulting in the loss of meals, restrooms and showers for hundreds of homeless people.

Activists have tried for years to make the City Council acknowledge the complete failure of Santa Cruz to house or even shelter more than a fraction of its homeless population. It is important that the mayor stated this explicitly, in black and white, to the public.

Lane writes, “Despite a fairly widespread misconception, we’ve never had a lot of emergency shelter for adults in the City of Santa Cruz. And now we have even less. No matter how you slice it, during most of the year, there are literally hundreds of adults without an indoor space to sleep at night.”

This adds up to a very serious indictment. For Mayor Lane admits that Santa Cruz is committing precisely the same injustice that the Department of Justice condemned in Boise, Idaho, by criminalizing people for sleeping outdoors in a city with too few shelter beds.

Lane states: “It has become extraordinarily difficult for any homeless adult to find any emergency shelter.”

The mayor also asks penetrating questions about the hardships faced by homeless people. Usually, if city officials address homeless issues at all, they discuss them in a way devoid of any human feeling, as if they were talking about bloodless statistics or abstract economic indicators, rather than human beings.

It is rare for any mayor to confront the desperation, anguish and suffering of people who have lost their housing. Lane asks the following questions in an attempt to open the eyes of city officials to the reality that leaving people to languish in misery is not a decent response to the desperate levels of human need on the streets.

“Where is a person who attended Santa Cruz High 15 years ago and who is now broke and troubled and living on the streets supposed to sleep tonight?”

He also suggested that the City work with a partner organization to set up a small pilot project for homeless residents to legally sleep in their vehicles, and explore the possibility of allowing an agency to create a small pilot camping area for people unable to find any housing.

It is truly unfortunate that, after saying so much of the right things about homelessness, Mayor Lane then launches an unwarranted attack on the very activists who have championed the rights of homeless people in Santa Cruz, in season and out. It is a bitter irony that the mayor maligns the same

On Homelessness and Human Rights in Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz has enacted bans on sleeping in parks and in vehicles, bans on blankets, and bans on sitting-panhandling-breathing-eating-sleeping-dreaming-and-existing.
On Homelessness and Human Rights from page 4

homeless advocates who have advocated literally single every one of the proposals he makes in his letter.

Lange refers to the unwarranted presence of the city’s homeless activists as the “elephant in the room.”

“In Santa Cruz, I believe the biggest challenge is to get the public to understand that we have a lot of high-profile homeless activists – the most notable among them are not themselves homeless. Years of boisterous and offensive behavior have caused me to avoid dealing with some aspects of local homelessness issues. I imagine this is also the experience of other elected officials. Anyway, I am not proud of my choice to avoid some of these issues. I have considered the behavior of a very small number of people to keep me from taking on so many truly important issues.

In the past, I have made many of the mistakes that homeless advocates have and now do in order to stick up for poor people who would otherwise be defenseless. In fact, for the past year, City Council has itself at stake are human lives – and not the delicate feelings of the City Council.

Another irony is that almost all of Lange’s proposals for safe sleeping places, legal areas for vehicle dwellers, and camps on the sleeping ban, did not originate with him, but with the homeless advocates he has so far defiantly defamed.

Santa Cruz homeless advocates have written thoughtful articles in Street Spirit that Lange’s proposals, say the of violence in a 30-year history of homeless movement and the criminal justice system to protect the lives and safety of poor people, прикрытие и всеобщая защита.

Lange’s letter states that “enforcement more of our city’s civil rights activism. Santa Cruz officials recently protest by making it unimportant. At times, they have been both American and international. All of the civil rights activists in our nation’s history have made city officials uncomfortable. Never have even been so firmly established to be upset. Yet that is what activists must do. They must expose unjust laws and create an uproar so that city officials are forced to act. They must create a moral crisis for those unwilling, government to deal with the issue.

City officials may dislike the activists for disrupting business as usual, but these protests are not only peaceful and non-violent. The City Council has presided over police raids and repression for three decades.

Instead of creating housing and other humane solutions, they have enacted an endless series of sleeping bans and vehi- cle bans and blanket bans and park bans that are now nothing more than a thinly veiled eating-sleeping-dreaming-and-existing.

Mayor Lane honestly admits, “I am as responsible as anyone in this community for allowing these people to cover up with sleeping bags and blankets and portable showers and composting toilets – and by virtue of their action, helping them to get away with it.”

