

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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Volunteers organize food that was collected to help their neighbors in need. Hunger is growing alongside of the decimation of industrial jobs, even in Oakland County, Michigan, one of the wealthiest local economies in the U.S.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

## Hunger In The Land Of Plenty

SEE COVER STORY PG.3

### *ALSO IN THIS ISSUE*

- 5. Detroit Fights Corps.
- 6. Foreclosures
- 8. The "New" GM
- 8. Water Struggle
- 10. Hip Hop Congress
- 11. Cabrini Green



**IMMIGRATION  
MARCHES  
SWEEP NATION  
SEE PG. 7**

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# NATIONALIZE THE UTILITY COMPANIES

## EDITORIAL

Except perhaps for food and water, there are few things more basic to life in a civilized society than having utilities in your home—the ability to heat, cool, and light your home and cook your meals and have the most basic necessity: water. Without utilities your house or apartment is nothing but a cave. What is wrong with a society that increasingly cannot provide utilities to millions of people when it's obvious we have the wealth to take care of everyone?

Nationwide, the number of households that had their utility service disconnected for nonpayment rose 5 percent in fiscal 2009, despite a doubling of federal emergency utility assistance. Some 4.3 million U.S. households were disconnected for nonpayment in fiscal year 2009, as federal assistance more than doubled to \$5.1 billion.

More than 8 million households got emergency utility assistance in 2009, up nearly a third from the 6.1 million in 2008. It's estimated that nine million to 10 million households may seek aid in 2010.

Utility shutoffs kill people. Look at every state, every major city, and you'll find the stories of the tragedies that result from shutoffs. Southeast Michigan and the Detroit area are prime examples. Tens of thousands of Detroit households are without water. In the last two years, nearly 400,000 homes in southeast Michigan have had their utilities shut off by the regional energy company, DTE. In 2009, the company cut service to 221,000 households, an increase of 50 percent over the prior year. Of the 16 house fire deaths in Detroit in 2010 as of April, at least 11 took place in homes without utilities, according to the Detroit Fire Department. Among the dead so far this year: two wheelchair-bound brothers in their 60s, and three children ages 3, 4 and 5.

These people were murdered by



**Protest at DTE Energy in Detroit, Michigan. Organizers estimate that there were upwards of 27,000 cutoffs in Detroit alone, without lights or without gas.**

PHOTO//KENNY SNODGRASS,  
ACTIVIST AND AUTHOR OF  
"FROM VICTIMIZATION TO EMPOWERMENT"

a corporate system that is protecting private profit and private property at the expense of the people's needs.

DTE has seen a 14 percent growth in its year-over-year profit since 2008, and DTE's CEO and Chairman Anthony F. Earley, Jr. took home \$11.4 million in combined pay in 2007 and 2008. Large Wall Street banks and investment firms have more than \$2 billion invested in the company.

People can't pay for utilities because they don't have jobs, or they don't have jobs that pay a living wage. We are not just dealing with the normal cyclical crisis of capitalism where workers are temporarily thrown out of jobs and then eventually go back to work. Electronic technology is replacing more and more labor in the workplace, and millions of jobs have been eliminated forever. For millions of us, the jobs aren't coming back. The cutting off of utilities is a symptom of the rising structural un-

employment and underemployment in our country, and that unemployment is a manifestation of a growing new class created by electronics—a class that no longer has a place in the market economy. As long as the energy companies are privately owned and utilities are provided only if you can pay, then millions who have been pushed out of the economy won't have access to utilities. We need a new system.

How long will we tolerate the corporate murder and driving down of our standard of living? It will go on as long as we let it. There is plenty of money in this country to provide every single household with all necessary utilities. In the long run we need a new, cooperative society where the necessities of life are distributed according to need. In the short run, we need to nationalize the utility companies so that we, the people, can guarantee the basics of a civilized life to every person in the country.

## PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

The People's Tribune is devoted to the proposition that an economic system that can't or won't feed, clothe and house its people ought to be and will be changed. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is the voice of millions struggling for survival. It strives to educate politically those millions on the basis of their own experience. It is a tribune to bring them together, to create a vision of a better world, and a strategy to achieve it.

We find ourselves at a historic moment as labor-replacing technology leads us on a path toward the decisive reconstruction of society. Who will win — the capitalists or the growing mass of poor — will depend on winning the hearts and minds of the people to create a society whose fruits benefit all.

We offer our pages as a vehicle for the new ideas rooted in our reality, and to be the voice of those who seek to raise the consciousness of society. Let us gather our collective experience, intelligence and commitment to bring forth a vision that changes America into a society "by the people, of the people, for the people."

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## Why Revolutionaries Need A Press

From the Editors

We are sometimes asked "Why do revolutionaries need a press?" The answer has to do with this moment in history. People are struggling just to get the basic necessities of life. Historical forces beyond anyone's control have set the stage for a new society to be built, but from this point on, how things turn out depends on what people think. This means that those of us who are seeking fundamental change are engaged in a battle of ideas, a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the people. If we don't raise the consciousness of the people and unite them around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it, then we'll fail in our effort to build a just and free society. To win the battle of ideas, we need a press.

Visit us on the web at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org)

# PLENTY OF FOOD —FOR A PRICE

## COVER STORY

From work and wages with a place to live; to no work, no wages, no home and no food is the slide from economic and social stability to absolute poverty. Today, millions of Americans are experiencing this horror for the first time in their lives. Entire families are being driven to the brink. Many are lashing out at everything. They are confused and angry and are blaming others just like them. However, it's the market-based system of production and its distribution of the social product that is out of whack, not those who are victimized by it. When the economic system no longer feeds its people and is unable to provide this most basic human right, the people must change that system.

Hunger is growing dramatically in the United States. Today, 1 in 8 Americans are receiving emergency food assistance from Feeding America, the largest food provider in the country, through the food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters it serves. Over one third of them are children. This new hunger is almost 50 percent higher than in 2006. Is it because less food is produced? We all know this is not the case. In this



**Hunger is growing in America as a result of joblessness. At the same time, an abundance of food is being produced today. That food is owned by the giant corporations. These corporations must be taken over by the government. Food must be distributed to all who need it.**

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

America of ours, we must have money to buy all the necessities of life, including food. And if you are forced to choose paying the rent or utilities, instead of buying food, then you and your family will experience hunger in America.

An abundance of food is produced in America. However, much of it is never placed into the marketplace. By withholding it from the market, farmers and food processors create an artificial shortage to maintain or inflate food prices. Meanwhile, the number of hungry Americans grows amidst an increasing abundance of food.

California is a good example of this national problem. Its farmland spans 25 million acres and produces about half of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables, according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture. More than 6 million tons of California food prod-

ucts are dumped annually, according to state studies. Food is the largest single source of waste in California, making up 15.5 percent of the state's waste stream, according to the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

At the same time nearly 40 million Americans, at some time or another can't buy enough food. Like everything else in a market-based economy, food is for sale just like any other product. But food is not a luxury; it's a most basic need of human beings. When it's denied to people, it leads to human hunger and even death.

