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STREET SHEET

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BLACK HISTORY // BLACK FUTURE

SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE:

As of February 14th there are **1,123 people** on the shelter waitlist in San Francisco.

BMIKE

#BLACKLIVESMATTER

Ending Homelessness for San Franciscans: A Bold Direction is Needed

JENNIFER FRIEDENBACH

San Francisco is at a precipice – deep into a housing crisis that exists within great wealth and economic fuel. Residents more than ever are motivated to see homelessness addressed as property values and rents skyrocket. Housing-insecure renters see themselves in the faces of those on the streets and respond at times with compassion and other times fear-based hostility. Homeowners have spent small fortunes to acquire property. Yet homelessness is more visible than ever with the proliferation of tents throughout the city, and the palpable deterioration of those forced to stay on the streets.

Every candidate running for Mayor states that homelessness is a top priority for them – and no doubt, it is the number one issue for San Francisco voters, with housing in general a close second, according to numerous polls.

But what does that mean, really? A quick look at candidate websites shows that few are thinking big. Jane Kim would call for a moratorium on evictions, and declare a homeless state of emergency. Mark Leno’s website has few details, focusing mostly on his work in the past, such as fighting to exempt SRO tenants from Ellis Act and allowing school districts to build housing. Angela Alioto’s website was under construction. London Breed calls for a city that is affordable to all of us, wanting to continue Mayor Ed Lee’s call for 5,000 new housing units. However, she gives few details beyond the “Housing for All initiative”.

The Housing for All initiative will appear on the June ballot, it was placed with signatures from four Supervisors with only nominal last-minute input from community organizations working on these issues. (Usually a very bad sign of political motivations – serious legislators will engage in large consensus and information gathering processes with experts to develop proposals). This measure will generate funds for some housing, bringing in about \$34 million for homeless housing and shelters – housing for about 1,200 homeless people, but also subsidizing market rate housing. With a total of \$76 million in revenue according to Controller’s Office, it will not come close to its “housing for all” promise. It was carefully crafted with corporate interests at its core, competing with a childcare measure which would have taxed the business community much higher, and killing childcare if the housing measure gets higher votes and visa versa. A housing win will translate into a tax break for downtown – but not enough of a tax to cause any real pain. Given the controversy surrounding this, it will be an uphill battle getting two-thirds of San Franciscans to support and if passed will fall short of what is needed.

Raising revenue to address homelessness has been a great challenge given California’s restrictive laws governing raising revenues that require 2/3rds approval of voters for any special tax that is dedicated to a particular use. In November 2016, the city attempted a split measure with a sales tax increase and then a separate measure that dictated where funds would go if the sales tax passed. The sales tax failed. There was not a lot of thought or effort put into building a large enough coalition to pass such a measure – and the Mayor’s office backed off after polls showed it was behind.

In addition, an anti-homeless tent ban was put on the same ballot, putting out a lot of anti-homeless rhetoric that hurt the outcome. Another measure addressing arts and family homelessness failed to get the 2/3rds necessary, losing by just 2 points. Neither of these measures got much attention from leaders at the top of our city.

In Los Angeles, a very serious effort to raise the sales tax by .25% passed, and in Santa Clara a \$950 million bond was passed for homeless housing. In both these cases, a true partnership with elected officials, non-profits and labor was credited as the reason for passage. So far, San Francisco’s efforts have lacked such a true collaboration. The latest June “Housing for All” measure being a case in point, with little to no effort for buy in, and a pitting of childcare against housing making it difficult for natural allies to come together. When the measure is fully cooked at election day, we may find the recipe was deeply flawed and lacking the sugar necessary to hit the 2/3rd sweet spot. Meanwhile, we keep seeing superficial measures that cost little, and do little, and rely on failed recycled measures involving police or locked facilities to solve the problem.

However, keep faith, because we have a magical moment. The California Supreme Court ruled that special taxes put on the ballot by voter initiative are only required to have 50% plus 1 of the votes to pass. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association is expected to go to the November ballot to overturn that decision, and likely there will be court challenges after the June election, but nonetheless we have a window of opportunity now to garner revenue. At the same time, President Trump is giving massive tax breaks to corporations that are broadly opposed by San Francisco voters. The tax break will bring federal corporate taxes down from 35% to 21%. Current San Francisco local business taxes vary depending on the type of business but are only a portion of a percentage point. Lastly, a private foundation, Tipping Point is investing in ending chronic homelessness and as part of that investment is undertaking a creative and landscape changing public relations endeavor that will educate San Francisco voters on true solutions to homelessness.

