

## *Journey*

### **Where Will I End Up?** *By Michael*

As a homeless man I think differently than the way I used to. I have this continuous fear deep inside of me. The fear begins with a question: "Where will I end up?" Most mornings when I wake up, my mind slowly becomes conscious before I open my eyes. I listen to the sounds around me. My first thought is that I may not be here alone.

I feel like I'm borrowing the world from the people who use it to traverse back and forth throughout the day. It's only about 7 am. I can hear people shuffle off to work, one by one, as car doors open and shut. I stay quiet, hoping that no one will notice me under my blanket. You see, I live in my vehicle.

When it feels like the coast is clear I begin to slowly lift my head. I look around. This is a good morning! I don't have to use the bathroom! I take a moment before I plan my day. I need to suppress the guilty thoughts I feel for being out here in the first place. Okay. I got it together now. First I must decide where I will brush my teeth and wash my face this morning. Can't face the public like this. Everyone will know I slept in my car.

Today I will wait for the public library to open at 10 am. Ten minutes for hygiene and then I can check my email and search the job scene. Some emails look promising at first, but as I begin to read them I realize they're just clever gimmicks designed to get my attention. You know, targeting people looking for work.

*Continued on page 4*

## *Editorial*

### **Open Letter to the Mayor** *By Joe D.*

*The Honorable Craig A. Moe, City of Laurel*

Dear Mayor Moe,

The way I look at America is, everybody's got to live somewhere. There is a homeless problem in the City of Laurel: people living in the woods, in tents, sleeping bags, cars. We need to solve this problem.

I'm going through a lot myself. I'm living outdoors. I've been homeless all winter. If my mom or dad were living now I wouldn't be living in a tent. A lot of the homeless don't have family.

The only thing the City will do is lock them up. That's not how to deal with the homeless. Try to help the people – see if they have mental problems, see if they're okay. Do they need a job? A place to live?

Grassroots, LARS, the Day Center – all these places are nice but they are just Band-Aids. LARS will help pay bills and give out cans of food but if we don't have anywhere to cook it, what are we supposed to do?

Laurel has half-way houses and rehabs. I don't need rehab. I just need a job and a roof over my head. A job is very important; that's half the battle, but if I don't make at least \$600-800 a week, I can't afford rent.

They want us to go to this mission in Baltimore. I'm not from Baltimore. Laurel needs a shelter that is a full-time program, not where we go in at 7 at night and they kick us out at 7 in the morning, even on Christmas. Try to get these people out of the woods, get them jobs, get them back in the mainstream of life.

I'd like to invite you to come to the Rt. 1 Day Center and talk with us and maybe you would get more of a grasp of what's going on. I know it's in Howard County, but 30 per cent of the people who come to the Center are from Laurel.

I just want you to know there is a problem in Laurel that needs to be acknowledged, and if you think it's not such a big problem maybe you could help the people out there. Howard County has announced its Plan to End Homelessness. Are you going to try to tackle the problem? ■

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## Day Center Garden: Take 3!

In early April, Randy, Steve and Ava launched the third season of the Day Center garden. They expanded and prepped the beds and built a new fence. The strawberries from last year returned lushly and Nancy donated veggies and flowers. Thanks to Randy for purchasing the fence materials and for his tireless hard labor, to Jaime and Sandy from Columbia Presbyterian for their help digging, and to Pastor Jeremy for pounding stakes into the ground. (How's that shoulder?!) Special thanks to Doug for donating the fertilizer (P.U.!). Nancy's rewards will come at harvest!