Food production is controlled by a handful of giant agricultural and financial corporations. Global conglomerates such as Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Monsanto, Cargill, General Mills and Kellogg's (to name a few) own most of the world's food. They, along with their financial partners, decide how much

food is produced and destroyed, who will get it and how much it will cost.

With today's high-tech production methods, food is produced in such abundance that every person on the planet can be fed. There is no justifiable reason for anyone to go hungry. Only the corporations and their lust for profits and a government that protects them stand in our way. It's time for the American people to take over the death merchant corporations and demand our government run them in the interests of the people. Either we take over the corporations or they take over us. Feed the people. Nationalize the food industry.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

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# THE AL-MARBID INTERNATIONAL POETRY FESTIVAL IN BASRA, IRAQ

By Jack Hirschman

Agneta Falk and I were invited to participate in the Al-Marbid International Poetry Festival in Basra, Iraq. After much bureaucracy, we received our visas. On the way in we went through checkpoints and noted that a car proceeding ours had armed Iraqi security forces. We became accustomed to the sight of soldiers with kalishnikovs or handguns leading the way in cars, and guarding the front of the hotel. Basra had been “secured” some time ago by the British and American forces. But all of Iraq is still a war zone and security is very heavy.

At the hotel I was asked to do an interview about my views on poetry. Next morning the poets all piled into the bus provided by the Ministry of Culture — which had organized the Festival. We went to the Petroleum Cultural Center Hall, a vast domed-like workers’ Hall in Basra where, after ceremonious speeches and an extraordinary dance ensemble called the El Basra Group for Public Folklore Arts, which performed breathtakingly with women drummers and male dancers, the poetry readings began.

Iraqi poets often read in dramatic style with great expressivity and sonority. At each of the three-day venues there would also be included the guest poets

from other countries. I read two poems on that first morning,—“Path” and “One Day”— with Sabah Jasim reading the Arabic translations he’d made, after I read a brief note of solidarity concluding with a “Long Live the Iraqi Poets!”.

In the large space in the rear of the auditorium — tables were laden with books of poetry and prose, large art and photo exhibitions, and many people were interviewing the poets. The Iraqis are hungry for communication with the outside world — it was a central underlying theme of the Festival. Indeed, on the second day Agneta Falk gave no less than seven interviews after she read her poem on Israel/Palestine, “O Hate”, and the poem on a British prostitute, “Shivering Mountain.” The other guest poets included poets from Italy, France, Morocco, Denmark, Syria, Spain, and Turkey.

I was asked to read at the Translation School of the University of Basra on the second day. I read a whole ensemble of poems including “New York, N.Y.” and “Mother” but it was “The Quntzeros Arcane” which I’d written about the war in Iraq that gave me one of the greatest pleasures of my life, reading it to those incredibly receptive students of the English language. It was my own personal highlight of the Festival, but the collective sense of harmony in poetry at the Festival is what has made Al-Marbid



Poets at a statue in honor of Iraqi women outside the Basra Airport in Iraq. From left to right, Thamir Sa’id, Agneta Falk, Jack Hirschman, an unidentified poet, and Furat Salih.

PHOTO/IRAQI POET, SABAH JASIM

such a new international wonder. Afterward I was told that I had been the first poet from another country to read at the Translation School in seven years!

At the evening session on the second day we all were treated to stirring Mendelsohn and Tchaikowski by the National Symphony Orchestra, brilliantly con-

ducted by Kareem Wasfi, prior to the poetry readings that continued filling the air with Iraq’s finest verbal sounds and its desire to become part of an international community. At this session and others, I had a chance to meet young Iraqi poets and comrades.

The Council-General of Basra invited all the guest poets to a dinner in the garden of the Gold Tulip Hotel. The celebration spilled over into March 26, which happened to be Agneta Falk’s birthday, which was celebrated with songs sung in Italian, Danish, Turkish, Spanish, French, Moroccan Arabic, American, and Aggie sang a Swedish lullaby. It was a truly international finish to a Festival that spread its wings outward, beginning to make its claim of belonging to the international struggle against the evils of globalization. Long Live the Poets of Al-Marbid in All the Years Ahead!

*Jack Hirschman has been called one of America’s most important living poets. He is available to speak through Speakers for a New America. Email [info@speakersforanewamerica.com](mailto:info@speakersforanewamerica.com) or call 800-691-6888.*

## Planning Direct Actions Around The Right To Housing In Washington, DC

By Eric Sheptock

Last month I described a meeting that took place in New York City to plan nationwide direct actions to make housing a realized human right. About 40 people from 13 cities discussed doing vacant property takeovers simultaneously throughout the month of May (and possibly beyond).

Since then, I have been working with organizations and individuals in Washington, D.C., to plan vacant property takeovers locally. ONE DC (Organizing Neighborhood Equity — <http://www.onedonline.org>) has emerged as the only organization that is doing actual grassroots organizing around the Right To Housing in D.C., while other organizations continue to work on legislation which is intended to make this right a reality. While the legislative process may take 3 years and the final draft is certain to be a watered-down version of our original demands, the takeovers are designed to show the urgency of our demands and our utter seriousness, while

garnering public support for the cause.

It was with this in mind that ONE DC arranged a direct action training which took place on Saturday, April 17th 2010. Trainers came from the Ruckus Society (<http://ruckus.org>), Take Back the Land (<http://www.takebacktheland.org>) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (<http://ccrjustice.org>) to meet with D.C. activists. The trainers led a group discussion on the history of direct action and the theories behind it. They explained that much has been accomplished through non-violent direct action. We then moved into a meaty discussion on the most effective procedures, followed by an explanation on our legal rights and ways to protect ourselves legally in case of an arrest. CCR assured us that we have their ongoing support. (It is always good to line up lawyers BEFORE performing any civil disobedience...err “moral obedience.”)

The training had an additional purpose which was to reinvigorate a docile, nonresistant community so as to resurrect the fighting spirit that Washingto-

nians have been known for in the past. The point was made that people’s fear of being arrested actually works against them inasmuch as it causes them to keep the unjust laws that they hate. People were encouraged to risk arrest, so long

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**People from 13 cities discussed doing vacant property takeovers simultaneously throughout the month of May (and possibly beyond).**

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as they don’t have any extenuating circumstances that might cause them to be locked up for prolonged periods of time or deported such as prior felony arrests or being undocumented. It is only through risk-taking that we can expect

to usher in social change.

Presently we are planning to put a tent city on Parcel 42 which is a vacant lot that is owned by the city. The homeless and others will be invited to squat on this publicly-owned land on which D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty had promised to build affordable housing, only to break his promise (and other affordable housing promises) later. Plans for the tent city also include publicizing his broken promises and educating the public so as to increase their social conscientiousness. We will begin in late May or early June and stay in place until our demands are met or until we are removed by the authorities. This is only the first of many planned actions that we will use to apply pressure to our local government until housing is a “realized” human right.

I hope that you will begin or join a similar organization in your locale.

