

ELSEWHERE**Video shows California officer beating homeless man**

A video taken by a bystander on Feb. 9 shows a Fresno, Calif. police officer repeatedly punching a homeless man in the face while another officer holds the man on the ground. The man, 52-year-old Glen Beaty, was treated in the hospital before being released, according to an Associated Press report.

The police officers' report says they were called to check up on Beaty because he was lying under a tree, intoxicated. They say that before the recording began, Beaty resisted questioning, hit one of the officers in the arm and ripped the badge off his shirt.

In the video, the officers can be seen wrestling Beaty to the ground. As Beaty lies on his side and an officer holds his arms, the other officer stands over his head and punches him four times.

The Fresno Police Department has not released the names of the officers, but it has launched an investigation into whether the use of force was justified. They say Beaty has a history of fighting with law enforcement, and he was arrested this time on outstanding warrants from a 2004 case.

"Their excuses are disingenuous," Fresno homeless advocate Mike Rhodes told the AP. "They had him under control, and they were beating him."

See the video on our blog: www.streetroots.wordpress.org.

Parade of immigrants draws ire of lawmakers, rights groups

Arizona lawmakers and immigrant-rights groups are calling for a federal investigation into the actions of Phoenix Sheriff Joe Arpaio, whose immigration enforcement tactics they call a human-rights disaster.

The Phoenix sheriff is part of a federal immigration program that delegates enforcement to local agencies. He has staged highly publicized sweeps of Latino workers, which his critics say amount to racial profiling and harassment. Legal residents who are Latino have also been questioned and detained.

On Feb. 4, Arpaio marched a group of 200 men, in shackles and prison stripes, past a brigade of cameras to a tent city surrounded by an electric fence. National Day Labor Organizing Network called it "a spectacle evocative of some of the most horrific episodes of human history."

Arizona State Sen. Richard Miranda and other members of the state's Latino caucus want the Department of Justice to examine Arpaio's practices.



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A light in the dark

Living outdoors requires some nerve, and a few good friends

BY ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

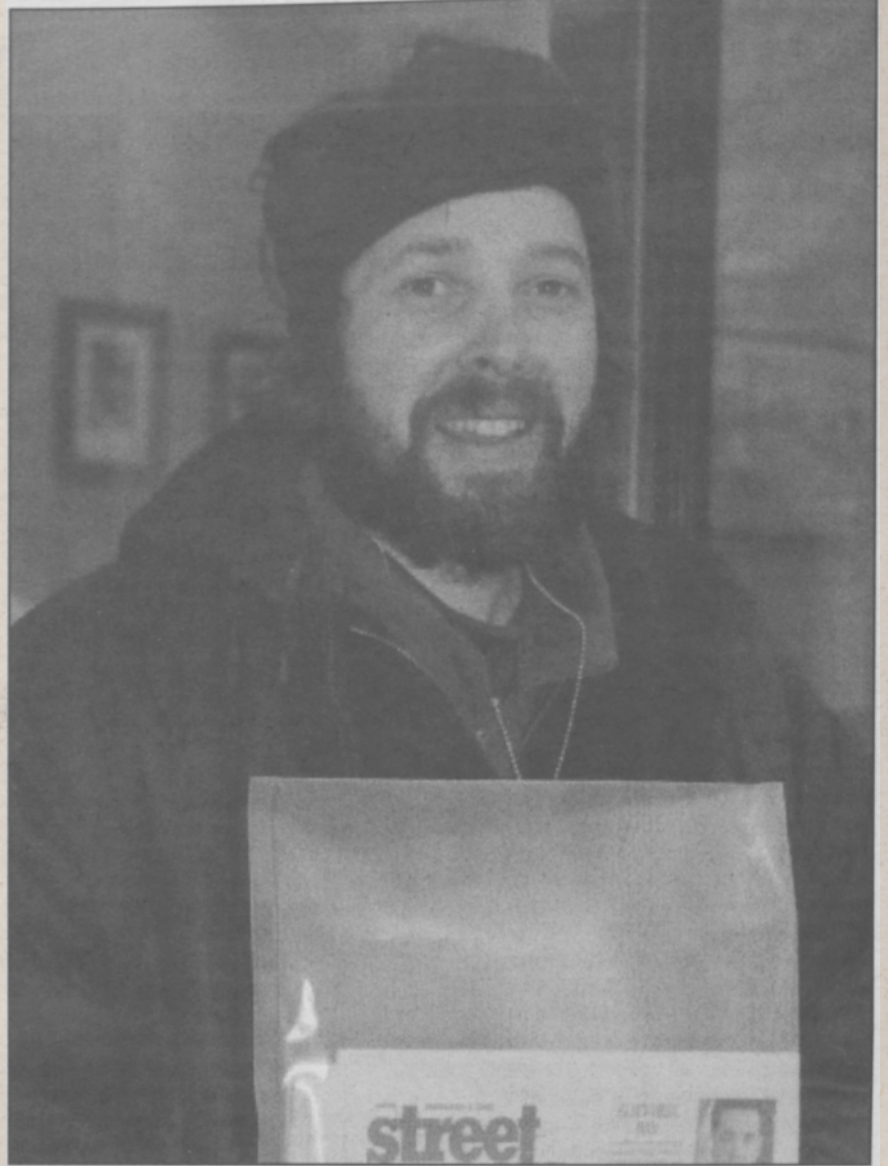
Gimel Gaiah has been selling Street Roots outside Borders on Southwest 3rd and Morrison for about two months. His customers are primarily MAX riders and Borders Books patrons. He also sells papers to a few people who work in a nearby office building. The bookstore treats Gimel well. They allow him to sell papers near their main door, use their bathroom, and sit and read books when he needs to get warm. Gimel also values the fact that the staff treat him with the same respect they offer other customers. In return, he buys a daily cup of coffee and refills from them.