*More help  
is always  
welcome...*

*Many hands  
make light  
work!*

*Excerpt from an essay by George Ball, CEO of the Burpee seed company:*

*The garden is not merely a great metaphor—it is the first metaphor. From a biblical perspective, we all began in the garden. You might recall Adam, Eve and the awkward matter of the apple of temptation, humankind's original and greatest sin. Disobeying their Creator's strict instructions, Adam and Eve partook of the apple offered by their serpentine interlocutor.*

*God promptly exiled the couple from the paradisiacal Garden of Eden, and sentenced the pair, their descendents, and all mankind—to what? Gardening! Yes, the never-ending punishment for our greatest sin is to become a gardener. By casting out Adam and Eve, the Creator gave his children the responsibility to create their own lives. Rather than lolling about the paradisiacal garden, we've been working in our own earthly gardens ever since.*

*(From "Easter in the Garden," by George Ball, Heronswood Voice, April 19, 2012)*

### Resources

#### Counseling Available

Lisa Davis, CAC-AD, from the Howard County Health Department, is available at the Day Center on Wednesdays from 2:30-5:30 pm for alcohol and drug abuse counseling. Some of the substance abuse services provided are:

1. Assessments
2. Recommendations
3. Treatment referrals
4. Assistance with other Health Department services

There is a sign-up sheet outside the Counseling room downstairs (between the doctor's office and pantry storage room).



First Person

## It's Never Too Late to Start – Part Two *By Woodchuck*

*Nicknamed by a ten-year old boy who'd watched him drag pallets across a railroad track to build fires for heat for 40 homeless people on a loading dock during a Tennessee blizzard in 1998, Woodchuck stopped by the Day Center on January 21 after a two-year absence. (Continued from the April 2012 issue)*

I decided I wanted to go home to Vermont and got as far as York, PA. I got drunk and an officer hurt me putting cuffs on. When he took them off he said I had problems and I assaulted him. He had stitches in his head, so I did seven months in prison and seventeen-and-a-half on parole. It would have been ten years but the officer went on my defense. That was God's doing. We're still friends today. My life transformed in prison and on parole. I had to go to AA, be alcohol and drug free, go to counseling. I got off parole July of last year.

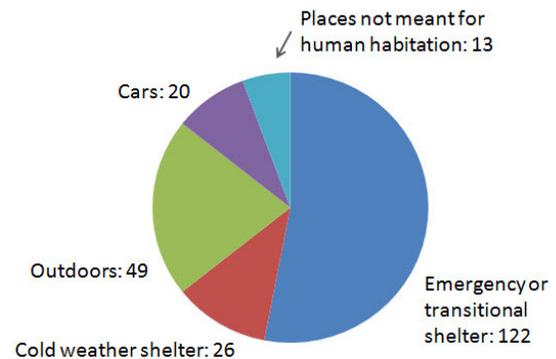
I was still drinking – sneaking. Praying. Finally I realized this counseling is helping. I filed for disability and SSI. I hated what the Lord was putting me through but now I realize the benefit. I decided detox and rehab ain't doing it, I needed to keep this up.

I'm on medication for schizophrenia, bipolar, borderline personalities, PTSD. I don't like it but as long as I take my medicine I'm doing good. I've got anger management, group counseling, a Bible counselor, a regular counselor to talk to about what's going on with me now and in the past, and a psychiatrist for the meds.

I'm living with people in York. I was flying a sign – “Will Work On Jobs” – so I could get drunk in my hotel room. This guy came by and said, you want to work? I said, yeah. Went to his house, painted the house. Two days later he said, got another small job, want to help? I said, let's go. Third time he says, I spoke to my wife and we want you to come for supper, sober. I said, no problem. We had a good time.

Next time he said, pack your stuff, we've decided to let you live with us, so I lived with them, started paying rent. One day he says, you're family. I've got his number in my wallet. If I drink, I can't go home. That's the rules but I don't

Howard County Annual Survey of the Homeless  
2012 Living Situation, 230 Respondents\*



*Thank you to all the visitors that completed a survey form at the Day Resource Center.*

\*191 respondents in 2011

blame them. If I drink I stay out but I have a key to the house, go in the refrigerator, take a shower, do laundry, come and go when I want, and that's a blessing. They adopted me as their own. Last month I told my psychiatrist to put me on Antabuse, a drug which could kill me if I drink.

