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**Volume 1 No 12**

**GIVING A VOICE TO HOMELESS PEOPLE IN NEVADA**

**April 2008**

## *Economic Stimulus Payments Information*

### ***Forgotten Voice Editor's Note:***

### ***Don't miss out on your Economic Stimulus Payment!***

*The following information is an excerpt from the Internal Revenue Service, United States Department of the Treasury website.*

<http://www.irs.gov/irs/article/0,,id=177937,00.html>

### ***Updated March 10, 2008***

Starting in May, the Treasury will begin sending economic stimulus payments to more than 130 million households. To receive a payment, taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number, \$3,000 of income and file a 2007 federal tax return. IRS will take care of the rest.

Eligible people will receive up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples),

and parents will receive an additional \$300 for each eligible child younger than 17. Millions of retirees, disabled veterans and low-wage workers who usually are exempt from filing a tax return must do so this year in order to receive a stimulus payment. But there are more details to know about.

[Find out more by visiting: <http://www.irs.gov/irs/article/0,,id=177937,00.html> or call the Las Vegas IRS Office at 702-868-5005 for the latest updates.]

### ***Forgotten Voice Editor's Note:***

*The following is an excerpt from the the Internal Revenue Service, United States Department of the Treasury website.*

<http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=179181,00.html>

### ***Updated March 5, 2008***

Under the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, more than 130 million American households will receive economic stimulus payments beginning in May. The only way to get one is to file a federal tax return for 2007. This filing requirement also applies to some people who do not normally file, including many low-income people and recipients of Social Security, certain benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs and certain Railroad Retirement benefits. Following are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions regarding the payments.

### **Q. What do I need to do to get an economic stimulus payment?**

A. All you need to do is file a federal income tax return for 2007. Even if you are not otherwise required to file a tax return, you must file a 2007 return in order to receive a payment this year. Although some filers, such as high-income filers, will not qualify for a stimulus payment, most will.

In most cases, you will fill out your return, reporting all your income, deductions and credits as you normally would. But even if you are not required to file, you must file a 2007 return to get a stimulus

payment this year. Low-income workers, Social Security beneficiaries, certain railroad retirees and those who receive certain benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs who normally don't file may receive a stimulus payment if they do. The IRS will provide special filing instructions for those who do not otherwise have a filing requirement. The instructions will explain which lines on the tax return the filers need to complete.

You do not need to calculate the amount of the stimulus payment. If you qualify, the IRS will automatically figure it and send it to you. The IRS will also send you a notice showing the amount of your payment. You do not need to call the IRS or fill out any other special forms.

### **Q. How do I find out if I am eligible?**

A. Most people with a 2007 net income tax liability will qualify. This includes most people who get tax refunds. Net income tax liability is the amount shown on Form 1040, Line 57 plus the amount on Line 52. For 1040A filers, it is the amount on Line 35 plus the amount on Line 32. For Form 1040EZ filers, it is the amount on Line 10.

*continued on page 4*

## **Inside This Edition:**

***Economic Stimulus Payments Information***

***Also: My Story, by James***

***and***

***Cash-In On Earned Income Tax Credits***

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

OUR GOALS ARE:

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

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# LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

## V.A. Clinics to Work in Tandem

Raising citizen awareness about the deficiencies in veteran health care has led to a concrete proposal to open four health care centers to finally make V.A. Health care more accessible and comprehensive. "VA clinics to work in tandem" Feb. 26, 2008 Las Vegas Review-Journal, Pg. 1B.

The activists who made this possible deserve praise and have proven that citizen activism does work.

If Iraqi Afghanistan veterans and homeless veterans are to receive the impatient care necessary to heal them, domiciliaries (veteran's homes) must also be built to address TBI (traumatic brain injury), PTSD (post traumatic syndrome disorder), alcohol and drug problems. Domiciliaries

are being built in fourteen other states, some of which have less of a problem, per capita, than we do.

Phone and write our federal politicians to ensure that they build these domiciliaries which will provide the health care that our veterans have earned and deserve. SUPPORT OUR TROOPS AND SUPPORT OUR VETERANS!