Combine all of that with a highly motivated voter base and we have a rare and historical moment where conditions are in place to effect great change and end homelessness for thousands of San Franciscans.

Continued on page 3....

ASK US ANYTHING

HAVE A QUESTION YOU WANT US TO ANSWER ABOUT HOMELESSNESS OR HOUSING IN THE BAY AREA? ASK US AT STREETSHEET@COHSF.ORG OR (415) 346-3740 AND IT COULD BE ANSWERED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

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COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition’s work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: They bring their agenda to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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WORKGROUP MEETINGS

AT 468 TURK STREET

HOUSING JUSTICE WORK GROUP

Every Tuesday at noon
The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone!

HUMAN RIGHTS WORK GROUP

Every Wednesday at 12:30 p.m.
The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join!

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO OUR WORK GROUP MEETINGS.

To learn more about COH workgroup meetings, contact us at : 415-346-3740, or go at : www.cohsf.org

IMPLEMENTING OUR COLLECTIVE VISION

Our vision is a San Francisco that prevents homelessness whenever feasible – be that a temporary subsidy for someone who loses their income due to an illness, or a long-term subsidy for an elder who loses the income of their family member to death, or a tenant who is being illegally evicted and simply needs legal representation. A San Francisco where episodes of homelessness that are not preventable, such as those caused by the recent fires or other unforeseeable events, are addressed quickly with immediate placement in shelter and placement in housing within three months, before the damaging effects of homelessness truly take root. A San Francisco where severely impaired residents are given the care they need to move off the streets into housing and the care they need to keep that housing – be that treatment or health care. We recognize that housing is the primary solution to home-

lessness, and we must invest in it. While housing is being developed, our emergency system is far too small, and the health of San Franciscans is degenerating without a roof over their head or access to water. The city should enact a major revenue source to pay for homelessness prevention; permanent housing subsidies, housing trusts, as well as acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of properties for thousands of homeless people. Funding is also needed to greatly expand our mental health system to care for the most disabled people among us. A small portion should be used on emergency services including expansion and improvement of current shelters, expansion of navigation centers, until that point where the shelter system is adequate to support the need.

OUTLINE OF NEED

There are about 7,000 homeless people at any one time in our city. Over the course

of the year, according to the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, there are approximately 21,000 people who experience homelessness. According to the last homeless count, about 41% of the population became homeless within the past year. This includes families, youth, single adults and elders. This includes people doubled up, staying in hotels, on the streets, in tents, in shelters or in parks. In any one year, the city places about 800 people in turnover supportive housing units, and with other interventions including bus tickets out of town, local subsidies, federal housing vouchers and public housing placement about 2,500 households will exit homelessness in SF next year due to these efforts. This kept our homeless numbers from rising as fast as other big cities on the west coast, but we need to think BIG and bring the numbers dramatically down.

According to the DSHS, in order to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% we would need 850

units on top of the unfunded 800 in development, as well as 70 additional housing ladder units, 850 problem solving units, and 360 rapid re-housing units. However – a system designed to force San Franciscans to be homeless for 10 – 20 years before they can get any help is absolutely unacceptable. It is unacceptable to everyone – be they small business owners, neighbors, or tourists – but it is especially unacceptable to that person forced to live without a safe and decent home for long years on end. To turn this around we need radical compassion and a willingness to tax the most fortunate among us. Our rough estimates are that with an only .25% tax on corporations earning more than \$25 million, we would bring in over \$170 million annually, a .5% tax would bring in double that– which would pay for housing, mental health treatment, and shelter for thousands of San Franciscans. With the tragic Trump tax break comes great opportunity – San Francisco can and should capture a portion of that lost federal revenue and use it to

Violent Threats Posted on Tents at Mission Camp

QUIVER WATTS

On Friday afternoon a handful of Mission District residents experiencing homelessness found shockingly violent threats taped to their tents. The typed notices referred to the campers as “JUNKIE MOTHER F***ERS” and warned that they would be the targets of vicious attacks if they were still present in the

area after sunset that night. The sign itself contained shockingly violent language, threatening “IF YOU ARE STILL HERE AFTER DARK TONIGHT, the hunters will become the hunted. We will pound you, burn you, beat you and f*** you up if you are within 100 yards of this park starting after sun down tonight. WE ARE COMING FOR YOU.”