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Lane voted for the cram that came out of them the Citizens Public Safety Task Force and that task force decided to place, physically and verbally, try to alleviate some of the safety of the homeless people on the streets at stake.

The pur-
A Futile and Brutal Act

from page 1

Measures N and O in 1994. Anderson said, “Berkeley continues trying to outlaw homeless people in the face of overwhelming statements from the federal government and from nearly every university school of health and law school that says that criminalizing the poor is a futile and brutal act.”

He responded directly to a few Berkeley residents who earlier in the evening had tried to stir up fear against homeless people in the city. “The poor have a hell of a lot more to fear from the affluent than the other way around,” Anderson said. “We have heard and seen what has happened when the rights of people are systematically ignored.”

Anderson then reminded Mayor Bates and the City Council that they had heard testimony from public health nurses about the “terrible health problems suffered by people on the streets” – people who are on medications for congestive heart failure, people who have kidney failure, or diabetes or a host of other diseases.

Anderson said that Berkeley officials have tried to criminalize basic things that all human beings must do, including sit-ting and lying, sleeping and urinating.

“Now we’re criminalizing people sit-ting in a two-by-two-foot space that they are condemned to have all of their posses-sions in,” Anderson said. “This is so dra-conian and so backward and so reac-tionary that you’d think this is coming out of Alabama or Mississippi.”

A BOOT ON THE NECKS OF THE POOR

Over the years, I have heard many, many voices speaking out in defense of homeless people, but Anderson touched on something very profound in describing the human damage caused by the new anti-homeless law. He somehow captured the deeper dimension of the appalling injustice being done to the poorest of the poor by Mayor Bates and the City Council.

Perhaps it was his shattering image of “boots on the necks of the poor.”

“To continue to pile on and put a boot on the neck of people when they need a helping hand is so beyond the pale of what we want for in this city,” Anderson said.

“And to have this thing be driven by wealthy, big-money interests that apparent-ly hold sway over six members of this council, at any given time without any kind of moral or ethical standards — even ignoring HUD guidelines! We don’t mind losing money for affordable housing in this city. We don’t want to build housing that is affordable for poor people. We throw our money on high-rise monstrosities that house only the richest among us.”

In light of Anderson’s reminder to his colleagues about the life-threatening health problems suffered by people on the streets, it almost defies belief that they ignored the testimony of nurses and ser-vice providers about the especially harm-ful impact their new laws would have on people with serious medical conditions.

Olivia de Bree, a nurse practitioner in Berkeley, described the health problems on the streets as working a 12-hour lifeworks on the streets and told the council, “This legislation is very inhumane.”

She told the City Council that there are higher rates of premature mortality among homeless people in Berkeley. National studies have repeatedly shown that people living on the streets have far shorter life spans than the general populace and often die prematurely due to serious illnesses and disease, and exposure to the elements and to violence.

De Bree testified that homeless people have higher rates of strokes, embolism, hepatitis and liver cancer. People from the ages of 45 to 64 who are homeless have 4.5 times higher rates of age-adjusted mortality.

Cancer and heart disease are two of the most common reasons why they are dying, she said, and that led her to a scathing denunciation of the council’s anti-homeless law that would require people to move their shopping carts every hour and to have only two square feet for their belongings.

“When people have heart disease, you’re going to ask them to move their shopping carts every hour,” de Bree said. “Who are you kidding? You are cruel! You are asking them to keep their posses-sions in a two-by-two-feet area and carry the rest? Are you insane?”

The nurse reminded the council that people with serious illnesses who live on the street have far worse outcomes because of the bad living conditions they face. “We’re not talking about people who have controlled but people with uncon-trolled diabetes, with amputations, ulcera-tions, and neuropathy,” de Bree said.

“They are not people you should be kicking when they are down and that is exactly what you are doing, and it’s incredibly inhumane. When you see a homeless person on the sidewalk and imagine that they are 20 to 30 years older because they are very sick, that is who you are hurting.”

She also warned that these anti-homeless measures could jeopardize HUD funding for affordable housing, and ques-tioned why the City Council would know-ingly take steps to lose funding for afford-able housing. The loss of housing is a public health crisis, and she warned that it also “deters Black people from living and working in this city.”