*For more information on Take back The Land’s national effort or ONE DC’s local efforts in Washington, DC, feel free to contact me at [ericshptock@yahoo.com](mailto:ericshptock@yahoo.com).*

# Detroit Struggles against Corporate Power

## 44 More Schools to Close this Year

By Dave Smokler

On March 17th Detroit School District Emergency Financial Manager, Robert Bobb, appointed by Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm, said to be on President Obama's short list for appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court, announced that on top of the 29 schools closed last year, 44 more will be closed this year. An additional 13 schools are slated to be closed by 2012. According to a District spokesperson more schools may very well be added to the chopping block.

The justification for the gutting of the school system is that it ended the last school year with a deficit of \$219 million, projected to increase to \$316.6 million by the end of the year. This debt was incurred during the first state takeover of the schools in 1999 under the then Republican, Governor John Engler, now the president of the National Association of Manufacturers. Prior to that takeover, the District had a rainy-day fund of more than \$70 million and a \$1.5 billion bond initiative ready to roll. Only five years later, Detroit Public Schools had a \$200 million deficit, most of the bond money spent.

Bobb was one of the first graduates of the Broad School for Superintendents, a national executive leadership development program launched by The Broad Foundation and Engler designed to create schools based on a business model with the aim of securing tax dollars.

In a case begun last year at the re-

quest of the Detroit Board of Education, a Wayne County Third Circuit Court judge issued a temporary injunction on April 13 temporarily stopping Bobb from enacting his academic plan that includes 42 - 45 school closings. Bobb has interpreted his authority to reduce the deficit of the District to give him control of academics. In apparent retaliation, Bobb terminated extended day programs. The board quickly met and reinstated these programs. It remains to be seen how this will play out.

At their meeting of March 8, the Board unanimously voted to file a second lawsuit against Bobb claiming that the \$145,000 in private foundation support he receives under his new contract is unlawful. The only philanthropic donor publicly identified is The Broad Foundation, whose support of charter schools has stirred controversy among some members of the Detroit Public School community.

In March, a coalition of private foundations and charter schools calling itself "Excellent Schools Detroit," announced plans to make a \$200-million initial investment to replace closed public



**Education protests of students and teachers in Detroit, Michigan. Twenty-nine schools were closed last year. Forty-four will be closed this year. About 2,000 Detroit Public Schools teachers have received layoff notices.**

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

schools with 70 new ones. Among their stated goals was to abolish the elected school board.

This situation is reminiscent to those described by Naomi Klein in her book, "The Shock Doctrine." She argues that the privatization of the public services often occurs when it is preceded by a "shock" or a disaster, natural or man made.

It is becoming crystal clear that it does not matter whether the Democrats or the Republicans are in power. The agenda is the same. There is a merger of the government and the major corporations who are in command. Those who work in the education sector are being punished; their jobs, unions, salaries and benefits are under a frontal assault. It would be illogical to believe that this reorganization of the educational system would treat their children any more kindly. In Detroit, the heart of the Rust Belt, digital production has decimated the work force eliminating the necessity for the corporations to incur the cost of creating an educated work force that could oppose its plans.

There is spontaneous resistance to this nationally orchestrated attack. Ultimately, the only way that we can overcome corporate power is to organize the working class to take over the corporations or, surely, they will take us over. The first step would be to nationalize education to insure that our society and our children can realize its highest potential.

## No Child Left Behind: Unless the State Runs Out of Money!

By Todd Price

For too long, the tired refrain of 'too much government spending' has been used to try and shut down any type of social reform, and instead, to exonerate the free market, with all of its supposed magic. Well now, with the excess of the corporate class exposed, the outright scandal and thievery, citizens clamor for solutions to the problems.

But at the heart of the problem, is who defines what needs to be fixed.

The teachers at a recent rally in Springfield, Illinois got it right. They protested to save the Illinois schools, K-12 and higher education, from draconian budget cuts. Some 15,000 in all marched, calling for increased revenues for cash strapped local school districts. Even the corporate controlled media had a hard time ignoring their call.

To put this protest in perspective, the corporate media has been only too happy to serve the bidding of the so-called "tea party" movement, trumpeting their

call for cutting government spending (except the government spending that is wasted through the 2-3 wars being waged abroad; somehow that spending doesn't count). The tea party movement forgets to challenge the corporations such as Exxon and General Electric, two of many sited who pay not a penny in taxes. They fail to make the connection that corporations are robbing them blind, instead blaming government for everything, but in particular this government, run by an African-American President, Barack Obama, whose birth certificate and credentials they doubt.

The tea party movement misses the point entirely, believing the rhetoric of the corporate public relations firms and spokespersons, that the president is somehow in the hands of left wing radicals, thus absolving the same corporations that put the entire economy in jeopardy last year. Those same corporations like Goldman Sachs, former members who populate the President's cabinet, now profit handsomely as Wall

Street recovers (while the jobless wonder where their bailout is and how a 'jobless recovery' benefits them at all).

As far as the schools go, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan seeks to "incentivize" the schools, providing Race to the Top funds for those states that most boldly and clearly align themselves with the Federal Department of Education's goals. The blueprint for the soon to be reauthorized No Child Left Behind law is replete with ideas to reward innovation and creativity, as long as it mirrors what the Feds want. Yet the business friendly Obama administration is feeling the pressure of citizen unrest. Not only from the mad ramblings of the tea party movement, but also now, the unrest of teachers and parents has surfaced. The federal government will either shake things up or be shaken themselves to their roots by this challenge from what had otherwise been the base of their administration and that of the Democratic Party in general.

Indeed protests across the country,

commencing on March 4, demonstrated that there is still support for public education and for public services, and that cutbacks will be met with street protests. State and federal government still have an important role to play, beyond that of bailing out banks and Wall Street.

So the teachers have it right, as the words read on t-shirts in Springfield: No Child Left Behind . . . unless the state runs out of money.

When a movement emerges, actually calling to raise taxes to "save public education" as well as to "save the state," the President and Congress on down to the legislatures and local politicians everywhere should take note.

Here's hoping the citizen's words have woken up others to the fact that only grass roots pressure will roll back the budget cuts. Public education needs a helping hand up, and corporations need to be taxed, now, before it is too late.

# UNEMPLOYMENT AND FORECLOSURES GROW SIDE BY SIDE

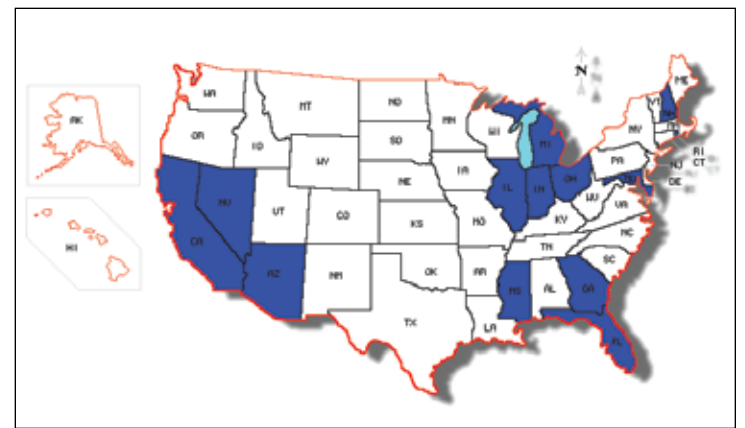
By Sandy Perry

New data released by RealtyTrac on March 11 shows that America is facing a new wave of up to seven million home foreclosures in 2010 and 2011. Many of these seven million owners are already behind in payments and eligible for foreclosure – but many of the lenders themselves are beginning to stall the foreclosure process. They are afraid that too many more foreclosures will flood the market and drive home prices down further – reducing their profit and creating even more foreclosures.