One resident told Kelley Cutler, a Human Rights organizer with the Coalition on Homelessness, that he had seen a person posting the threats and confronted them, only to be attacked with pepper spray and have a gun pulled on him. Cutler said residue from the attack was still visible on the victim’s body when they spoke. The victim was able to note down the license plate number of the suspect. Police were notified of the threats and the assault on the homeless resident and are currently investigating this attack.

The notice was signed “-THE NEIGHBORS” but workers in the nearby businesses and passersby were surprised when asked about the threats. “This is very unnecessary and it’s not the way to solve the problem.” said Lane, a skateboarder

at the park said he wasn’t aware of any conflicts between the unhoused neighbors and those using the park during the daytime. “There has got to be a peaceful way.”

Unhoused people have faced a string of publicized attacks in the past year, some with links to far-right neo-Nazi groups and others seemingly the actions of individuals. At the end of January a know Nazi agitator showed up to an encampment sweep in Oakland carrying an American flag on a heavy pole and antagonized campers, including trying to forcibly enter the tent of a Black transgender woman. Campers at the “First They Came For the Homeless” camp in Berkeley have also faced harassment from known Nazi organizers. In May of 2017 the East Bay Express

reported on a string of arson attacks on homeless camps, and just this weekend a man died in a fire while in his tiny home structure.

Homeless San Franciscans have to defend against hostilities from the Department of Public Works and SFPD while also avoiding threats like this one from vigilantes. While campers nearby were upset and surprised by the intensity of the threats, it did not seem like anyone was making moves to leave the area.

“I’m not going to move,” said David, a nearby camper who found the threatening notice posted on his tent that afternoon. “I’m a Marine Corps veteran. I’m not very good at retreating.” ■

The Waiting List

ALICE E. ROGOFF

The waiting list at the Senior Residence is long but it is the end of the year Christmas trees and menorahs and wreaths December, when my mother and Grandpa died, more than cold, cold to want someone to die in December so the waiting list will go down, to find an available room because someone is lonely, in December, hasn't left their room, stopped eating no visitors when the season is supposed to be jolly, but it's so cold to die in December, alone on the street, looking for a room, the last on a list, not the right insurance, or the right kind of person even without snow, it's cold; the wind blows across urban tunnels the last days of the year.



EXPANDING BLACK TRANS SAFETY: AN OPEN LETTER TO

Three Black transgender women were brutally murdered on the last weekend of February [2017]. Their names were Chyna Dupree, Ciara McElveen and Jaquarrius Holland. TGI Justice Project is deeply saddened to witness such a great community loss and, like many, we have been grieving this tremendous loss.

To make matters worse, the Trump administration is taking away life-saving protections for transgender children and their families, creating an environment ripe for shaming, bullying, hate crimes, and suicide. It is no coincidence that these events have occurred simultaneously—in fact, these events speak to the heart-wrenching realities of

violence that transgender people face every day.

While we at TGIJP have long advocated for transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex people to be affirmed exactly as we are, this year, like every year before it, began with the devastating reminder that we have a long way to go to get there.

Attacks on Black transgender people are occurring interpersonally and systemically through violent transphobia in government, at church, and in our own homes. The refusal of many to have honest conversations about why Black transgender women are killed with impunity only emboldens the

people who kill us.

Transphobia is as deeply rooted in our society as it is dangerous. It exists in all of us, because in America that is how we are socialized – to adhere to a prescriptive set of traditional gender identities and conservative values that leave little room for freedom of choice or individuality. Eliminating transphobia, and stopping the violence perpetuated against Black trans women in particular, requires each of us to be daring enough to reflect on how we have all contributed to it, and to be mindful of how we have, whether we are aware of it or not, given rise to an environment in which transgender people are in danger doing everyday activities

like walking down the street, going to work, or having a cup of coffee. It requires educators to begin teaching lessons on the history of transgender people, for legislators to take seriously their job to protect every single person they claim to represent, and for everyday people to intervene when witnessing violence against trans people.

