

# SistersVOICE

A Quarterly Newsletter of Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. 133 NW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97209

Volume 6, Issue 3: Fall, 2003

## *First Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival*

*By Monica Beemer*



*Mike Seeger*

Please Join us for the First Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival & Benefit, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003!

Please join us for a full weekend of fun! Sisters Of The Road Café's First Annual Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival & Benefit will be an entire weekend of music and fun, beginning Friday night, September 12<sup>th</sup> with a Hoedown and Auction on Alberta Street, continuing with a Family and Community

Focused Dance & Concert Saturday at the Crystal (\$0-\$20 sliding scale donation) and ending Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> with a free Bluegrass Gospel Show in the River District! Go to [www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org/bluegrass](http://www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org/bluegrass) to learn more about the Festival!

Tickets for Saturday Night Concert with Mike Seeger, Sam Hill and the Foghorn String Band are now on sale. To purchase tickets- go to any Ticket Master outlet, the Crystal Ballroom Box Office or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or charge by phone at 503-224-4400. Tickets are \$15 now or \$18 the day of the show - but are limited – so don't wait! The concert will take place Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at the Historic Crystal Ballroom - located at 1332 W. Burnside in Portland.

Nationally acclaimed and award winning Virginian Mike Seeger, is an amazing multi-instrumentalist and folk artist who's performed at The White House & Carnegie Hall. He has devoted his life to singing and

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### **Our Mission:**

*Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. exists to build authentic relationships and alleviate the hunger of isolation in an atmosphere of non-violence and gentle personalism that nurtures the whole individual toward changes that will reach the root of his or her homelessness and poverty and end it forever.*

*Enjoy a meal at Sisters Of The Road Café. The Café is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00pm. The last meal of the day is served at 2:45pm. Our administrative office is open 9:00am to 5:00pm.*

*E-mail us at: [info@sistersoftheroadcafe.org](mailto:info@sistersoftheroadcafe.org), call (503) 222-5694, or FAX (503) 222-3028 [www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org](http://www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org)*

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*"At Sisters Of The Road Café, there are no strangers, just friends we've never met."*

## Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival

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playing Music from the True Vine - the home music made by American southerners before the media age. Music from True Vine grows out of hundreds of years of British traditions that blended in our country with equally ancient African traditions to produce songs and sounds which are unique to the United States. For the peoples of the rural South, their great variety of music, song, and story provided their Shakespeare, their dance music, their news, and the fabric of their daily lives. This music in time became the roots of today's country, bluegrass, and popular music and remains as ever, enduring and refreshing listening ([www.mikeseeger.info](http://www.mikeseeger.info)). Mike Seeger will be joined by Foghorn String Band and local Bluegrass dynamos Sam Hill for the Saturday night concert and bluegrass/old time event of the year!

Buy your tickets today for the Saturday Night, September 13<sup>th</sup>, Bluegrass & Old Time Concert at the Crystal Ballroom and support a great, community building organization!

***Many thanks to our generous Sponsors: N.W. Natural Gas, Rejuvenation, Standard Insurance Company, InFocus, and Stoll, Stoll, Berne, Lokting and Schlachter Law Firm and A+M Creative, HGW, Inc. & Providence Health Systems, Everett Street Auto, Debbie Thomas Realty, and Progressive Investment Management.***

*We are too often trying to be heroic instead of just ordinarily good and kind.*

*- Dorothy Day*

## *Schedule of Festival Events*

### *September 12th, 13th & 14th*

#### **Friday, Sept. 12th, 6:00– 11:00 pm**

***Hoe-down, Square Dance and Silent Auction*** at The Acadian Ballroom, 1829 NE Alberta \$45 tickets; tables of 10 for \$400 Come revel in the music of *Dylan-Thomas Vance & David Lipkind*, the *Foghorn String Band* with *Bill Martin* and introducing, from Nashville, *Uncle Earl!* Enjoy outstanding Hors d'Oeuvres – and an auction featuring a brand new Vespa scooter, cooking classes and dinner parties prepared for you in your own home! Call Monica @ 503-222-5694 ext. 19 for tickets – only 200 are available!

