

## WHO'S RAKING THE MUCK?

An interview with Harper's editor Ken Silverstein on the state of investigative journalism

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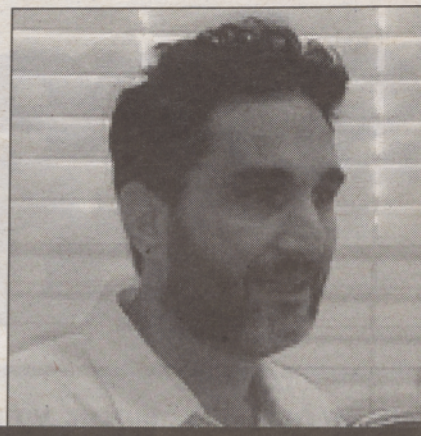


PHOTO BY KEN HAWKINS WWW.KENHAWKINS.COM

Patricia Schafer, with Caden in the foreground. The two, along with Caden's mom, Tiffany Shepard, have been living in a motel room to avoid homelessness, while waiting to get into stable housing.

# Motel limbo

*Some of Portland's motels hide a troubling side to homelessness*

BY REBECCA ROBINSON  
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The first thing you notice when you enter Tiffany Shepard and Patricia Schafer's motel room is the darkness, especially in contrast to the blindingly bright summer sunshine outside. The second is the fatigue on the women's faces, betraying the exhaustion that accompanies living in limbo with an 8-month-old child. Tiffany looks lovingly but wearily at the blanket-covered crib in the corner, where a soft rustling announces the end of her son Caden's nap and the beginning of nonstop infant supervision.

The fractured family's room off Sandy Boulevard in outer Northeast Portland is a temporary residence; neither Tiffany nor Patricia calls it a home.

"It's a roof over our heads," says Patricia. "That's it."

Homelessness takes many forms in Portland, but some are less visible than others. Tucked away behind closed doors off busy thoroughfares are the "hotel homeless," people who have lost their homes and are living week to week in motel rooms until they can find a permanent residence — or until their money runs out.

Tiffany, Caden and Patricia, who is five months pregnant, moved to Portland at the end of May when their housing situation in Salem fell apart. Tiffany hints at financial and interpersonal strife during a recent conversation, but when asked to

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## Loss of low-cost housing routing poor from downtown

*City maintains it is holding the line, even as a new report shows fewer options for the poorest*

BY AMANDA WALDROUPE  
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Affordable housing for Portland's poorest residents has declined significantly in the city center, even as more high-end housing increased.

According to the Central City Housing Inventory, released in July by the Portland Development Commission, the city center lost more than 22 percent of its lowest income housing options, but gained nearly 12 percent more in the number of units for higher incomes.

The result, according to those in the business of placing people in affordable housing, has been a shift of poverty from the central city area to outer parts of Portland and Multnomah County.

"Here in mid-county and in east county we are seeing an increasing number of people seeking low-cost affordable housing," says Jean DeMaster, executive director of Human Solutions. "And we believe part of it is the lack of housing in the central city areas and the decrease of housing in

the central city area."

The sources interviewed for this article all point toward a growing trend: the displacement of low-income people, who can no longer find affordable housing in the central city, to other parts of Portland and Multnomah County.

The increase of people looking for housing in eastern parts of Multnomah County has been happening for the last three or four years, DeMaster says, but Human Solutions saw a "marked" increase in the last six months, corresponding with the deepening of the recession.

The inventory, published every three years, monitors whether or not the city is adhering to its "No Net Loss" policy. Passed in 2001, the No Net Loss policy establishes that the same number of rental units available to people earning 60 percent of MFI or below in 2002 would remain the same through preservation or replacement. That number is 8,286.

The inventory says there are 15,601 total rental

units in the central city, an area defined as the downtown, the River District, Goose Hollow, University Place, the South Waterfront area, Central Eastside, the Lloyd District, and Lower Albina.

Affordability is categorized according to the median family income, or MFI, for which a unit is affordable. The federal Bureau of Housing and Urban Development sets the affordability standard that rent or mortgage consume no more than 30 percent of a household's monthly income.

In Oregon, the median family income is \$54,000 for a family of two. An individual earning zero to 30 percent of MFI — up to \$14,700 — is considered to be living in poverty. In that price range, the central city lost more than 22 percent of its housing units. The nearly 12 percent increase charted in the inventory came in housing affordable to people earning at least 120 percent MFI, or \$60,000 or above.

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