Ultimately, ending violence against trans people requires those who are not transgender to listen to and respect the needs of transgender people, and for each of us to unearth in ourselves a lifelong commitment to advocating on behalf of each other.

In Black communities, we've raised

BLACK HISTORY MONTH OR THANKING THE SLAVES
FOR MAKING AMERICA GREAT?

BILAL MAFUNDI ALI

For many people, especially Black people, the month of February signifies the annual celebration of Black History Month/African-American Heritage Month. February is designated as a time to recognize African American achievements and contributions to America. One notable consequence is the hero worship of a handful of prominent figures. What's more, this celebration of Black achievement particularly tends to be sanitized, and this selective representation is often at the expense of erasing a rich legacy of individuals, groups, and movements just as important in the legacy of Black struggle.

Every year since 1929, the month of February has been observed as Black History Month by scholars, students, churches and the corporate world. Many people feel that it is important that we honor those who faced with almost insurmountable challenges and barriers to "overcome." Many believe that Black History should be celebrated year-round, not just one month of the year and the shortest month of the year at that, as it's no different from American history. After all, Black History is amerikkklan history, in which, without Black people there would no American history.

Negro History Week (1926), the precursor to Black History Month, was created in 1926 in the United States,

when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February to be "Negro History Week." Woodson was bothered by the fact that many textbooks and other historical reviews minimized or ignored the contributions of black figures. When Carter G Woodson proposed Negro History Week, he explained, "If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated." Woodson earmarked the second week in February to raise awareness of our stories. Woodson chose that week because it specifically covered the birthdays of Frederick Douglass (February 14) and Abraham Lincoln (February 12).

There is no shortage of ways to celebrate Black History Month. Teachers give lessons to students about important African American historical figures such as Harriet Tubman and the Tuskegee Airmen. Bookstores highlight the works of black poets and writers. Meanwhile, galleries display the work of black artists. Museums feature exhibitions with African-American themes, and theaters present plays with an African American subject matter. At the same time Black History Month is being celebrated with all its pageantry, it fails to acknowledge the historic ongoing struggles

for Black people's self-determination and liberation. Is this because Black History Month has been successfully co-opted by corporate America and the petty black bourgeois? KKKapitalism co-opts the post-holiday sales slump that usually follows New Year's Day, when retailers honor holidays in hopes of boosting revenue while adjusting their products and services to commemorate Black History Month. Target, Verizon, Google and Netflix, along with alcoholic beverage companies, display Great African Kings such as Budweiser's advertisement. Ironically, many of these corporations have derived their great wealth from that "peculiar institution" known as slavery. This involvement by these corporations has had the effect of rendering Black History Month a token gesture.

"We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society - Point 5 of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense Platform."

Black history is amerikkklan history. A history of kidnapping, a history of genocidal practices, a history of suffering, murder, brutality, marginalization, containment, control and the exploitation and oppression of Black people in amerikkka. Black History Month has never been about black folks understanding their oppressive conditions in this kkkountry. Black History Month has become the

month of the "good negro," totally erasing the history and contributions of Black freedom fighters such as Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Robert Williams, Ella Baker, Queen Mother Moore and others who waged militant opposition against the U.S. empire. Black History Month has become a whitewashing of the historical relationship between people of Afrikan descent and white supremacist America.

"Often black history is not recorded, it's forgotten about, this keeps us from knowing what direction to go in the future" – Huey P. Newton.

Black History is white domination of Black people and white people being entitled to rape, murder, exploitation and oppression of Black people as a divine right. Black History is the denial of Black people's right to self-determination. Black History is the criminalization of being black. Black History is Black Lives have never mattered. Black History is whites being able to escape into their whiteness, while making impossible for blacks to escape into their blackness. Black History Month is about the Commercialization and Commodification of OurStory

REAL BLACK HISTORY MATTERS!!! ■

TO OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY

awareness about the pervasiveness of gender-based violence and the impact that violence has on everyone involved. However, violence against and the murdering of Black transgender women at the hands of Black men who are not transgender goes unchecked by everyone. Our communities have begun to address violence against Black women who are not transgender, but this has not been extended to Black transgender women, and we should be asking ourselves why.

The fight for civil rights for Black people is alive and strong. Many of the tools we need to abolish anti-Black transphobia exist within that fight, and we are the ones to do it. We have always demanded to not be treated prejudicially because of who we are and what we look like. Now, Black people have a responsibility to hold people who are transphobic in our communities accountable for their discrimination.