#### **Saturday, Sept. 13th, 1:00– 6:00 pm**

***Bluegrass & Old Time Concert and Square Dance*** The Crystal Ballroom, 1332 W. Burnside Sliding Scale \$0 - \$20 donation. Proceeds will benefit *crossroads*, a people's organization.

Join us Saturday for more fun with the *Flat Mountain Girls*, *Train 145*, *Bill Martin* and the *Foghorn String Band* and a family focused square dance instruction and good time!

#### **Saturday, Sept. 13th, 1:00– 6:00 pm**

***Jam session*** Lola's Room at the Crystal Ballroom. Jam session for all musically interested (Lola's room is 21 & older only) Bring your instrument and or voice.

#### **Saturday Night, 7:30 pm– 12:00 pm**

**Rejuvenation presents... *A Concert with Nationally Acclaimed Old Time Music Artist Mike Seeger, and a toe-tappin great time with Sam Hill and the Foghorn String Band.*** The Crystal Ballroom. Tickets are \$15.00 now and \$18 the day of the show and are available through Ticket Master and at the Crystal Ballroom box office. ***Come help us fill the house!***

#### **Sunday, Sept. 14th, 11:30-4:00pm**

***Sunday Gospel Music in the River District***  
FREE Bluegrass Gospel Show in the River District, Co-hosted By the Zimmerman Community Center, Ecotrust Building Terrace, 721 NW 9<sup>th</sup>  
Featuring: Sweet Fern, Flat Mountain Girls and more!

# Community Organizing Project Update

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by Keith Vann, *crossroads* member

This past June, **crossroads**, a community organizing project of Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc., staged a very successful direct action – a sleeping bag giveaway to homeless people right in front of City Hall.



Keith Vann

On June 25<sup>th</sup> between 8:40 and 9:00am in the east patio of Portland's City Hall, **crossroads** and **street roots** gave away over 130 sleeping bags in protest of the city's anti-camping ordinance. At the end of the giveaway, we invited over 60 homeless people, many with the sleeping bags we'd just given them, to fill the city council chambers. This made a powerful statement to Mayor Katz and the city commissioners that we can and will mobilize the homeless to induce change in the city's response to people forced to live on the streets.

Because there are insufficient shelters and a severe shortage of low-income housing in Portland, at least 1571 people are forced to sleep on the streets, in open areas, and under bridges. This number was taken from the latest homeless count performed in April, and is widely believed to be a very conservative estimate of the actual number of homeless individuals in the area.

The mere presence of these people on the street violates the city's anti-camping and trespass laws.

Thus, the simple and necessary act of sleeping becomes a crime for one of the most vulnerable segments of our population.

**crossroads**, along with **street roots**, as co-founders of the Right To Sleep campaign, have repeatedly and publicly demonstrated our outrage at this intolerable state of affairs. The Right To Sleep campaign has pledged to actively mobilize the community and stage actions around this issue until the city desists its inhumane policy of criminalizing the homeless.

Right To Sleep was launched in response to widespread incidents of police harassment and senseless ticketing of homeless people trying to get a decent night's sleep outside. The immediate objective of this Portland-wide campaign is to grant individuals and families currently without shelter, and who have no other option, the freedom to sleep outside peacefully and safely without undue disruption from police or other public safety officials. The campaign's long-term goal is the suspension of Portland's infamous Anti-Camping Ordinance (city code 14A.50.020) until sufficient housing has been provided for the well over 1570 local homeless men, women, teens, and children forced to sleep outside.

Recently, **crossroads** and **street roots** completed a very successful meeting with Portland City Council member and Public Works Commissioner, Eric Sten. This meeting took place on Wednesday, July 30 in Eric Sten's office at City Hall. This meeting was called at the bequest of Commissioner Sten in response to our highly successful sleeping bag giveaway.