I'm here to say hi to all the people I love. This center saved my life, all because Ms. Anne had an idea that God told her to do. God bless her and all the people. As many times as she's seen me get up and fall, she never gave up on me. I love her dearly. I love this center. It threw a monkey wrench in my life style. A good one, though. I like me better today.

Maybe a lot of people ain't going to change their lives here, but at least if they really want to, they can. If I could do it, I know they can. I'm 58 years old so it's never too late to start. ■

*“I hated what the Lord was putting me through but now I realize the benefit.”*

Where Will I End Up, continued from page 1

It's 11:30 now. This is the most challenging part of my day. I may check out a few local "Now Hiring" ads. But after that I'm just trying to find ways to kill this empty time. There aren't many places in Laurel for people like me to hang out. Sometimes I go to the lake. It's beautiful there, though it reminds me of better times, and if I'm not careful, I may even shed a tear or two. I never knew I liked the life I had before. Looking back it's almost laughable to think that I had any complaints. I think of my children from the time they were born until I last saw them. And I smile to myself and remind myself that there are still people who care about me.

Now, as the day grows old and the skies darken with a calm late afternoon/evening feel, I become more relieved because there's not so much time to kill. I almost feel accomplished for finding ways to dispose of my day. Time to start thinking about tonight. I have a place in mind to bed down. Do I have to use the bathroom? If I feel like I may need a bathroom, I'd choose somewhere close to 24-hour facilities. No concern of bodily functions tonight. Maybe I will watch a movie on my computer. I have movies and old TV shows to watch. I used to watch them for the entertainment, but now they just remind me that I am human, and that there is still a reason to laugh sometimes.

Okay. The programs I watched were satisfying. Just a little bit of the life I used to have. Satisfying enough to sleep without those depressing thoughts entering my head. I relax and give my day one last review as my eyelids become heavy. Outside is quiet and I feel sleep coming on. Yes! I feel good and relaxed now. Man! I don't want to die outside like this! I want to believe that it's going to be okay. God has a plan for me! But, as the last bit of consciousness leaves my mind I think to myself, "Where will I end up?" ■

**Howard County considers spending more to end homelessness: \$366,500 slated for housing and financial assistance, drug treatment**

[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-04-29/news/bs-homeless-funding-20120426\\_1\\_end-homelessness-fight-homelessness-homeless-families](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-04-29/news/bs-homeless-funding-20120426_1_end-homelessness-fight-homelessness-homeless-families)

**Singer Willis Earl Beal, once homeless, not surprised he's on road to cult stardom**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/singer-willis-earl-beal-once-homeless-not-surprised-hes-on-road-to-cult-stardom/2012/04/19/gIQAGkaIVT\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/singer-willis-earl-beal-once-homeless-not-surprised-hes-on-road-to-cult-stardom/2012/04/19/gIQAGkaIVT_story.html)

**CLASSIFIEDS** Send ads to [homelessgazette@gmail.com](mailto:homelessgazette@gmail.com)

**Wanted:** Looking for an inexpensive, economical car. Contact Ava at the Day Center.

The Homeless Gazette meets Saturdays from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. We need your news, stories, poems, art, photographs, ideas and suggestions. Drop off in the submissions box at the Rt. 1 Day Center, email to [homelessgazette@gmail.com](mailto:homelessgazette@gmail.com), or see Ava, Gary, Jerry, Joe D., Mary or Sherri.

To subscribe go to: <http://rt1daycenter.wikispaces.com/thg> and click "Subscribe Now!"

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To make a contribution to offset printing costs see Ava or Mary at the Rt. 1 Day Center.

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Special thanks to Randy C.

Greater Howard County  
**CROP Walk for Hunger!**  
Portions of proceeds benefit Route 1 Day Center  
**Sunday, May 20, 2 pm**



Oakland Mills Interfaith Center  
5885 Robert Oliver Place  
Columbia, MD  
Online registration: [www.cropwalk.org](http://www.cropwalk.org)