We can do this by critically examining the values at the core of people’s bigotry, and by having courageous conversations with those who are closest to us about where they learn to be transphobic. These are ways in which we can start to confront the transphobia in ourselves and, even more importantly, commit to eliminating it. We must uphold and take seriously the collective responsibility of every person to learn about, understand, and realize the full range of human rights that transgender people are due.

This is most important because Black transgender people, who live at the dangerous intersection of gender-based violence and anti-Blackness, are the fulcrum of the success of anti-discrimination protections – if Black trans women are not safe, none of us are safe. For transphobia to be abolished, every individual person has a role to play. At the center of all this is acknowledging the long-standing system that allows people with male privilege to exercise tremendous violence against those without that privilege – in other words, patriarchy.

Our communities are on constant defense from the daily harassment, violence and abuse they face and are eager to find ways to stay safe and to stay alive. People without this experience can’t imagine what it’s like to worry incessantly if the people

you’re in relationship or community with want to do you harm. When you are facing real physical and mental violence from everyone around you - from strangers to doctors, legislators to social workers - life becomes about basic survival, and living a fulfilling life becomes impossible. To add insult to injury, there are no protections at the state or federal level for Black transgender women acting in self-defense to protect ourselves. But while the system was not designed to protect us, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we deserve to live and to be affirmed.

The mandate for Black people and everyone now is to transform ourselves and our conditions by both confronting state violence and confronting every day, gender-based and transphobic violence against Black trans women. We ask that you join us in this commitment to keeping Black trans women and trans women of color safe; we ask that you offer up everything you can in this moment as an ally, as a comrade, and as our family. Ask yourselves what little steps you can take to intervene on transphobia as a daily practice. We encourage you to start working on the local and regional level--find organizations in your area like BreakOUT!, El/La Para Translatinas, Solutions Not Punishment Coalition (SnapCo), or Audre Lorde Project that directly invest in and center the leadership of transgender and gender non-conforming people of color. Donate your time, energy and money into these local efforts and find ways to be in meaningful relationship with them. Creating a culture of safety is much larger than the task to “stop killing Black trans women;” what we are suggesting instead is the possibility that we can all prevent and intervene against this violence daily. If you have an extra room to offer up to someone in need, if you have a meal to spare, or if you can walk with someone and make sure they get home safely--these are all ways we can begin to create a culture of safety among one another. Remember that this work begins and ends with each of us individually. And, we are all uniquely a part of a stronger collective community, which, when strong at the foundation, can make great shifts systematically toward solidifying the world we truly want to see. ■

WITH LOVE FROM, JANETTA JOHNSON AND THE TGJIP FAMILY

Be safe and stay strong!

To Mister Slater

TEASLATER

To Mister Slater,
You don’t deserve a dear
I don’t really want to talk to you
But there’s something you need to hear

You may be mad that I am singling you out
It’s not just your whiteness that bleeds through my veins
But I think you have done the most damage
After all I still carry your name

It’s really your fault
Your evil history tends to honor
Like we were your property
So were your wife and daughters

Except they got to be whole people
They got to be virtuous too
I’ll write another letter to them later
This here is about you

To Mister Slater,
Was it because of you Abuelo had light skin?
Did you whip his grandmother
So she would give in?

I was told his father had your eyes
But I can’t be sure
There are no pictures of him or her
While I see your spirit every time I leave my door

In the sound of my people begging
Sitting in the urine soaked streets
In the police lights flashing
And blood on the concrete

To Mister Slater,
Did you know what you took away with greedy hands?
Wasn’t it enough to steal their labor
Did you have to cut us all off from our Motherland?

Did you know it would doom us to a life
Caught up in confusion and profitable lies
To deceive us into obedience
That we would reap rewards when we die

To Mister Slater,
Is it your fault my hair both kinks and curls?
Do you still believe, as you must have
That it was the only beauty I could claim
Being dark brown in your world?

Do you even see me as one of yours?
Would you claim me in court?
Would you have let me run to freedom,
Or let your overseer shoot me for sport?