The new data also shows that the foreclosure crisis has now decisively shifted from a sub-prime collapse to a deeper, more systemic one. According to [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), “The borrowers in trouble now are, for the most part, people who have better credit and safer loans and have become delinquent because they’ve lost their jobs or are dealing with other economic setbacks, economists said. More than 75 percent of the borrowers who are now seriously delinquent – meaning they have missed at least three monthly payments – have traditional prime loans, according to First American CoreLogic. Most of these borrowers have not made a payment in six months.”



States with unemployment rates over 9.5% November 2009 Bureau of Labor Statistics



States with foreclosure rates over 9% Foreclosure rates in 4th Quarter, 2009

PHOTOS/SANDY PERRY

The government’s response was to announce a new, incremental expansion of the 2009 Make Home Affordable program. However, this new plan, like the old one, is only expected to help a few thousand of the millions facing foreclosure. Aid to unemployed borrowers will only last three to six months. It will only write down principal to 97.5% of current home value. Worst of all, it relies on incentives to lenders – effectively giving away another \$50 billion to the banks.

We have to fight for all the temporary measures and partial relief we can get, but we also need to understand that this

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**We have to begin to fight politically for a cooperative system that will distribute life’s necessities — including homes — to people whether they are employed or not.**

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crisis is not like previous ones we have been through. The government plan is based on the idea that the economy will rebound soon, but most economists believe the eight million jobs we lost in this recession are not coming back. This is the second “jobless recovery” in a decade. It is increasingly leading us toward a “jobless economy”. We have to begin to fight politically for a cooperative system that will distribute life’s necessities – including homes – to people whether they are employed or not. Fighting to nationalize banks and force them to end foreclosures is a good first step in this direction.

## Homeowner threatened with foreclosure says: “I want my bail out money back and a bonus!”

By Adriane Harden

I’m a homeowner in Georgia. After losing my job in 2009, and obtaining employment that paid significantly less, I immediately called One West Bank to apply for a loan modification. I was told I qualified for the HAMP modification and received a trial modification agreement. Over the next 3 months I continued to update them with financial statements for my file. When I made my last trial payment, I was denied because of an accounting error on behalf of the Bank. I was advised to fax updated information to them. I constantly called every day, faxing over information and asking for someone to review my information. I was told my income was VERIFIED and there was nothing I could do.

A week later, I received a modification agreement from the One West Bank that would increase my payment by an additional \$300 per month because of their accounting error. I’ve spoken with numerous customer service representatives, supervisors, and managers and my information gets put in a virtual system



Adriane Harden with a “Bail me out” t-shirt and a sign to save homeowners.

PHOTO/DONATED

and passed off from one person to the next. I’ve had HUD Certified Counselors send new requests for modifications on my behalf that have not even been looked at.

Recently, I was told to take the mod-

ification offer that was sent or pay my past due amount because my account was going to foreclosure in less than 30 days.

I’ve been routed and re-routed through virtual voicemails without a return phone call, told there is nothing they can do, bring your account current, do a short sale, nothing on my file will change, take the offer the investor sent or leave it and foreclose, and most recently, that I should have positioned myself to where I would not have to ask for help. The customer service representatives have been rude, unproductive and have not answered my questions. Needless to say, I sent the modification agreement back that would increase my payment to prevent foreclosure.

Sadly my story is not unusual; I’ve spoken with so many homeowners that have the same story. Why aren’t the Banks working with us? It’s not my fault that the economy failed. Only a fraction of permanent modifications have been done since the HAMP program was introduced. Homeowners are struggling each month to make their mortgage pay-

ments and it seems as if no one cares. If you send in all your paperwork and do exactly as they tell you it seems as if the Banks will find a way to deny you.

In Georgia you can foreclose on your home in as little as 30 days and you don’t even have to go to court. They just sell your home on the courthouse steps the first Tuesday of each month.

**My solution:**

We need a foreclosure moratorium. We need a stop foreclosures until something can be done to save homes. The Banks are not being regulated. They are playing by their own rules. They got their Bail Out Money and ran. If I don’t pay my mortgage, for whatever reason, I will foreclose. If the Banks don’t modify loans what happens to them? From what I see, they get a bonus!

We were told that Wall Street was too big to fail. I say: We the American People are too big to fail and I want my bail out money back and a bonus!



# Defend the Human Rights of Immigrants, Defend the Whole Working Class

By People's Tribune Editorial Board

The fascistic law passed recently by the state of Arizona authorizing state and local police to demand documents from anyone they “reasonably suspect” might be undocumented escalates the assault on immigrant workers to a new level, and in the process escalates the assault on the entire working class by the corporations. The immigrant workers across the world are the vanguard of a new class of permanently unemployed and underemployed workers. To defend them is to defend this new class, and to defend the future of every worker.

The migration of workers seeking jobs is a worldwide phenomenon. But this is more than a migration from poor to rich countries. Over the past 40 years, the combination of a global economy and advanced, labor-replacing technology applied to production has wiped out jobs across the world. A new class of structurally unemployed and underemployed workers is being created. As this process hit the poorest countries, it has spurred a global migration across borders. Nearly 190 million people, or about 3 percent of the world's population, lived outside the country of their birth in 2005. This is up from 75 million in 1965. The industrialized countries experienced significant growth of their immigrant popula-

tions beginning in the 1990s. From 2000-2008, according to the federal government, the undocumented immigrant population in the US grew by 37 percent.

These migrant workers are people who have been uprooted by the capitalist system. They are an expression of the new class being created by electronics. Millions of native-born workers in the US are also part of this new class. Sooner or later, most of us are headed into the ranks of the permanently unemployed and underemployed as labor-replacing technology continues to sweep through the economy. The current economic crisis, which is wiping out the so-called “middle class” of formerly stably employed workers in America, is itself a manifestation of this economic revolution. Electronic production in the hands of the people would create abundance



Immigration march in Detroit, Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM



Immigration march in Los Angeles, California.

PHOTO/CYNTHIA GUZA

for all of us; in the hands of the corporations, it is wiping out jobs and markets and plunging the world into poverty.

How do we defend ourselves against this system? What is our strategy for victory? The new class of permanently unemployed and underemployed has no choice but to fight for a new society that will serve their needs. To defend the entire working class we must defend this new class being created by

electronics—we must defend their right to food, clothing, housing, health care, education and all the other necessities of a civilized life. And we must defend their civil and human rights. Among other things this means defending the immigrant workers wherever we are, as they are the worldwide vanguard of this new class. By doing this we not only do what is morally right, but we defend the future of all of us.