De Bree pointed to a recent survey that shows that 49 percent of homeless people in Berkeley are African Americans. “African Americans are disproportionately repre-sented among the homeless,” she said. “In South Berkeley, we see institu-tional racism.” The new anti-homeless laws would disproportionately affect African Americans who are homeless and “will only make their lives harder.”

Daniel McMullan also spoke out against the discriminatory aspects of the anti-homeless measure. McMullan, a City Commissioner on Berkeley’s Human Welfare Commission, reminded City Councilmember Linda Maio, one of the key authors of the measure, that the coun-cil’s vote for anti-homeless laws on Dec. 1, 2015, came on the 60th anniversary of the day that Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and helped to spark the civil rights movement.

McMullan said that the Berkeley City Council has been reversing the spirit of the civil rights movement with its “fuzzy, racist, anti-human” laws that stem from a “beat-up on the victim ideology.”

At the council hearing, McMullan charged that the proponents of the anti-homeless laws were depicting “homeless people as filthy animals,” and denounced the City Council for enacting the laws at “the whims of business and development ties. This is the hidden reality of the anti-homeless ordinances. And it gives the lie to the liberal Berkeley rhetoric that we all agree that black lives matter. These laws say that black lives, in fact, do not matter. Anti-homeless ordinances are part of the ethnic cleansing of American cities as much as racial cleansing.”
A Futile and Brutal Act

from page 6

Moni Law and Sally Hиндman helped organize a sleep-out that began on the steps of old City Hall on Monday, November 16. The two women and a few others slept on the steps all night before the council meeting, and their act of soli- darity triggered the large-scale occupation that flourished into a community of peo- ple in tents and sleeping bags that soon covered the City Hall grounds.

Moni Law told the City Council, “It was freezing last night,” adding that she was awakened repeatedly by the cold and the noise. Law referred to the city’s two-square-foot law at the City Council meeting on December 1, trying to stop the second reading of what most already knew could perhaps be delayed, but certainly had the votes it needed to become another layer of Berkeley’s anti-homeless laws.

The best quote of the night heard over an auditorium reverberating with chants and stomping was Vice Mayor and Council Chair Linda Maio’s plaintive defense that the two square foot law would not be used until storage was made avail- able, and that “they are really big bins.”

“Really big bins,” the photographs of rows of ugly plastic garbage bins used in San Diego and elsewhere — in lieu of hon- estly providing low-income housing — never has quite the desired effect on people who wish to convince themselves that criminalizing having more than two square feet of possessions (shopping carts and blankets excepted, or so Maio claims), among other idiosyncrasies, is somehow okay.

The sleepy councilmembers who disagreed with Maio included Mayor Tom Bates and Councilmembers Linda Maio, Laurie Capitelli, Lori Droke, Daryl Moore and Susan Wengraf.

Just before they cast their votes to perpe- tuate and criminalize homeless people, a woman walked up to the microphone and denounced their actions. She then called for a moment of silence “for all of the home- less and disabled senior citizens who will die in the cold.”

Mayor Bates ignored her request, and loudly broke into the moment of silence again and again. Every time she asked for just a moment of silence to honor the suf- fering of homeless people, Bates broke into the silence and loudly ordered her to sit down; even though she was one of the very last speakers and might have been afforded a moment of silence.

She refused to sit down and called again for a moment of silence, but Bates continued to break into the moment of silence. He barked her and ordered her to sit down. He could easily have granted this simple request. Instead, he showed a complete lack of respect for the suffering of homeless people in his city.

One last time she tried. Once again Bates barked at her to sit down. She said, “A moment of silence for those who will die in the cold.”

The mayor rudely told her to sit down.

“Shame on you,” the woman said. “I said a moment of silence to show respect and honor, but you clearly have none.”

This is how bad it has become in Berkeley under the administration of Mayor Bates. The mayor is on his way out, and one of his last public acts in the season leading into Christmas was to override a simple request for a moment of silence to honor the poorest of the poor.

His legacy is this new set of laws that persecutes people in need.

The Berkeley police and Downtown Avalon are already harassing folks on the street with tickets and efforts to make life on the street even more miserable than it already is. And now there’s a fight to make sure that the homeless people also carry their belongings with them, when we will never have proper storage space to protect their items.