--Frank Perna, Veterans Representative in SNAHP, Southern Nevada Advocates for Homeless People

## Something of Interest

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a concerned citizen writing in an effort to shed light on a situation beginning to unravel in our homeless shelters. Recently, it was brought to my attention that the

Salvation Army holds 80 free beds for homeless consumers. As of April 1st there will no longer be any free beds at Salvation Army. This may be due to lack of city funding or the new chapel that is being erected on the Salvation Army campus (which is NOT for the homeless). St. Vincents free bed services are also being downsized, as they do every year at this time. I believe whoever is at the cause of this situation is being very narrow-sighted and doesn't see the potential for disaster at this downsizing, which has the ability to flood our streets with homeless, thereby causing crime rates to rise, as well as trash levels. I was shocked to find this information out, and I'm sure your readers would be shocked as well. Thanks.

--Concerned Citizen

## Letters to the Editor

*We encourage feedback and letters to the editor. Please keep your letters brief, and email them to: [forgottenvoice@gmail.com](mailto:forgottenvoice@gmail.com) with "letter to the editor" in the subject line. Please include your first and last name, or a nickname if you prefer to remain anonymous. You may also mail letters to:*

*Forgotten Voice  
9101 W. Sahara Ave.  
Ste. 105 – #155  
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*We look forward to hearing from you!*

## Low-Income Las Vegas Residents Urged To Cash-In On Earned Income Tax Credits

### *City of Las Vegas, Community Partners Will Offer Free Tax Preparation For Eligible Taxpayers*

<http://lasvegasnevada.gov/Publications/14303.htm>

Every year, thousands of hard-working Las Vegas residents miss the opportunity to claim federal tax credits that could put money in their pockets. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the largest federal cash assistance program for low-income, working taxpayers and helps to lift more families out of poverty than any other government program. Eligible taxpayers who earned less than \$39,783 in 2007 can receive a refund of up to \$4,716. An IRS hotline and Web page are available to answer questions about EITC at 800-829-1040 or at [www.irs.gov/eitc](http://www.irs.gov/eitc).

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), presented in partnership with the IRS, United Way of Southern Nevada and a host of community partners, including the city of Las Vegas, will assist those earning less than \$40,000 in 2007 with free tax preparation to take advantage of Earned Income Tax Credits. Officials from the city of Las Vegas are lending support and encouraging low-income residents to seek the volunteer assistance. Now through April 15, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance is available at sites around the community. Residents can call 2-1-1 for information on the free tax preparation sites or visit <http://www.nevada211.org/>.

It is estimated that close to 85 percent of eligible area residents are not claiming millions of dollars in refundable tax credits that reduce or eliminate taxes for low-income earners. The credits are considered an important weapon against poverty. In 2004, nearly 21 million American families received more than \$36 billion in refunds in EITC. The refunds significantly impacted communities nationwide, elevating more than 5 million families above the poverty line and giving a financial boost to local economies.

Taxpayers must file a federal income tax return in order to claim the EITC—even if their income is so low that they normally would not file a tax return. They can get money back even if they don't owe any taxes.

Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 in part to offset the burden of social security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

# Economic Stimulus Payments Information

*continued from Front Page*

Families with children under 17 generally will qualify for an additional payment. Some people with no tax liability also will qualify. This includes Social Security and Railroad Retirement beneficiaries, recipients of certain veterans' payments, low-income workers with earned income and/or benefits of at least \$3,000 and individuals who have combined income of at least \$3,000 from any combination of these sources.

Some higher-income taxpayers will not receive a stimulus payment or will receive a reduced payment.

**Q. I normally don't need to file a tax return. How do I know if I'm one of those people who may be eligible to receive an economic stimulus payment?**

A. This group includes some recipients of Social Security, Railroad Retirement or veterans' benefits as well as taxpayers who do not make enough money to normally have to file a 2007 tax return. For example, this can include low-income workers, those who receive Social Security benefits or veterans' disability compensation, pension or survivors' benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007. These people will be eligible to receive a payment of \$300 (\$600 on a joint return) if they had at least \$3,000 of qualifying income.

Qualifying income includes Social Security benefits, certain Railroad Retirement benefits, certain veterans' benefits and earned income, such as income from wages, salaries, tips and self-employment. For people filing joint tax returns, only a total of \$3,000 of qualifying income from both spouses is required to be eligible for a payment.