## WE REFUSE TO BE DENIED: Housing is a Human Right

By LA CAN congress.wordpress.com

On March 30, 2010 hundreds of low-income residents and supporters, including over 50 Los Angeles Community Action Network members, came together in City Council chambers to urge action on LA's housing crisis. Residents and organizations from around the city have been working together to build momentum to secure the human right to housing and end all criminalization of homelessness and poverty. Our plan was to overwhelm the Council chambers with enough people that our issues couldn't be ignored – and we succeeded.

Based on recommendations from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, LA CAN, along with other community groups, created a People's Declaration on the right to housing in Los Angeles, including specific recommendations for LA policy makers. The UN report, which was presented to the U.N. Human Rights Council and the Obama Administration in early March, made several key recommendations to ensure the right to housing is achieved in the

United States.

Our Declaration was presented to the LA City Council by LA CAN members Deborah Burton and Deanna Weakly and other tenants. They demanded a special public hearing on the state of housing and the recommendations of the U.N. Special Rapporteur. Our voices were heard loud and clear that the City must make housing for everyone a top priority.

Bilal Ali of Coalition LA and LA CAN called for one brave Council member to stand up and agree to hold a special committee meeting on housing. Council member Janice Hahn said that Council members are forbidden by law to respond to public comment.

Bilal wasn't moving and the rest of the people weren't either. An LAPD officer tried to remove Bilal from the podium. Bilal refused and continued pleading his case for one brave Council member to meet the people's demand.

Finally Council member Herb Wesson stood up and asked the LAPD officer to leave Bilal alone and announced to the full crowd that he would hold a special hearing on or near April 14, 2010 in the community.

This was an important step in moving



LA CAN protest, Los Angeles.

PHOTO/LA CAN

us toward action on the right to housing demands and shows that when people come together – the Council members can be moved. The crowd applauded Councilman Wesson and we left Council chambers with shouts of victory - chanting “HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT.”

There was an overwhelming sense of unity among low-income residents from all corners of Los Angeles as we rallied in City Hall rotunda. Chants in English and Spanish could be heard throughout

the halls of City Hall with many staffers coming out to see what was going on. The message that housing is a human right rang out.

We then marched across the street to the new LAPD administrative building, where we rallied to demand an end to all forms of criminalization of homelessness and poverty – a crucial piece of ensuring the right to housing. With almost everyone still present after a two-hour action, we all formed a large circle, held our hands high in the air and pledged to come together in even bigger numbers on April 14.

We pledged to work together to finish our fight — because the struggle for complete liberation is not won in one battle, but a series of actions.

This action proved that the power of the people is greater than the power of the city and state, and that we can come together to fight and win for a common cause.

Together we can make a change.....

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

# THE “NEW” GM : JUST THE SAME OLD DOG WITH NEW TRICKS

By Claire McClinton

The “NEW” GM is on a public relations campaign, bragging about the repayment of \$8 Billion in loans with interest back to the government. But the smoke and mirrors does little to reassure the displaced autoworker or the retiree who is losing some of their healthcare. In reality, GM is far from “Back”. Recent reports show that the GM pension fund is under-funded, owing \$27 billion and in serious trouble. Analysts predict that GM could face a crisis as soon as

2013 or 2014. If the fund goes broke, since GM operates the country’s largest pension fund, it could drive an already strained Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. (PBGC is a government sponsored organization to backstop failed company pensions) into it’s own financial crisis.

The grim news about the pension funds didn’t grab a lot of headlines. But profit-driven decisions have consequences. Several weeks ago, a local union here got an angry telephone call from someone upset about the cuts in retiree healthcare benefits — they threat-

ened to ‘blow up the building’. The police were called and the benefits representatives office was relocated to a safer area in the union hall. This incident highlights a rash of other angry calls, and many of these workers are coming into the Hall, upset and demanding answers.

The UAW recently took GM to court, suing for the promised funds for Delphi retiree healthcare. In Canada, the CAW (Canadian Autoworkers Union) has blasted the Ontario government for allowing legal loopholes that allowed GM to underfund its’ pension fund. Protests are being organized there.

We, the workers will forever pay for the “sins” of the corporation’s quest for maximum profits. With the government owning controlling shares of GM, they should insure that the needs of those who made the old GM rich have their needs met — the pensions, the healthcare, broken cities and closed schools robbed of resources through GM tax abatements and more. By meeting our needs, we truly will have a new GM. Otherwise, the comeback of GM makes for interesting sales ads.



Michigan autoworkers fighting to save their pensions.

PHOTO/DONATED

## Clean, Affordable Water Is A Human Right!

By Ann Rall

The People’s Water Board is a coalition fighting for public water, water conservation and protection, and access to water for all people. The People’s Water Board has been attending the monthly meetings of the Board of Commissioners of the DWSD (Detroit Water and Sewerage Department) and speaking during the public comments section of the meeting to voice our demands. We have been observing that at every meeting, at least two-thirds of the seats are taken up by corporate-types in suits who are with the various firms who are bidding on the contracts being offered by the DWSD. For example, at the November , 2009 meeting, we watched as the Board approved a contract for \$80 million dollars to a single contractor (Inland Waters Pollution Control, Inc.) for three years’ worth of inspection of and repairs to the Detroit sewer system. It was the largest contract ever given to a single company by DWSD. It has also been reported that the water board recently instituted a new charge of \$100 fine for people who turn their water back on themselves. The \$100 is for a first-time offense, and the fines would go up for successive infractions.

Recently, an inside source with the City of Detroit informed us that the DWSD is currently undergoing a capital assets review, in which consultants are going over the books to determine the amount of cash on hand and the amount of work that needs to be done. According to our source, this means that David Bing, the former corporate executive who is currently the Mayor of Detroit, is preparing to entertain bids on the sale of all or part of the region’s water system. As we go to press it has been reported by the Detroit News that the director of DWSD and some other employees are talking about leaving. We think it is because of the privatization being planned. The People’s

Water Board plans to discuss this issue with other activists during the US Social Forum, so that we can figure out how to fight against this effort to privatize our most precious resource,



**Protest against the water shuts offs in Detroit, Michigan. Up to 45,000 homes have been without water.**

PHOTO/KENNY SNODGRASS, ACTIVIST AND AUTHOR OF “FROM VICTIMIZATION TO EMPOWERMENT

water.