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**As Rents Skyrocket, Berkeley’s Favorite Scapegoat Comes Back Into Play: The Homeless Are to Blame**

The residents of the homeless occupation at old City Hall in Berkeley have named their protest, “Liberty City.”

**Seen No More**

*(For the homeless on Gillman Street)*

by Joan Clair

How to become you in the dust?

Seem no more, they’ve cleared you up.

Seem no more, they’ve cleared you up.

And where you were is a space.

And where you are — no trace!

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On the steps of old City Hall, protesters lined up candles to light the all-night vigil and a sign that said: “Build Affordable Housing.”

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Socialist Mayor J. Stitt Wilson, Berkeley.
by Daniel McMullan

“A Laundromat is more valuable to the community then a Real Estate Man.” — J. Stitt Wilson, Socialist Mayor of Berkeley, 1911-1913

When you say it out loud it sounds preposterous: “It’s the poor and homeless who are to blame. They are the ones that have all this power over the quality of your life.”

They are called the rich and powerful for a reason. They are powerful, and like it or not, they are the true architects of your community.

But there is only profit in that, when good things are pointed out. When bad things happen, people ask questions. With rents skyrocketing, some people are angry and fearful. Some are starting to look at decades-long maneuvering that has married local politics inextricably with real estate and developer interests.

With rent increases in Berkeley (depending on who you want to believe) of 12 percent to 31 percent, it has been hard for working families to stay in a city where they have lived for decades — some of us for generations.

Do your elected officials demand we take a look at this? Do they try to figure out where rent control is failing? Require more affordable housing from developers?

Well, according to Linda Maio, a member of the Berkeley City Council eyeing the mayor’s seat, it is the homeless who are to blame. This ever-powerful minority is the source of all our woes.

Maio’s anti-homeless measure is the same proposal that was backed away from a few months back after an uproar from the public. Such an uproar over homeless people might be rare to distract the public.

After all, members of the City Council must do something to drown out an ever growing growl that is coming from a populace that is having its life blood squeezed out by greedy landlords and developers and the needy politicians in their pockets.

For as quiet as it’s being kept, while your public servants mouth “Affordable Housing” platitudes, in another room, they splot the high rents that can be commanded in Berkeley as proof of the great job they are doing for their masters. It is election time and it is time to deliver and to show the bosses that they are willing to do their bidding, even in the very face of the people that elected them.

For in a busy, distracted world, it is money that wins the day — unless. Unless the people, You and I, fight the money with our time. Doing the footwork it takes to talk to our neighbors and share with them what is really going on. Overcoming their money with our energy.

These same people — the landlords and developers and politicians in their pay — tried to put forward Measure S, an anti-homeless ballot measure, in 2012. I was astounded by the number of slick mailers that filled my mailbox with lies and half truths and the tons of money they commanded.

Being a homeless advocate, I know the real story, but what chance does a person concentrating on other things have? They trust these people to speak the truth, but when it comes to the only subgroup in society where such hate speech and oppression is tolerated — the homeless and poor and disabled — the powers that be rarely tell the truth.

Every single one of these mailings inspired me to get out of the house, molder in hand, to talk to my neighbors about who and what was really behind this, and what game they were really playing.

And now here we are, just three years later, after Berkeley voters rejected anti-homeless criminalization, and it is already time to trot out this grim anti-homeless strategy again, this one-trick pony. Whether or not it passes, it caps the energy we could be putting towards true progress.

They want us busy. They know we held a meeting on November 22 to discuss what is happening to housing in Berkeley, a meeting titled: “Berkeley’s Housing Crisis: What Can We Do About It?”

Another, a Town Hall on the same subject, was called by Assemblyman Tony Thurman on November 12.

These are meetings that were called by some of the smarter heads in Berkeley, the kind of folks that make sense. And that does not bode well for politicians seen as Pro-WageSlavery, politicians who are slack off on affordable and low-cost housing. But when someone is caught out and they are not very honest or not very bright, whatever the case may be, they sometimes do the knee-jerk thing and double down. Throwing good money after bad on anti-homeless measures. Only here, it is all bad. Bad, bad, bad. The voters have spoken on this issue.

We know it is obvious that these issues are related. High rents create homelessness. Wasting time and money drawing up statutes to make illegal what is already illegal is taking away resources and attention from the real issues — issues we care about deeply and will be heard.