To Mister Slater,
I’ve been bringing positivity this year
I want to connect with my spirits
But then I feel you near

I'm not really sure why
The things you valued are not mine
My Blackness, my Queerness, my Power
You must hate, but suit me just fine

Mister Slater,
I know you are still in me, even as a part
You can’t choose the roots of your family tree
But next time I call on my ancestors
Stay the hell away from me

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, born February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama.

JOE WILSON

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, born February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Civil rights pioneer, known for refusing to give up her seat to a white man and sit in the “colored” section on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Contrary to popularized legend, Rosa Parks was not simply a mild-mannered seamstress but secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, as well as a seasoned organizer who had been trained at the legendary Highlander Folk School training institute in Tennessee, which had trained dozens of well known activists and leaders, including a young Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, Jr.

On that fateful day, December 1,

1955, Rosa Parks’ refusal to move to the back of the bus was not coincidence, but part of a deliberate, strategic campaign to challenge segregation on Montgomery’s bus system. Ms. Parks was not tired from a hard day’s work, she was tired from giving in. When Rosa Parks sat in the front of the bus and refused to move, it was a deliberate act of planned resistance. The gauntlet had been thrown. A movement begun. People would no longer ride in smoldering anger. They would walk with a fierce purpose — in a figurative sense, all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Ms. Parks’ simple act of defiance sparked the historic Montgomery Bus Boycott, organized by the fledgling Greater Montgomery Improvement Association,

and catapulted to public attention a little-known 26-year old preacher named Martin Luther King, Jr.

Though Ms. Parks’ contributions to the civil rights movement remain indisputable, there were other heroines in this struggle. A 15 year-old pregnant teenager named Claudette Colvin was actually the first person arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white person — resisting segregation — on a Montgomery bus, nine months before Rosa Parks more publicized defiance.

Although Ms. Colvin’s character as an unwed mother was considered a supposed liability by many in the movement leadership — mostly male — at the time, young Claudette would

later give powerful testimony in the landmark Supreme Court case that would overturn Alabama’s discriminatory practices in its public bus system - some measure of vindication for Ms. Colvin.

The bus boycott, in a era before cell phones, fax machines, email, Instagram and Facebook, lasted an incredible 381 days — nearly 13 months — and led to the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling

that segregation on Alabama’s public buses was unconstitutional.

The bus boycott demonstrated the power of oppressed people to push back, to stand up against injustice, and by their courage and sheer force of will, to bend the moral arc of history toward justice.

Claudette Colvin would say many years later, “Being dragged off that bus was worth it just to see Barack Obama become president, because so many others gave their lives and didn’t get to see it, and I thank God for letting me see it.”

Rosa Parks remains a towering example of how a simple act of defiance can be indelibly etched into public consciousness, and inspire multiple generations of social justice warriors. And young Claudette Colvin reminds us how there are often many unsung warriors, lesser known but certainly not less, tiny but incandescent sparks, that can also galvanize a movement. Though history is full of lesser-known heroes and heroines in humanity’s struggle for justice, they are giants nonetheless. Then and now...

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks died in 2005. Claudette Colvin is 78, retired and lives in The Bronx, New York. ■



Image: Apu//Theo Collective & The Feral Branches Zine (queer punk, organic gardener, collage diy artist) from Northern Germany

GHOSTLINES PROMPT...

"And, if i know anything at all, it's that a wall is just a wall and nothing more at all. It can be broken down." - Assata Shakur

Think about one "wall" you face in your life. What is this wall made of (your silence, disconnection from your history, a language barrier between you and your family, a physical border or prison wall)?

Write a poem in which you dismantle this wall with an unexpected tool.

Ghostline: "When the wall finally comes down..."

submit entries to qwatts@cohfsf.org

Since 1989, the STREET SHEET has been an independent media organization that provides a powerful platform to homeless people to reclaim and shift narratives about homelessness in San Francisco. visit www.cohfsf.org and click "Donate Now" to help keep it that way!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED, CONTACT QUIVER WATTS AT QWATTS@COHSF.ORG

SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 16	FEBRUARY 17	FEBRUARY 18	FEBRUARY 18
FILM SHOWING “THE MURDER OF FRED HAMPTON” WHERE: 2969 MISSION ST. @7-9PM Join the PSL in watching the film and discussing the revolutionary legacy of the Black Panther Party. \$3-10 donation, no one turned away for lack of funds.	SURVIVING SMASH & GRAB #BLACKSOLIDARITYWEEK WHERE: FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF OAKLAND, 2501 HARRISON ST @6-9PM In honor of #BlackSolidarityWeek, and in light of the recent released FBI report on so-called “Black Identity Extremists,” CRC will host a political education panel on the repression of Black dissidents.	COLONIZATION AND RESISTANCE PANEL AND DISCUSSION WHERE: OAKSTOP, 1721 BROADWAY, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612 @1:30-4PM Three visionary community leaders will speak with us about the ongoing colonization of these places, and the politics and strategies of indigenous resistance.	BAY AREA DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: NO BARBED WIRE! NO WALLS! WHERE: NATIONAL JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1684 POST ST @2-5:30 All are welcome! Suggested donation- \$8
FEBRUARY 22	FEBRUARY 24	FEBRUARY 25	MARCH 2
LISTEN FOR A CHANGE: MENTAL HEALTH, FAT-SHAMING & MASS INCARCERATION WHERE: THE ERIC QUEZADA CENTER FOR CULTURE AND POLITICS, 518 VALENCIA ST @7-9PM RSVP to be notified on fb for free ticket release two weeks before the event. This event will sell-out.	AN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINX HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES WHERE: THE GREEN ARCADE 1680 MARKET STREET @7PM This book is a concise, alternate history of the United States “about how people across the hemisphere wove together antislavery, anticolonial, pro-freedom, and pro-working-class movements against tremendous obstacles.” No admission charge.	RISE-N-POLE: FUNDRAISER BRUNCH PARTY WHERE: CENTER FOR SEX AND CULTURE 1349 MISSION ST @3PM Gather all your sexy friends and lovers for Rise-N-Pole, a fabulous brunch ‘n’ pole party to raise money for CSC.	EMPOWERMENT IN PRINT: LGBTQ ACTIVISM, PRIDE & LUST EXHIBITION WHERE: THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY 4127 18TH ST @7-9PM The magazines, newspapers, newsletters and zines on display reflect how queer people have used periodicals to create community, develop culture, express desire and inspire activism.

STOP DISPLACING VEHICULARLY HOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS

SAM LEW

San Francisco has over 1,200 people cars, vans, or RVs on the streets of San Francisco. These are families, students, pregnant women, young children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and adults. These are people who simply seek shelter from the harsh elements and the dangers of the streets.

But since 1971, living in your vehicle—even one that is legally parked—has been illegal. Although the San Francisco Police Department only gave out seven citations for vehicle habitation last year, the police often use it as a tool for harassment.

It’s hard enough to find a place to park in the City for a couple of hours, and the places where cars can park for longer periods of time have been rapidly disappearing as well. The City has been placing more signage that restrict cars from parking for certain hours--for example, between 10pm to 6am--which cause vehicularly housed people to constantly be on the move. For RV and oversize vehicle dwellers, there is even less space; there is specific oversize vehicle restrictions. Finally, throughout the entire city, there is a 72-hour parking rule, which means that no vehicle may be parked for more than three days. While intended to address abandoned

vehicles, the rule forces those living in their cars to move again and again.

THE SFMTA DEFINES THIS AS “PARKING AND CURB MANAGEMENT.” WE DEFINE IT AS DISPLACEMENT.

The difficulty of finding a safe place to park is exacerbated by exorbitant fines and fees which homeless people simply are unable to pay. With San Francisco’s adult shelter waitlist consistently over 1,000 people long and while public housing waitlists span years, vehicles are often the first—and only—line of defense before people are forced to live directly on the streets. While vehicular dwelling is far from ideal, it is often the safest option for this vulnerable population. Yet people’s only form of shelter is threatened by parking citations and tow fees, which only further exacerbate precious living situations. It is nearly impossible for a homeless person to be able to pay off a \$73 to 110 parking citation, much less a tow fee, which can cost upwards of \$269.

Even more problematic is the impounding fee of \$71 per day, ensuring that the individual will most

likely never retrieve their vehicle. In a week, the tow fee can add up to an unbelievable \$754 or more, depending on vehicle size, and reach thousands within a month. Furthermore, it is not only the loss of the vehicle, but all of an individual’s possessions inside the vehicle, which can often only be retrieved with valid ID. For homeless people, losing your ID happens frequently and getting another can take weeks. These fines and fees do not serve to end homelessness, but only exacerbate the issue.

