

“It was cold Sunday, all day. I know Jimmy well enough he went to see if he could get in the armory.... That’s what killed him. He had nowhere safe and warm to go.”

by Becky Johnson & Robert Norse

MORE HOMELESS DEATHS: NEGLECT AT DOMINICAN HOSPITAL

Patches died late this summer when she sought treatment for an infected arm four times at Dominican Hospital. Night after night she was turned away. On her fourth trip to the emergency ward she was admitted and scheduled for an amputation of her infected arm. Two days later — the day before surgery — she died. Her husband, Chico, claimed the Dominican Hospital kept turning her away because they were homeless and had no insurance.

On November 14, Linda Sipos was taken to the emergency room and suffered two seizures in the ambulance. The ER personnel were able to treat a third seizure she had in the ER ward. Yet Linda was released in a wheelchair in the rain later that evening when a blood test showed a trace of alcohol in her system. C.J., her common-law husband, begged the staff to admit her. “If she goes into another seizure, she may die,” he had pleaded.

“They told her to get a bus in the rain in a wheelchair,” C.J. cried, sobs catching in his throat. “I woke up the next morning (in their campsite) and she lay dead beside me.” C.J. is a well-known street musician in Santa Cruz who helped start the recent street performers union SAFE (Society for Artistic Freedom and Expression). “For the past five and a half years I woke up every morning with Linda and told her I loved her. I don’t know how I am going to

WHY CAN’T THESE KIDS COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS?

When Stephanie and Steven Johnson [they asked that their real names be withheld] arrived in their RV from Kentucky, they thought they were planning a better life for their four kids. They didn’t know how hard it would be to get housing in Santa Cruz, and wound up living in their RV much longer than they had anticipated. One day last April, social workers from Child Protective Services (CPS) showed up and took all their kids.

“They’d gotten an anonymous complaint that we were having sex in front of our kids and that I was smoking marijuana in front of my kids,” said Steve. “It wasn’t true, of course,” said Stephanie. No such charge was ever filed against the couple and no witness ever came forward to testify against them. But their children were not returned.

“CPS is trying desperately to find something to pin on this couple to justify the seizure,” said Roxanne Acquistapace, who founded an organization called “Independent Advocacy” to help people like Stephanie and Steve who are caught up in a system which divides and sometimes destroys families under the guise of protecting them.

During court-ordered counseling, Stephanie was asked to report intimate details of her sexual life with her husband, and was chastised when she failed to be forthcoming. The counselor also intimated that she should leave her husband.

Acquistapace was outraged. “They have no business pressuring people to make those kind of decisions with their lives, but then they are homeless and living in an RV,” she said. “They feel they have some kind of right to pass judgment on them.”



Food Not Bombs members are being harassed by Santa Cruz police.

Linda Lemaster