They will not split us off. They will bring us together. And together we will find solutions and elect those that will put

See Berkeley’s Favorite Scapegoat page 9
I first met Eve Pageant at a restaurant at which I worked in Berkeley. She would bring her current artwork and work on it for several hours at a time. It ranged from fabulous human figure sculptures to sculptural reliefs to oil paint-ings to ink, charcoal and colored pencil drawings. It was the best artwork I’d ever seen, including that of the art professors in my college classes.

We became quick friends, and I found her to be a shy, modest, knowledgeable and personable person. Ultimately, I visited her home studio, and the sheer number of her art pieces astounded me. Every wall was covered with her paintings, and shelves were filled with her bronze and wax sculptures.

Eve loved music, and played banjo and guitar, and was learning electric bass towards the end. She often accompanied me to my gigs, where she would make pen and ink sketches of the musicians and patrons. People often mistook us for sisters, and ultimately we became sisters, closer to me than my real sisters.

Eve grew up in Indiana, where her parents were both psychology professors and published authors. One of her sisters became an ear, nose and throat specialist and surgeon. Her other sister was a brilliant biochemistry major before her own early death.

Eve received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Indiana University. She suffered from severe asthma her entire life, and Indiana’s climate didn’t agree with her. As a child she had to spend entire summers in her air-conditioned bedroom, where she spent many hours developing her skills, which weren’t impacted by her asthma. She told me that she wasn’t able to go to camp like the other kids because of her asthma. Her parents offered to send her to a summer camp in Colorado to live, but Eve decided not to leave her family.

She and her partner moved to Boulder, Colorado, where amazingly she had no trouble breathing. But they were intrigued by the idea of living in Hawaii, and moved there. But as soon as Eve stepped off the plane, she realized it was a mistake.

Over the several months they lived on the Big Island, they had to go into the hospital several times. They moved back to the mainland, to San Francisco, where she’d briefly lived during the “summer of love,” as a teen age runaway in 1967.

But around 1978, her partner, who suffered from chronic depression, unexpectedly committed suicide. Eve was understandably traumatized by this, and moved back in with her family, who at that time supported her.


do nothing. The Bay Area is a bad place to play in the late Autumn Fall.

I hate to use strong language, but these folks. Things to change before our community is lost to the group of official on our City Council not just willing, but seemingly eager, to sell out Berkeley residents.

It is very obvious that they subscribe to the idea that money elects people, not votes. Yet, our success in defeating Measure S tells another story.

J. Stitt Wilson, Berkeley’s socialist mayor back in 1911, knew the value of a Laundromat and a Real Estate Man. He knew that one cleans things. The other can be quite the opposite.

Dan McMullan is a Commissioner on the Human Welfare and Community Action Commission and Director of the Disabled People Outside Project.

The Ripple in the Lake

by George Wynn

In the heart of the Redwood country where the cold wind blows in the late Autumn Fall

I listen to a volunteer in the soup kitchen

after he offers me Seconds say, "I go out to the woods as often as I can just like my daughter did before she got hooked and died after she left the military" to watch a ripple in the lake.

I know I’ll never again see the aurora of her hair but I live for that image of me and her sitting, watching a ripple in the lake and that seems to make all the difference when my emotions and feelings are beyond weary."
I was fine as a shape-shifter and an immortal until doctors got their sani-
tizing ignorant hands on me. The first thing Doctor Baker did, when he assessed
me with his feeble mind, was order up some Haldol to be administered by force
if necessary. Everything changed when that mind-disabling medication took
effect.

My senses were deadened. I could barely move. My torso felt stiff as a
board. And I realized that my shapeshift-
ing ability was mostly blocked by the antipsychotic drug. For the first
time in centuries, I was scared.

It was group time, and I fidgeted in my chair because of the medication’s side-
effects. I looked around the room and realized others were also fidgeting — and
they clearly didn’t want to be there.

One man stood up from his seat, was irate and wasn’t making any sense.
Immediately, the directing psychiatrist told these two bumbling psych techs that he
was going to take over. They got on both sides of him, each man grabbed an arm,
and they walked off with him.

Finally, it was my turn to speak. “I really feel better and I would like to go
grow,” I ventured.