The demands of the People’s Water Board are to:

- \* Place a moratorium on water shut-offs
- \* Fully Implement original Water Affordability Plan
- \* Televis Water Board Meetings
- \* Publish meeting agendas and minutes on website
- \* Stop conservation penalization through rate hikes
- \* Stop outsourcing city jobs
- \* Involve the public in creating demonstration projects that engage and educate the community on how to protect water
- \* Provide a public update on the Federal Consent Judgment

## In Defense of Immigrants

Sentences halfway written  
By a little girl  
Who in mass heard  
That purgatory is worse than hell  
Only to comprehend that sermon  
Later in life

Immigrants with green cards  
Have been deported  
Due to incarceration  
Longer than a year  
Unjust laws  
Written in the 1990’s

When will the nightmare  
Come to an end  
Suffered by undocumented and  
Documented immigrants  
As well as naturalized and  
Born in Amerika citizens

It will be over  
When we stand up  
When we sit in church  
And we win over

Those who have been  
Brainwashed into hating  
Those who have been told  
Not to respect those  
Of a different skin color  
Those who pray to a divinity  
Different than their own

Only the green color  
Of the almighty dollar  
And power unmasked  
Is what gets the attention  
Of those who decree  
The unjust laws

For the poor  
We have no alternative  
But to keep on fighting  
With poems, art, newspapers,  
CDs, DVDs, books, and stories

And maybe  
The green crocodile  
Will march with us  
For comprehensive  
Immigration Reform

—Yolanda Catzalco



# March To Fulfill The Dream: U.S. Social Forum 2010 and The Movement To End Poverty

By Jeff Rousset

The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign launched the March to Fulfill the Dream on April 4th, the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. It's a 2,300-mile caravan from New Orleans to the U.S. Social Forum (USSF) in Detroit, visiting 29 cities to build the movement to end poverty. The trip is documenting people's stories of living in poverty and organizing folks to attend the USSF at the end of June. Relationships and strategies are being created among poor folks as well as with their allies to take the struggle for economic justice to the next level. It's time that housing, health care, and jobs are not privileges – they are human rights.

The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) continues the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 Poor People's Campaign to build a multiracial movement led by the poor to end poverty. In the last five years of King's life he moved his focus from civil rights to human rights, and radically condemned war and poverty.

"Dr. King saw the ills of this capitalist system we live under and that one thing it always produces is pov-

erty," said Marian Kramer, president of the National Welfare Rights Union, a PPEHRC member organization. Marian also works with the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and is co-chair of the Poverty Working Group of the USSF. "He saw the necessity to eliminate poverty."

The March to Fulfill the Dream uses communications technology to share stories and connect different areas together facing the same problems. It's breaking the isolation of people dealing with systemic economic problems like unemployment and the dismantling of public education.

"This caravan connects people and reveals who their common enemy is – it's these corporations who profit from our misery and control the government. That's why banks and corporations get bailouts but they won't bail out our communities or our schools," says Marian.

Last year a record three million homes were foreclosed in the U.S. and even more are expected this year. PPEHRC is fighting a national Zero Evictions and Foreclosures Campaign targeting banks and government policies.

"All around the country the same banks that created the housing crisis and got bailed out with taxpayer money



**Stacy and her family live at a homeless encampment in the woods outside Mobile, Alabama, just minutes from the city center. Hundreds of homeless people live in these woods. Stacy is pregnant with twins. Chris, her husband, worked on supply boats until he was laid off months ago.**

PHOTO/JEFF ROUSSET

are kicking families out of their homes. We're organizing people in foreclosure to stay in their homes even if that means committing nonviolent civil disobedience," said Cheri Honkala, National Organizer for PPEHRC and a formerly homeless mother.

## Quotes from Simuel Ramey – One of the People's Tribune Star Distributors

By Sandy Reid

Simuel Ramey is out in the streets with the People's Tribune every day. He feels it is his duty to bring the people the truth. What follows are quotes from Simuel about the situation we face and the message he brings.

"I go out in the community to let people know the truth. I tell them they



**Simuel Ramey, one of the star distributors of the People's Tribune holds up his favorite copies of recent papers.**

PHOTO/SANDY REID

don't have to accept what is going on. Their paycheck goes to feed the children. The People's Tribune is about how the system is destroying their life and the possibility of having a different kind of society. People say, 'Yes, it is a good paper.' I have a couple of distributors now.

"People need to know the truth. The American people have been tricked and robbed without a gun by the few greedy elite with lies and promises. The poor didn't get health care but the corporations got off shore drilling for oil. In Little Rock, Arkansas, Power 92 Radio sponsored charity sports to raise money for social programs that the government cut like the after school program to keep problem children out of trouble and get good grades. This used to be the responsibility of the government. Instead the

Homelessness and poverty are rampant in the United States. Every city the caravan has visited so far shares the visible pattern of wealth concentration and widespread poverty.

"We have the technology and resources to feed and house everyone in this country but people are starving and homeless," Marian points out. "Our economic system is designed to maximize profits, not to meet people's needs."

Successful social movements are always led by those most affected and PPEHRC is committed to building the leadership of the poor. The March to Fulfill the Dream and the USSF, which tens of thousands are expected to attend, are important to developing those leaders, creating collective solutions, and building the movement to end poverty.

"If you're serious about building a movement for social justice then you need to be at the U.S. Social Forum. We can't wait for politicians or anyone but ourselves to make the changes we need. Register for the USSF today!" said Honkala.

*Learn more about PPEHRC and the March to Fulfill the Dream at <http://economichumanrights.org/> Register for the U.S. Social forum at [ussf2010.org/](http://ussf2010.org/).*

government is bailing out Wall Street and the 'Big Three.' Meanwhile, Sell it Seal with C & J Entertainment does the half time entertainment shows with hip hop rappers for the whole state on the weekend in order to do something positive for the kids. Obama the people voted you in for help. Yes you can. Instead the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. So people we must organize and fight and take back our future.

"In Little Rock Arkansas, the state is taking poor people's land and won't let them grow food on the land. They are building shopping center malls, movie theatres, on the land they have taken. For three generations people have lived and eaten on that land. Now the state says it is a health problem. But no one has been sick. People are fearful. They need the support of the federal government.

## SPEAKERS FOR A NEW AMERICA

Our speakers are in the forefront of the fight for food, housing, health care, education, peace and justice for all. Our speakers bring a message of hope and the possibility of creating a new society whose wealth benefits all.

For a free brochure, call 800-691-6888 toll-free, e-mail: [info@speakersforanewamerica.com](mailto:info@speakersforanewamerica.com) or visit us on the web at [www.speakersforanewamerica.com](http://www.speakersforanewamerica.com)



# As the Poor Get Poorer Look for Brutalizing Police to become the New 'Buffer' Middle Class Set to Protect the Rich

By Davey D

*Editor's note: The following is part one of an article written by Davey D. Part 2 of the article will be in the June edition of the People's Tribune.*

I been saying this for a minute and will most likely do a show on this later this week. But as the economy worsens and the gap between the Have and Have Nots widens we are going to have some serious problems. One disturbing note is that an estimated 75% of the people do not trust the government. That's playing out with the rise of militias, increasing threats by Tim McVeigh-like domestic terrorists and just an overall overt disrespect for anyone in office. A lot of anger has been directed at President Obama, but increasingly more and more ire is being turned toward anyone in office.

Part of what has driven this is the nagging perception that those in office work for the rich and powerful and not for the people. There's a lot of media middleman efforts seemingly designed to keep people's anger directed at politicians and not the rich and powerful figures behind the scenes who are driving policy. It's only a matter of time before folks come to realize that no real changes are gonna take place until the proverbial Wall Street fat cats are put in place. Sadly they seem to realize this as well.