**Q. If I'm filing a tax return this year just to get a stimulus payment, by when do I have to file?**

A. The IRS encourages everyone to file by the normal April 15 tax deadline: The sooner you file the sooner you can receive your stimulus payment. But if you have obtained a valid six-month extension to file or if you are filing to establish your eligibility for the stimulus payment, filing by Oct. 15 means the IRS can process your return and issue a stimulus payment before the end of the year. *[New 3/5/08]*

**Q. Will receiving an economic stimulus payment in any way affect my eligibility for other federal benefits, such as temporary assistance for needy families, food stamps or Social Security? Will it count as income for purposes of my Social Security benefits?**

A. No. The stimulus payments will not have any effect on eligibility for federal benefits.

**Q. I know some people won't get a stimulus payment. How do I know if I'm one of them?**

A. You won't get a stimulus payment in 2008, if any of the following apply to you:

- \* You don't file a 2007 tax return.
- \* Your net income tax liability is zero and your qualifying income is less than \$3,000. To determine your qualifying income, add together your wages, net self-employment income, nontaxable combat pay, Social Security benefits, certain Railroad Retirement benefits and certain veterans' payments.
- \* You can be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return. For example, this would include

a child or student who can be claimed on a parent's return.

\* You do not have a valid Social Security Number.

\* You are a nonresident alien.

\* You file Form 1040NR or Form 1040NR-EZ, Form 1040PR or Form 1040SS for 2007.

**Q. I have moved since filing my 2007 tax return. How will my payment reach me?**

A. You should file a Form 8822 with the IRS and a change of address notice with the U.S. Postal Service. This will ensure your check is sent to your new address. Without your current address, the check could be returned to the IRS as undeliverable.

**Q. Is my stimulus payment taxable?**

A. No. You will not owe tax on your payment when you file your 2008 federal income tax return. But you should keep a copy of the IRS letter you receive later this year listing the amount of your payment. In the event you do not qualify for the full amount this year but you do next year, you will need to have the letter as a record of the amount you previously received.

## Face-to-face Tax Help

IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers are your source for personal tax help when you believe your tax issue cannot be handled online or by phone, and you want face-to-face assistance.

No appointment is necessary - just walk in. If you prefer, you may call the [Las Vegas] local number, 702-868-5005, to learn about available and alternate services... Multilingual assistance is available in every office.

## Taxpayer Assistance Center

110 City Parkway  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
Phone: 702-868-5005

**IRS Toll free:** 1-800-829-1040 (individuals) or 1-800-829-4933 (businesses).

## The Taxpayer Advocate Service:

Call 702-868-5179 in the Las Vegas area or 1-877-777-4778 elsewhere. The Taxpayer Advocate Service is an independent organization within the IRS whose employees assist taxpayers who are experiencing economic harm, who are seeking help in resolving tax problems that have not been resolved through normal channels, or who believe that an IRS system or procedure is not working as it should... The service is free, confidential, tailored to meet your needs, and available for businesses as well as individuals.

## Free Tax Help Available

Individuals who need to file a return this year to receive a stimulus payment may be able to take advantage of thousands of free tax preparation sites nationwide for low-income and elderly taxpayers.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides help to low- and moderate-income taxpayers. Call 1-800-906-9887 to locate the nearest VITA site.

The Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Program provides free tax help to people age 60 and older. As part of the IRS-sponsored TCE Program, AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program at more than 7,000 sites nationwide during the filing season. To find an AARP Tax Aide site call 1-888-227-7669 or visit the AARP Web site.

# WISHING WELL

by Hansee U

A shopping cart compared to an escalade. A church compared to a family. A can of 211 compared to a flavored water. A shelter compared to a shelter.

In a wishing well near the library I'd take 200 dollars and hope my wish would come true, soon as it's dropped into the wonderous omni.

I'd set my aim for a house in Thailand with everything even an airplane and a house of blues on the backyard of my wished property. It's probably the Palms I'd get in an instant but it should have been Mandalay Bay.

I used to work across the street from Mandalay Bay. Brackets in a last place of financial runnings wouldn't douse a soulfire. I've intimately noticed spin this local world above worlds.

When I was working there I sort have had Buddhism instinctively on those mental alarms, I was surfacing to, in semi-homelessness times.

I went into a mode of business thought, the architect me, wanted to deliver a design appealing to end this feeling that this and those things had no real accentuation offer to anyone. I was holding my heart for. Forward in time I seen the Orleans and it was how I designed it.

I cared so much for those lives destroyed 2 years ago (N. Orleans) but had no way to stop destruction. And it's all chainlink oriented that when I was homeless, struggling, taking another open door to my fullest, that 911 happened and I was in N. Orleans in terrorist shock

suspended emotion, I wished that the area I was in, so full of hospitals could be used and the superdome could be used to save everyone.

I passed that Orleans casino, heard it's kind of shows so many times during one month when I was a church program member, and I knew it was that place that only I could've designed. I roughly adjust sometimes so God hopefully you'll have mercy on me. I wish this summer wasn't stalking as it passed.