Dr. Baker asked, “What made you beat up the man on 50th Street?”

“He was pummeling an underage girl, he was overly assertive with me, and I told
him to go to hell.”

“I am a customer of prostitutes often?”

I said, “Never. That guy is scum and he was baring up the wrong tree.”

“Settle down, Mr. Stiles. Let the med-
tication take effect. You’re a little angry
today and we want to see you calm
down.”

I wanted to say, you’re a prick and a
sorry excuse for a doctor. But it was going
to be impossible to get released if I con-
tinued on this angry track. I would need to
simulate a crisis and then “a meaningful recovery.”

“Sorry, Dr. Baker.” It took consider-
able effort to feign regret.

The psychiatrist apparently didn’t buy
it. “I will meet with you today, Mr.
Stiles.”

The meeting with the evil psychiatrist
didn’t go according to his plan. I had
some stored reserve power and I was able
to telepathically zap him into a stupor.
Then I took control over him. Dr. Baker,
while he was under my power, issued an
order to release me from the hospital. To
stop it off, I made him write me a prescrip-
tion to telepathically zap him into a stupor.

Some stored reserve power and I was able
to do it. Still, my wills, surprisingly enough. I
would use the situation to my maximum
advantage.

Dr. Baker spoke. “How did you cause
me to have a lapse in memory and to write
a release order? Are you a trained hypo-
notist?”

I replied, “No, I am an extraterrestrial.
We have abilities.” I was feigning having
delusions. I am not an extraterrestrial.
Dr. Baker stared at me very intently.

“Bull,” he said. “Where did you learn this ability?”

I said, “There is a training complex on
Mars.”

The nurse and the psych tech in the
room both chortled involuntarily. Baker
glared at them. “Sorry,” the nurse said.

The psych tech didn’t apologize, but
stopped himself from laughing.

Baker looked at me. “Maybe a bit of
electroconvulsive would zap some of that
smartass out of you.”

I replied, “I demand to speak to an
attorney.”

Dr. Baker picked up the phone on his
desk and put it in front of me. I picked up
the receiver and realized I didn’t have a
phone number to reach anyone, much less
an attorney. I put the phone back on
its hook. The nurse and psych tech mumbled
faintly in a tone of sarcasm.

“Not really from Mars?”

I said, “You can’t give me elec-
troshock without my consent.”

“I don’t come of that,” I said.

“I don’t reply. I was flabbergasted. Dr.
Baker smiled.

“Baker said, ‘I want the truth and I want
it now.’”

“I don’t know what you’re talking
about,” I answered.

“Good thinking. You could train me in return for the slight
possibility that I’ll release you.”

“I need to be off all meds for two
weeks,” I said. “I won’t make any trouble.”

“You got it.”

Again I met with Dr. Baker. After two
weeks without medication, my powers were almost fully restored.

Baker said, “I heard you got a nasty
shaving cut. Where is it?”

I rotated my head to show all parts of my
face and neck.

“Wow, nothing is visible. Did you hear
that?”

I said, “Let’s try you on a shapeshift-
ing technique. I will guide you through a
process, and at the end, you will have
shapeshifted to look like me.”

“Wow.” It was all Dr. Baker could say.

“What an idiot, I thought.”

Within a few minutes, I guided Baker
into a trance and got him to look like me.
Then I told him to sit in my seat, which he
did. I used my power to give him a tele-
pathic zap, which caused him to become
completely unconscious.

Then, I shapeshifted to look like Dr.
Baker, and I went into the little closet he
had in his office and put on one of his
shirts. I sat in his chair, and pressed the
intercom button.

“The patient needs immediate elec-
troshock,” I said.

Two psych techs entered Doctor
Baker’s office.

One of them asked, while rubbing his
chin, “Um, how big of a zap does he need?
He already appears to be out of

I replied, “I tranquilized him because
he was out of hand. He needs the biggest
jolt that the equipment can deliver.”

The psych tech paused. “Are you
sure?”

I replied, “I’m late for a lecture and I
don’t have all day to argue it. I’m the doc-
tor, remember?”

“Got it. We’ll carry out your orders
immediately.”

“Contact Dr. Johnson and tell him he
is on duty. I have to go.”

Science Fiction by Jack Bragen

I found myself flanked by the two

Two manic psych techs, and I was escorted
to locked room.