Now once upon a time the Aristocratic class and Land Barons who ran this country realized it was just a matter of time before their African slaves and white (European) indentured servants would come to realize, as they were working side by side on the fields, that they were being smashed on by the same person. They feared these lower class folks would rise up and turn on the rich and so these Aristocrats did a couple of things. First they elevated the status of the indentured servant. They were granted more privileges than their African counterparts and were literally



Davey D.

told they were better. Many were given overseer status. Their job was to keep everyone especially the African slaves in check and basically protect the rich land owners. The overseers became the first police officers.

The original concern from our founding fathers was to protect the rich and powerful from the poor they were exploiting.

Next they put laws in place that would protect them from the 'Tyranny of the majority'. This is one of the basis for the Federalist Papers put forth by early president James Madison. As professor and fellow radio host Dr. Jared Ball once explained to me...The 'tyranny of the majority' the Aristocratic class was afraid of was the poor and desperate who were being oppressed, yet vastly outnumbered the ruling class. If they should ever get into power the fear was they would start redistributing the wealth and might start returning the harsh oppressive favors they levied on everyone else. Because of that fear, in a nutshell, the game plan was to find ways to protect the interests and property of the rich and powerful, and with each passing year and generation, different scenarios, tactics and schemes have been thought up. It might've been saying slaves were only 3/5th human and

not allowing them to vote. It might've been making women property and denying them the right to vote. It might have been concocting the 'American dream' narrative and leaving a whole lot of poor whites under the illusion that with a bit of hard work, elbow grease and determination they too could one day become rich and powerful.

For decades the rich and powerful were able to keep things moving because they had a buffer class that kept the misery of the poor from smashing on the oppressive nature of the rich. They were the Middle class. For the overwhelming majority of people in this country getting a nice house and a white picket fence was the goal. Forget being a land baron, just give me a small piece of the pie and I'm straight, is how most people thought. Become Middle Class and issues of inequality, injustice and the existence of an underclass would be swept under the rug. We saw this with poor whites who became working class

done by many 'who got theirs' who would then turn around and arrogantly chastise those who didn't make it..

But as we can see that illusion has all but crumbled, and for those who were happy being middle class the reality has sunk in that they too are not only poor, but they may now be a part of this expanded permanent underclass. This realization is setting on for many as they've seen their 401K's tank, their credit ruined, overwhelming debt that they can't get rid of thanks to more stringent bankruptcy laws designed to protect the rich, sky-high school tuitions and jobs permanently gone while more workers are being told they are too old or irrelevant for today's youthful and politically dumbed down job market. Today we've seen a collapse of the Middle Class. Either you're rich or poor. Very few are in between. Enter the new Middle class. [To be continued.]



**Hip Hop Congress (HHC) has partnered with the People's Tribune to connect Hip Hop and other cultural movements to practical struggles all over**

**the U.S. For more information on how you can get involved, please visit [www.hiphopcongress.com](http://www.hiphopcongress.com).**

**— DLabrie, Page Editor  
Email: [dlabrozia2005@yahoo.com](mailto:dlabrozia2005@yahoo.com)**

## Sister/Brother, can you spare \$20? Here's what the People's Tribune can do with it –

The People's Tribune brings clarity to the growing movement. It unites revolutionaries around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it. It has no paid staff and gets no corporate grants. The paper is financed solely by subscriptions, bundle orders from readers and donations. We need your support to continue telling the truth to the American people.

We welcome donations of all amounts, but if you can spare at least \$20, here's what we can do with 20 bucks:

- Ship a box of 75 papers across the country
- Pay postage for 20 subscriptions for prisoners
- Pay for six months of hosting our web site

One-time donations are welcome. If you can spare \$20 a month, you'll be a hero. Please make donations payable to People's Tribune and send to P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. You can also donate via Paypal at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org).



# Cabrin Green Eviction Efforts Continue

## Interview with 30 year resident

### whose grandson was crushed by 800 pound gate

By Joseph Peery

The following are excerpts from an interview with Velma Wade, a Cabrini Green resident for more than thirty years. She lost her three year old grandson in 2008 when an 800 pound gate fell on him, an accident that many residents refer to as neglect on the part of CHA and the private management company, Urban Property Advisors. Soon after the accident, UPA was replaced by the private firm, H.J. Russell. In recent months, H.J. Russell has been attempting to evict as many families as it can. Velma and her family are currently in danger of being evicted.

**People's Tribune:** Why is CHA trying to evict you?

**Velma Wade:** Because they say I have a son and grandson that have been to jail and neither one is on my lease. My grandson one time used my address and I got caught up.

**PT:** So he got arrested and used your address?

**V.W.:** Yes, so they're not taking my rent. I had to get a lawyer. They don't want to fix anything in my apartment. So I don't know if they're doing me like this because my grandson died over here and his mama is suing. I don't know. I'm in counseling and I still have these problems. They should judge me

for what I did and not for what our children do because when we're not with our children on the outside, we don't know what they're doing and anybody can give your address.

**PT:** Talk more about what happened to your grandson.

**V.W.:** My grandson was three years old. His name is Curtis Cooper. We usually let him and his brother JR (JR is three now. He was one year old then) go and play on the front while somebody sits on the porch to watch them. This particular day, my neighbor's little children asked if Curtis could come out and play. JR's mama said, "I'm gonna let them go back there and play," I said, "Yeah, as long as you're back there watching them." He rode down where the girls were, got off his tricycle and was talking to them. These kids were about four or five years old. His back was to the gate. The lady heard a popping noise. The gate fell on him. It squashed my baby. It smashed his body all the way up from his head all the way down to his feet... an 800 pound fence fell on him and smashed him. It took eight men to get that fence off my baby. I could not believe it. We slept together, we ate together, I cooked for him, I did everything for him. I thought CHA would be a little more lenient in trying to help me, like helping me move and get my life back together. But they're making things hard on me.



**Velma Wade, a 30 year resident at Cabrini Green lost her 3 year old grandson when an 800 pound gate fell on him. Velma and her family are currently in danger of being evicted.**

PHOTO /JOSEPH PEERY

is where I had a stroke. They don't care about the disabled.

I really need a three bedroom apartment in case I get sick again. I need someone with me around the clock. I have a housekeeper, but they only give me four hours with her. They put me from a three-bedroom to a two-bedroom, but I need a three bedroom so I can have some one here to cook for me. When I try to cook I mess up because my left side is not like my right. The left side

**PT:** What's the solution?

**V.W.:** Come together. Go to meetings. Get on Ms. Hinton (the manager). Get together to change her mind about a lot of things. Everybody just come together as one.

## ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN....

### LETS UNITE WITH OTHERS AND HELP THOSE IN NEED

By Lenette Evans

Last week at about 8:30 a.m. I was drinking a coffee and walking down Niles Ave. here in St. Joseph, Michigan, because my car was being fixed at St. Joe Auto. As I walked by Ace Plumbing, there was a homeless man that had about three blankets or so piled around him to keep him warm as he slept through the night.