I remember a little black girl died and I moaned and cried to heaven that life and love came to her. I did it so much in sympathy and solitude, I caught a glimpse of her alive and well. Heart and soul = [equals] a wishing well, tiny person climbed out into a different light. Rebirth I have noticed for certain situations in this world but a firm attitude envious lingers always making me literally go thru hell all alone, not alive it seems.

Then I look in the mirror and notice I'm homeless in a different way, the empathetic sort, a chronic set course I'm here but time isn't a friend of mine, it's pretty much emptied out the wishing well and wished I didn't exist. I know how I'm hanging on to this shape-shifting making the most out of very little setting, it's like a raw material and I'm numbly with respect. But the clinging on to authority for help is versos a great downfall.

A bald eagle right at a conduit telling the possibilities do have some prices cause you're young

and strong but there ain't sin cities in gospel amounts you need to know: what, where, when, why, how, who, in newspapers that voice for homeless exampling it's all awesome at the wishing well.

You need people like Linda and Chicago who want to see you getting more for yourself the representation hearty, hopeful, headstrong. I also get a glimpse of straight from the streets and I'm pondering do they really exist "emergency" "emergency" and they help me regain an endless adventure. I start to wonder about that adventure anyone might journey thru. No longer uprooted for the moment. No longer homeless or homeless mental being. So far in this wishing well I found endearment. I wonder are those two people and other essential people within their reach really real. I love them, they keep on truckin all in silver like a silver lining. They talk to me with a resourceful quality. I wish for them all their heart's desires cause nothing compares and they share so much, and have arranged the wishing wells.

With a circle of mountains around this city, I'm made to believe that Las Vegas is really that essential in helping thoroughly in the welfare of the denizens who've adventured into this city of everything and forgetting (who is who) isn't something to wishfully visit that miracle maker well. Silver lining stay ageless wishing well listen for the homeless and wish them well please.

**Let Your Voice Be Heard!**

**Forgotten Voice welcomes all submissions in the form of fiction, journalism, artwork, photography, and poetry.**

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

**Submissions can be emailed to: [forgottenvoice@gmail.com](mailto:forgottenvoice@gmail.com) or mailed to:**

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

## Thought of the Day

**As an example of how homeless people could make a difference by voting, [Michael] Stoops cited the 2000 Florida presidential election results, in which George W. Bush beat then-Vice President Al Gore by only 537 votes to win the presidency.**

**--The Honolulu Advertiser**

## Community Empowerment

**Factors of Poverty; The Big Five:** The factors of poverty (as a social problem) that are listed here, ignorance, disease, apathy, dishonesty and dependency, are to be seen simply as conditions.

No moral judgement is intended. They are not good or bad, they just are...

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

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

forgotten  
VOICE

*Lives of Damaged DenTed Dreams*

**Artwork: by Brian Thrasher**

# MY STORY

by James

--participant of Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth Independent Living,  
17 years old and a Senior at Odyssey Charter School

Imagine walking down a suburban street at three in the morning. Imagine being hungry, and tired, while looking for a house to break into, just so you can sleep. Now, imagine just for a second, that kids actually go through this every night. I searched for houses so late, because I couldn't risk getting caught. The longer I could go without being seen, the longer I could use a house. If I got lucky, the for sale house I broke into would have power, or water. If I was really lucky, it would have a microwave too, that I could use for cooking my stolen food.

But it wasn't always so easy. There were times I walked around early in the morning looking for a house, to no avail. There were times I even slept in a friend's car, hoping his parents wouldn't see me in the morning. Often I had to watch where I left my belongings, because sometimes they were taken when found. Once I lost almost half my stuff, and ended up only having three pairs of clothes left.

When I was staying in a friend's

car, I often couldn't wash for a week or two because I had no house with running water. I did my best to hide the fact that I was homeless, and since no teachers ever said anything, I think I did a good job. That was a big deal for me. Staying off the radar, when I was living at home, I didn't care about getting in trouble at school. Not like I was a trouble maker, but when I left home, I couldn't even get sent to the office, or my whole set up was over, and it was off to foster care for me.

And the things I did during that time in my life wasn't normal for a fifteen year old either. I drank and got high everyday because I had nothing better to do. It made my life easier, and helped me fall asleep at night. I went to school, and didn't do much, but sleep, normally tired from the night before. I could have just dropped out of school, but I refused. Even if I only slept when I went to school, I figured at least attending, I would still have a shot at graduating.