“Behave yourself or we will tie you
down to the restraint table.”

The door was shut, a formidable door
of solid wood. I took a seat on the
restraint table since no other furniture was
in the room. The room was appointed
with a toilet, but no sink or drinking foun-
tain.

What now?

I was tired, and I realized my options
were limited. I decided it was time for a
nap, and I laid down on the restraint table
putting both hands under my left ear,
since no pillow had been provided.

In the next meeting with Dr. Baker,
he had reinforcements in the room, and by
this time, the antipsychotic meds had obliterated most of my abilities. So be it. I
still had my wits, surprisingly enough. I
would use the situation to my maximum
advantage.

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me to have a lapse in memory and to write
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I rotated my head to show all parts of my
face and neck.

“Wow, nothing is visible. Did you hear
that?”

I said, “Let’s try you on a shapeshift-
ing technique. I will guide you through a
process, and at the end, you will have
shapeshifted to look like me.”

“Wow.” It was all Dr. Baker could say.

“What an idiot, I thought.”

Within a few minutes, I guided Baker
into a trance and got him to look like me.
Then I told him to sit in my seat, which he
did. I used my power to give him a tele-
pathic zap, which caused him to become
completely unconscious.

Then, I shapeshifted to look like Dr.
Baker, and I went into the little closet he
had in his office and put on one of his
shirts. I sat in his chair, and pressed the
intercom button.

“The patient needs immediate elec-
troshock,” I said.

Two psych techs entered Doctor
Baker’s office.

One of them asked, while rubbing his
chin, “Um, how big of a zap does he need?
He already appears to be out of

I replied, “I tranquilized him because
he was out of hand. He needs the biggest
jolt that the equipment can deliver.”

The psych tech paused. “Are you
sure?”

I replied, “I’m late for a lecture and I
don’t have all day to argue it. I’m the doc-
tor, remember?”

“Got it. We’ll carry out your orders
immediately.”

“Contact Dr. Johnson and tell him he
is on duty. I have to go.”
I n a court ruling that affects thou-
sands of poor Section 8 tenants in
Oakland, San Francisco, Berkeley
Richmond, Alameda County, Marin
County, Contra Costa County, and mil-
ions of other tenants across the na-
tion, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
declared that the Housing Authority of
the City of Los Angeles illegally cut subsidies
to thousands of Section 8 renters.

During 2004, the Housing Authority of
the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) cut
Section 8 housing subsidies for about
20,000 low-income residents without
giv-
ing proper notice in advance, a three-
judge panel of the U.S. Ninth Circuit
Court of Appeals declared on November
30, 2015.

The Section 8 Housing Choice
Voucher Program provides rental assis-
tance to the most vulnerable members of
our communities, women with chil-
dren, the elderly, and disabled. Section 8
renters generally pay 30 to 40 percent of
the rent to the landlord, and sometimes
more, and the housing program pays the
rest.

For households who are living in
poverty on a fixed income, and house-
holds living paycheck to paycheck, any
unexpected decrease in their housing sub-
sidies can result in homelessness. This is
why the program contains procedural pro-
tections designed to ensure that beneficia-
ries have at least a full year to plan for
cutbacks to their rental subsidies.

The illegal cutbacks to the rental sub-
sidies for the poor Section 8 tenants resu-
ted in many elderly and disabled residents,
including families with young children,
paying much higher rents that averaged
around $104 more per month, the court
said.

Because the court ruled in favor of
the Section 8 tenants in the class action suit
brought by the Los Angeles Coalition To
End Hunger And Homelessness, Barrett
Litt, an attorney for the recipients, said
"This decision should not only lead to compensa-
tion for the tens of thousands of Los Angeles Section 8 recipients that
were hurt by the illegal reduction in bene-
fits going back in 2004-2006, but also protects all Section 8 recipients going
forward, wherever they may be."

According to court documents, the
Housing Authority failed to provide com-
prehensible information to Section 8 ben-
eficiaries about the payment standard
decimalization and change its one year in advance
of the change’s implementation.

Section 8 tenants Michael Nozzi and
Nidia Palaz, along with the Los Angeles
Coalition To End Hunger And Homelessness, sued the Housing
Authority for illegally cutting the sub-
sidies for about 20,000 Section 8 house-
holds.