"I love readers," the vendor told me. "Readers are different. They have a deeper ear to understanding, are open to listening and talking, and are more patient." Sometimes Borders patrons purchase a book on drawing and give it to Gimel after noticing him making pen and ink drawings in a little notebook. Others buy him snacks from the bookstore. One man brought him a large bag containing almost anything a homeless man might need: shoes, socks, a tent, and a sleeping bag.

Gimel told me that he does not just sell Street Roots for the money. "People are approaching my loneliness and bringing theirs. I'm not waiting here for the money from selling a paper. I'm waiting here for the people who approach me and give me human contact. The beauty of it is the variety."

Gimel says that often the first thing people ask him is, "Are you really homeless?" The vendor told me that he has found that homelessness is a "touchy" subject for people of all income brackets in Portland. They want to know where he lives, how he survives, and most of all how he keeps from going crazy. He suspects that those who want to know the details of his life and survival are somehow reassured by what he tells them. At my request, Gimel agreed to pass on to Street Roots readers the techniques he has learned from old-timers about how to maintain his sanity while living in the wilderness.

For Gimel, the single most important thing is having a candle to light at night. He had not had the money to purchase a candle the night before I interviewed him. "A candle and a match to light it at night make



Gimel at his sales post outside of Borders Bookstore in downtown Portland.

Photo by Elizabeth Schwartz

VENDOR PROFILE
Gimel Gaiah

the difference between acute loneliness and a sense of warm community when you live in the woods," he told me. I was deeply struck by the simplicity of this man's need. All he had wanted was a candle.

"How did you make it through the night last night? How did you deal with the loneliness?" I asked.

"I thought about Street Roots," he replied, and the wonderful ways that they help him feel part of a community and regain a small sense of self-respect.

Gimel said an old-timer who lives near him in the woods has helped him overcome his fear of darkness and the forest. Gimel has learned that if he is patient, his eyes adjust to the dark and he can see well enough to move around safely. "This is paradise, the Garden of Eden," the old-timer told Gimel. "Don't see it as dark and scary. See it as a place that takes care of you,

shelters you, and is calm." He also counseled Gimel to make friends with raccoons, who prey on mice and rats, Gimel said. Keeping his shelter clean also helps reduce the rodent population, which can be a serious problem for the homeless. The Street Roots vendor's shelter is currently under a tree, which is home to a family of three raccoons. He does not have much of a rat problem.

When not selling newspapers outside of Borders Bookstore, Gimel keeps busy drawing his pictures and collecting wood. He searches the forest for "old, burl-type pieces." He told me that it is like "finding jewels. They are dynamic, hard and do not rot." He uses the wood to decorate his shelter. He does not normally build a campfire, but the wood may have saved his life during the severe cold in December. The dry, dense wood burned hot and long, warming him.


At the end of our interview I bought a paper from Gimel, who said, "God bless you, and thank you for reading."



www.streetroots.wordpress.com

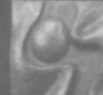
Heavenly Art

BY JULIE MARTIN



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