However, things do seem to be looking up: In a win for anti-poverty groups, the SFMTA Board of Directors recently amended their community service and payment plan processing fees for parking citations.

One fast and immediate fix to the issue would be an amnesty on tow fines and parking citations for people who are experiencing homelessness. This would ensure that homeless people would not be burdened by fines and fees and would also not lose their shelter.

Additionally, for many years, the Coalition on Homelessness has supported a safe parking program, where people experiencing homelessness would be able to safely and legally

park in their vehicles for an extended period of time. Other cities have adopted various iterations of this program, including services, such as showers and bathrooms, for program recipients. It has not only been a way to provide people with safe and dignified sleep and to protect them from vicious fines and fees, but also a means of offering services to a vulnerable population.

AS SAN FRANCISCO FACES AN EVER-GROWING HOUSING CRISIS, IT IS CRUCIAL THAT PEOPLE LIVING IN THEIR CARS ARE ABLE TO STAY IN THEM FOR SAFETY AND SHELTER. THEY SHOULD NOT BE UNFAIRLY EVICTED FROM THEIR HOME SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO POOR TO PAY A FINE.

Interested in working on this issue with us? Email Sam Lew at slew@cohsf.org for more information. You can also email the SFMTA Board of Directors to let them know what you think: MTABoard@sfmta.com. ■

Fall in Love

LARRY WARE

Should a warm smile in the rain turn your days into beautiful sunshine...
Fall in love.

Should a loving kiss awaken you amidst a beautiful dream tenderly in the light...
Fall in love.

As the eyes of the heart look through the windows of the world, they can see that there are so many beautiful things in life for people to do together...
all in love.

And should you find it real...
Fall in love.

Fall in love with me.
Deep within your heart...
Fall in love.

Fall in love with me; so we can fall in love with life together...
Fall in love.

EMERGENCY STREET SHEET NEEDS YOUR HELP!

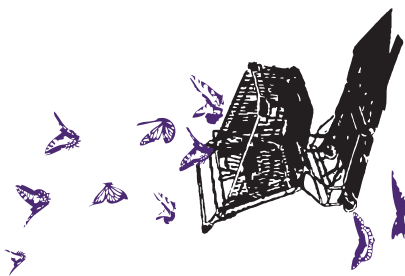
This past week five of our office computers went obsolete and we do not currently have the resources to replace them. We need donations of high quality Mac desktop computers (no more than 3 years old) in order to get our office up and running again. Please email development@cohstf.org or call (415)346-3740 before bringing donations to our office. You can also donate money online by visiting our website www.cohstf.org and clicking "Donate Now"

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Coalition on
Homelessness
San Francisco

Name: Sonny Thompson and Valerre Erickson
Date: 31 January 2018
Place: Compass Family Services
Time without a home:
Age: Sonny: 33 Valerre: 30

"We always say that we are not homeless, we're houseless because the only thing we're lacking is a house, the structure of a house. Everything else we've got. We've got the safety and the security and the hygiene - we take care of ourselves very well." Sonny and Valerre

What's the most difficult thing about being without a home: "... falling asleep every night and not being safe. The hardest part is worrying about the cops, if they're going to come and kick us out. Or if they're going to just harass us for no reason. I don't worry about other people oddly enough, I can defend against that. It's the police that usually offers us the most trouble; kicking us out, making us move. It's already hard enough without having to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, or 4 o'clock in the morning, and have to move everything you own just because a cop doesn't want you in your little nuck or whatever you can find. It's our biggest struggle." Sonny

What's the most difficult thing about being without a home: "I have to say honestly just not having a shower, or a kitchen to cook in." Valerre

"When you're in a house you have your routines and you have your life. When that's taken away from you there's a whole other world out there and you realize that some of the grimmest, some of the dirtiest people can be some of the best friends you'll ever have. Or the people with the most heart, or somebody that's actually going to help you in your time of need. These people walking around that are in your "community", they look at you and see you're in need, they're just going to keep walking by. Some of these people that are drug addicts or other types of homeless people, they will always lend a hand, always come to help you when you need it. Other people don't do that any more. It's really sad and I really hate it." Sonny

Valerre and Sonny are expecting their first child, a daughter. Valerre is at 8 months. They are currently in the Compass Family Shelter.

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