It got to a point, where for sale

houses were no longer so easy to find. After being robbed of food for so long, the local grocery store installed new cameras on every aisle. Slowly, my only alternatives to living, were disappearing. So what does a kid do when he has used all possible resources he had, which weren't much in the first place? I tried to get into a group home, but they wouldn't take me, unless I was eighteen, or had my parent's permission. Both options we're out of the question. I sometimes got to stay with a friend for a week or so, but it never lasted long. The parents always seemed to blame me, for anything their kid did wrong. Not because I was actually doing anything, but because they always thought their kids were rebelling, because I was rebelling.

I didn't finally get a place to stay until I found church. My best friend had always tried to get me to go to her church. But I never wanted to. When I was at my lowest point in life, I figured why not? I went with her and her father to their church. I fell in love.

Soon after, I was invited on a trip. During that trip so many amazing things happened in my life. I met some of the greatest people, I still know today. When I came back from the six day trip, the church had found me a place to live. After that, they got me into a better school. Today, I'm living with Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, an organization that helps kids get back on track. I've been living here since the beginning of December, and it's probably the first place I've felt I could call home, in a long time. At first, I didn't like the idea, but they've given me a condo, and provide food, all for free, as long as I can stay in school. I'm pretty happy to be here.

## *Nevada Homeless Alliance Wish List*

*blankets t-shirts socks*

*Items still needed for 2008*

## *Project Homeless Connect Thursday, April 10, 2008*

*If you would like to be a sponsor, please call*

*Kim Amato, Executive Director,*

*Nevada Homeless Alliance 702-455-2699*

# LET'S BE FRANK

The USA is too uptight about sex, case in point, the former governor of New York, recent victim of humiliation. I believe that it is nobody else's business except the man, the woman and Almighty God to work things out and no one else.

The media is suppose to be as a neutral medium, it at one time was, at the start, nowadays you will find that there are reporters who at some moment in a certain segment interjecting a personal thought and feeling. It has a profound impact on influencing the minds of listeners. Isn't it true, this country only

loves winners? Of course it is true.

Candidates for consideration, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and McCain. Only one will win, who will it be? Perhaps George Bush, who by the way, so cunningly added, "Executive Order 51", along with the Patriot Act. This allows the current president to remain in office, in time of war.

I believe that it was Voltaire that said something like this, "I may not agree with what you say, but, I will defend to the death, your right to say it." Now I will interject for the moment.

Education from 1st to 12th

grade to undergraduate to doctorate should be free to all. Sex should be between 2 consenting individuals and prostitution should be legalized and monitored by clinics the way it is in Europe.

Drugs should be banned, except for medicinal and laboratory controlled research and patients under doctor's care only.

Alcohol and tobacco companies and their distributors should be heavily penalized. Recommend public execution in Washington D.C. between the stretch that leads to the Lincoln Memorial.

Everyone should be provided a

home, vehicle and a card for food, clothing and hygiene articles, with the card being reloaded each month to resupply items of food, clothing and hygiene. Just like the socialist countries.

These are just a few of my many personal thoughts and feelings. We have the freedom to agree to disagree with anyone at anytime on anything, don't you agree? Of course you do. Thank you for listening.

by Charles McClarty

# *BETWEEN A ROCK AND THE SIDEWALK*

by Kurt Borchard

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

In April 2006, outside of the Salvation Army shelter, a woman plops down near me on the dirt, legs apart. She has gray hair, brown eyes, wire glasses, a dirty white Imperial Palace T-shirt, and wears shoes without socks. We see a line of people across the street behind an SUV. She asks me what they are giving away.

“Food,” I say.

“Oh,” she says. “More food. What people need around here is money. When is the money truck gonna come?” she asks rhetorically.

She points out the Jerry’s Nugget sign, the top few letters visible now across the expanse of green trees. She says the trees are now blocking the sign, and that that’s not right—the sign should be visible from all directions. I can see her point—ads are supposed to be seen, the trees are blocking the view, and that certainly the management at Jerry’s Nugget want the sign to be highly visible. She says similar problems have occurred in California—businesses built signs, and then the city planted rows of trees between those signs and vehicle traffic, rendering the signs ineffective. I see her point, but I think to myself that it is a bit unreasonable to expect the whole

sign to be visible from where we sit, about a mile away.