St. Joseph, Michigan doesn't want to admit that there are homeless people all around our town only because Berrien County and Whirlpool want to paint a picture-perfect image that nothing goes wrong here. They think the homeless and poor are only in Benton Harbor. BUT THAT IS A LIE!

There are many homeless people but people have gotten so used to not seeing homeless or poor people that they think it doesn't happen here. But it does. If a

homeless or poor person is seen in or around St. Joseph they are not helped but harassed and chased off the streets or thrown in jail.

Whirlpool, Harbor Shores and many of our judges do not want to see this. When Jesus fed the 5,000 he was feeding the homeless, the poor, the unwed mothers and the children. His chosen people were the homeless and the poor. We are to help those in need and be examples of Christ... not turn our back on someone because they have dirty clothes, or smell, or have mental illnesses. WE ARE TO BE PEOPLE OF CHARACTER AND SHOW LOVE AND COMPASSION TO OTHERS.

\* \* \* \*

I have a neighbor who lives very poorly and who has cried endlessly because of the way she has been treated by

the government and because she happens to be a part of our welfare system who will not help her like they should. I have gone over to help her rake her yard, to give her bags of food, or give her a ride to the store while my neighbors look down at her. But let me tell you something people.... DO NOT EVER LOOK DOWN AT SOMEONE because you never know when you will lose your job and be living on the street. Don't say that will never happen too you. Oh Yes It can. You are a fool if you think otherwise.

I cannot tell you how many people I know who have lost a job, lost family, or their house got foreclosed and they packed up and moved.

I have a neighbor that lives across the street from me on Niles Road near Oakridge Avenue. They had a moving van come in for two days a few weeks ago. They packed their things and left.

Our government is turning our families upside down and God is trying to shake the universe, and the churches and our community to stand up and fight for your rights of freedom and justice. But God is saying to the church STOP BEING A PEW SITTER and get involved in your neighborhood and your community and make a difference by reaching out to others and showing love and compassion. Jesus said "Compel people to come in from the outside."

PROVERBS 29:7 says: — "The Righteous Care About Justice For The Poor. But The Wicked Have No Such Concern".



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PHOTO /  
BRETT JELINEK

# BENTON HARBOR, MI

## THE HOMELESS NEED JUSTICE TOO

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

The Benton Harbor NAACP has been working with the homeless in a combination court-watching program. It has been a



Rev. Edward Pinkney.

PHOTO /DONATED

tremendous success. We are also trying to take the court system to the neighborhood. We want court sessions for the homeless defendants convened in a homeless shelter to resolve warrants and misdemeanor offenses without jail sentences.

The NAACP would like to build strong relationships between the courts, local shelters, service agencies, prosecutors and court-appointed attorneys. It seeks to resolve the problems that homelessness represents with a practical solution.

The NAACP proposal is for the prosecutor and the defense attorney to review the cases before the court hearings. The court sentencing for fines, cost and custody would be substituted by participating in agency programs. The program is designed for efficiency. The majority of the cases would be heard and resolved. The people would be sentenced in one hearing. The initial referrals to a homeless court would originate in the shelters and service agencies.

This program is designed to counteract the effect of criminal cases pushing homeless defendants further outside society. This program combines a progressive plea bargain system, an alternative

sentencing structure, assurance of no jail and proof of program activities to address a full range of misdemeanor offenses. It brings homeless people back into society. The homeless need justice too.  
\* \* \* \* \*

The takeover of Benton Harbor by an Emergency Financial Manager: Pursuant to Public Act 72 of 1990, Governor Jennifer Granholm has taken over the City of Benton Harbor. A "financial emergency" has been declared by the governor and Whirlpool so Whirlpool can continue stealing land. The governor assigns responsibility for managing the "financial emergency" to the local Emergency Financial Assistance Loan Board. In turn the board appoints an Emergency Financial Manager to exercise authority under the act for the purpose of destroying the City of Benton Harbor and driving the Blacks from the city. Your city can be next! We live in a nation based on life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

### COMMUNITY QUOTES:

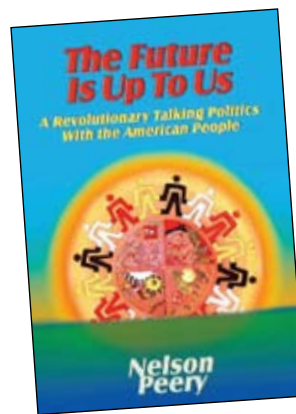
*The American Legislative Exchange Council recently released the "Rich States, Poor States" report which ranks each state according to competitiveness and economic outlook. Michigan ranked dead last in economic performance. Gov. Granholm has the nerve to want to take over Benton Harbor. She is the worst governor in the history of Michigan.*

— Tony Miller

*The three uncles on the Benton Harbor City Commission must go. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle.*

— Aaron Taylor

## THE FUTURE IS UP TO US!



WHERE  
THERE IS  
NO VISION,  
THE  
PEOPLE  
PERISH

The America the world admired, studied and strove to emulate, was an America of vision and visionaries. The vision of a country where all are created equal and a government that derives its power from the people is immortal.

As America grew, the antagonism between its vision and its capitalist reality deepened. Thousands of citizens stepped forth to defend that vision from the slave owning expansionists that sought to destroy it.

Defying a world gripped by reaction and slavery, Abe Lincoln gave humanity the vision of a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. This vision rewrote the Constitution and became a beacon for the downtrodden of the earth.

Vision has always rallied and sustained America during times of crisis. Today our country, shorn of vision and its ability to dream, is known by its stockpile of nuclear arms, bullying of nations, and slaughter of the world's poor striving to be free. It is known for its greed and its

state-sanctioned selfishness. We are seen as a nation where vision was slain by the sword.

What happened? The dull and leaden mind of America is the harvest of anti-communism planted during the McCarthy era. As they planted their malignant crop, every lofty vision, condemned as communist, was forsaken. Equality for the minorities and women, peace and finally democracy itself, was branded "communist" and forbidden. There was nothing left save consumerism and greed. America lost its way as it lost its vision.

Now, more than any time since WWII, our country desperately needs a clear vision.

Vision arises from material possibilities. We have, in the new electronic production — the computers and robots that under capitalism are permanently displacing so many workers — the possibility of doing away with poverty and privilege. We can create a world of love and peace. First, we must take these marvelous tools away from those who use them only to create profit, poverty and privilege. We must convert them from private property to public property for the public welfare. If we do not, this concentration of wealth and power of the corporations and the rulers will be used to crush us. The future is up to us.

*This article is excerpted from the book, "The Future is Up to Us", by Nelson Peery. To order a copy, send \$14 to Speakers for a New America, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. Or pay via paypal at speakersforanewamerica.com.*

### MASS DEMONSTRATION:

A mass demonstration will be held in Benton Harbor, Michigan Tuesday, August 10, 2010 starting at 11:00 a.m. in front of City Hall with a march to Jean Klock Park to protest Harbor Shores and Whirlpool's hostile takeover. Every one is invited. For more information, please contact Rev. Edward Pinkney at 269-925-0001 or email [banco9342@sbcglobal.net](mailto:banco9342@sbcglobal.net).

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