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sidies for about 20,000 Section 8 house-
holds.
Wrestling the Wind
for Jack Hirschman
by Julia Vinograd

It’s easy to write about what’s wrong with the world, outraged, accusing, scolding man and God like lazy children who hadn’t done their homework. It’s much harder to keep a vision of what the world should be behind your smiling eyes and make us look until we want those faces, those lives to call our own while centuries wake up. It’s hard to write us outstretched warm hands to hold when we’re alone. When you’re alone. It’s hard to write the world right as spring rain, right as summer with no more fault-finding than the seasons. What does it mean to be human, to be fully human? How big must a poem be to stretch us to our full height still testing our legs? We need words to open us little by little. How big must a poem be to stretch us to our full height still testing our legs? We need words to open us little by little.

Brother of Mine
by Carol Denney

people in houses are sure that you want to be out in the wind and the cold people in houses grow more and more certain while we just grow tired and old some of the people who live here outside can remember when there was a day when if you found someone curled up in a doorway you’d welcome them home and you’d say brother of mine are you out in the rain do you need a hot meal or a hand brother of mine you don’t have to explain some of us here understand
we once had plenty of housing and jobs and a minimum wage that made sense we once had plenty of housing and jobs and a minimum wage that made sense

Sixth Street Nights
by George Wynn

Too many people hate homeless people for being homeless,” he said. “Why it don’t make no damn sense!” I worked all my life before my accident then my workmen’s comp ran out and damnit here I am. I’m 60 now had eye blur and all I can’t miss the passers-by furtive negativity of me (one ill-clad sorry wrinkled-skinned sidewalk sleeper). Should be a sin to be poor. All men and women and children are our brothers and sisters. These 3 frayed blankets don’t seem to keep the wind nor cold out of these old homes in front of this storefront door no matter how many times I roll myself up. I may be sore but my poetry books from the thrift shop do kinda warm my spirit.”

For Pete Seeger
by Julia Vinograd

No, you are not dead, I saw you singing “This land is your land” and the mountains sang with you. I saw you on the lake your magic boat sang to clean the passers-by I can’t miss bad eye blur and all I’m 60 now comp ran out and then my workmen’s no damn sense!” “Why it don’t make people for being homeless,” he said. “Too many people hate homeless” by George Wynn “Too many people hate homeless people for being homeless,” he said. “Why it don’t make no damn sense!”

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Remembering Poet Mary Rudge
by Claire J. Baker

Dear Mary, we hadn’t known you were a nun. Did you reach your Dominican heaven? Or as the one who wrote, “We who are luminous,” are you enshrined on a luminous island — a kind of stepping stone to glory? Looking way back, the Bay Area poetry scene was ho-hum before your meteoric arrival. I’ll extract from your poetic corpus vitæ two words: peace, justice. You arrived stimulated, activated, ready. And you took us with you. Your good works shall remain remembered. And your warming sign-off “In poetry” rings as valid now as ever. You were activated, stimulated, ready. And you took us with you.

The Wheelchair Jogger
by Claire J. Baker

On a dusty track in total sunlight, wearing sky-blue warm-up suit and running shoes, low in her chair, head bent, lips tightened, stunted arms pulling hard, slowly she rolls around the track, counting one by one the laps. Young college sprinters gazelle beyond her snail pace like wind. Yet they realize how hard she pulls. Runners who look back (as if to wish her a good run) tend to lighten her arms and their own legs.

The Young Hobo
An Enduring American Tradition
by George Wynn

Relaxing on his bag at night in a clean downtown alley to light up one of my Camel Non-Filters he says: “Everybody wants to be good at something. I’m good at hoboing even though the Chamber of Commerce and shopkeepers consider me good for nothing, I’m an outcast from coast to coast. Hobos even before the Grapes of Wrath been traveling light and carefree about Tomorrow: Long live Today! I always say regardless of how much sorrow and vagrant jail cells I’ve endured on the road or rails. I love to kiss the open road smack on the mouth! Everything that high techies are, I’m not. A little cash helps but ambition and materialism are unthinkable as long as I can stumble along the wrong side of the tracks cap above my eyebrows to a ripe old age whistling a song made of mist showing my sly smile to the sky and cry and cry for women who abandoned me or I abandoned them. Thanks for the smoke.” “Keep the pack.”