I introduce myself. She says her name is Marge. She then notes how the signs around her have multiple, hidden meanings. The sign for Lakewood Recycling, for example, means that they like to recycle wood. The Sanctified Church across from us is really the Sacrificed Church. She tells me such meanings are everywhere.

She moves easily from sense to nonsense. She seems lucid when she says what a nice day it is, or that she traveled here a few days ago from Reno. Then come laughable ideas—when a white Chevy Blazer goes by, for example, she tells me that O.J. Simpson is her father’s father. Then comes a reasonable opinion that the nation’s three-year obsession with the O.J. Simpson trial was a complete waste of time. Then she says George Washington was O.J. Simpson’s father, and that that is why Washington’s portrait on the dollar bill looks so much like Simpson.

Marge tells me that communists are secretly killing people, grinding them up, and then mixing them into the concrete. She says they have pursued Italians the most (which is what she happens to be).

She says that when she moved

here, she got a feeling that there was a vast reservoir of water nearby. When I suggested that it might be Lake Mead, she tells me she thought of that, but that in fact it’s a secret stream, deep under the nearby mountains. She says that abundant source of water, plus the water in Lake Mead, could save us from our valley being consumed by fire. She likes that we live in a valley, because it means that if a fire does come, it will not burn past the mountains, but simply consume everything inside the valley.

Before she can elaborate, a security guard from the Salvation Army approaches in a white T-shirt, baseball cap, and wraparound sunglasses. He tells the few of us sitting on the edge of the S.A.’s property to move. Marge gets up without a word and wanders away. He tells me to move from the rock that I’m sitting on, a rock that straddles the dirt and the sidewalk. I get angry, and point out that I am on the sidewalk side of the rock and therefore am on public property. He says no, that it is Salvation Army property. When I tell him I am not bothering anyone he tells me he doesn’t need attitude, that he’s just doing his job. Annoyed that he is standing over me, I plop down on the dirt inches from

the rock. I tell him that now I am sitting in the dirt, but that this is clearly on the sidewalk. Frustrated, I ask, is this okay?

“It’s the sidewalk,” he replies, walking away.

I wonder which is the more frustrating area of Las Vegas, the homeless corridor or the tourist corridor. Certainly more money is lost in the tourist corridor, but perhaps more time, energy, and spirit are lost in the homeless corridor. I think about the signs in each area, and how people look for messages and meaning within the symbols each area presents. We all try to make sense of a place, and of our lives within it. But signs and symbols can have multiple, even contradictory, meanings.

Marge seemed crazy, but not always. Rules that seem sane most of the time can make no sense sometimes. There are times we deserve what we get, and there are times we don’t.

How should we interpret Marge and her homelessness? How should we interpret the way the city addresses people like her? Finally, why are charitable institutions often concerned with whether someone like Marge “deserves” assistance?

## ***URGENT NOTICE- TANF and Food Stamp Recipients***

**The Division of Welfare will be holding a public meeting on April 17, 2008 at 10:00 am at the Nellis District Office, 611 North Nellis, Las Vegas, NV to reveal the latest measures to decrease the expense to the TANF and Food Stamp programs.**

The caseloads have increased dramatically this year and the Governor says we don't have enough money to cover everyone who needs assistance. So, the Division has come up with ideas to ensure that "benefits go to only those who are genuinely seeking to become self-sufficient." Since our state has pared things to the bone already, what they are left with is kicking kids off the programs.

The proposals include kicking the entire family off of Food Stamps if one person in the family has an outstanding felony warrant (we used to only remove the adult, but continue to give Food Stamps for the children.) One other proposal is to remove the entire family if the head of household does not comply with work requirements (we used to only remove the adult, but still provide assistance for the children) and the family will not be eligible for assistance for three months - even if the adult does become compliant. Another one is to give assistance for a determined amount of children only; for example, the state will set household size limit at 3 children and the family would receive TANF and Food Stamps benefits for a household with 3 children, no matter how many children the family may currently have or if another child is born later.

**General Public Comments will be heard. Let the State know that you do not agree with their decisions.**

# WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

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

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

## **Meet the Mayor!**

Generally, every month Mayor Oscar Goodman has a "Coffee with the Mayor" followed by an open door meeting. These meetings are open to all and participation is encouraged. For date and place, call the mayor's office at: 229-6241

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

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

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

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



**NEVADA HOMELESS ALLIANCE**

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

2008 Southern Nevada  
Project Homeless Connect  
April 10 th and October 8 th  
New hours: 9 am to 4 pm  
Cashman Field Center

**Please join us as we provide an array of free services for the homeless.**

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



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