**crossroads** and **street roots** achieved all the key objectives that we had targeted prior to the meeting. Commissioner Sten stated that he was happy to work with the Right To Sleep campaign for immediate short-term solutions to the problems that homeless people face sleeping on the street. He further stated that he was both eager and willing to establish an ongoing work relationship with **crossroads** to develop near- and long-term solutions within the framework of Portland's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

## Other News

On August 1, **crossroads** completed its strategic planning process for the 12-month period ending on July 31, 2004. Steel Fixler, co-director of Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc., graciously contributed her time and expertise to facilitate this invaluable process.

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## *crossroads*

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More than a dozen persons, representing **crossroads**, **street roots**, Sisters Of The Road Café, and Dignity Village, attended this critical structural event. The newly created strategic plan clearly identifies our key objectives, priorities, projects, activities, and events for the coming year.

The Research Component of the Community Organizing Project continues its interviews with men and women who have experienced homelessness in the City of Portland. To date, over 475 interviews have been completed. We are well on target to completing all 600 interviews by January 2004.

### **Background**

**crossroads** began in March 2002 as a dialogue with individuals who were or who had been homeless. These people were encouraged to share their perceptions of the causes of and solutions to homelessness. Their personal accounts of the emotional and societal consequences of homelessness were especially poignant. The stories of their successes and difficulties in accessing services, and their recommendations for changes in the delivery and availability of those services proved invaluable.

The information gathered from these conversations was seen as vital to Portland's overall civic and social planning. Those early participants were invited to create a people's organization as a potent vehicle through which to pursue their recommendations for change.

### **About Us**

**crossroads** engages in community organizing that leads to systemic change for our key constituents - people with experience of homelessness, and those at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Systemic change is change that goes to the root of a problem, addressing its causes instead of treating its symptoms.

We use a community organizing model to:

1. Realize authentic, immediate, and concrete improvements in our lives and communities;
2. Experience a genuine sense of control over our choices and challenges;
3. Build relationships with our perceived opponents, and ultimately co-create with them;
4. Grow viable organizations that are inclusive and action-oriented

Our activities include: education forums, street theater, communication with key decision-makers, participation in relevant city and regional proposals, building and maintaining strategic alliances, and, most importantly, direct actions. Direct actions intimately involve and empower an organization's key constituents to foment systemic change.

Our action meetings take place at the **crossroads** office at 618 NW Davis Street in Portland every Tuesday from 11am to 1pm. These popular meetings are widely attended by a broad cross-section of the local Portland community. Our welcome gatherings take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of each month at Sisters of the Road Café. So please feel free to join us. Meet old friends and make new ones. Join the struggle to end homelessness.

## *Sisters Five Year Plan*

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*by Steel Fixler*

Sisters Of The Road Café was the brainchild of the men and women who were 1970's residents of Old Town/Chinatown. Genny Nelson and Sandy Gooch were the Architects.

Genny and Sandy not only worked in what was then called the Burnside Neighborhood, they were invited into the heart of the neighborhood by the people that were experiencing homelessness and poverty.

Early on Genny and Sandy had to make a difficult decision. "Do we organize the community to make changes that will impact their lives or do we respond to the immediate needs, like food and information, that will improve people's quality of life?" At the request of our community, Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. was created to do many things, including to address immediate needs. Once established, Sisters began to organize the community to win victories that would change the relations of power and create real systemic change to end hunger and poverty in our community through. All of this is done through the filters of non-violence and gentle personalism - offering dignity to every single person.

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## **Sisters Five Year Plan**

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On first glance Sisters Of The Road Café, appears to be a little restaurant serving people with little or no incomes. But a closer look reveals that what we really are is a “Change” organization working to build relationships with our community and support them in advocating for themselves and for social and personal change that will end their homelessness.

In February 2003 SORC completed a five year planning process and new Strategic Goals for 2003-2007. These goals reflect the opportunity for us to return to our roots and put new resources into the organizing/systemic change arena that has been on the back burner for nearly 25 years but is our expertise and our driving force.

**GOAL:** Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. will move from a scarcity of financial resources to an abundance of financial resources.

**GOAL:** Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. will be recognized locally and nationally as an innovative leader and expert in addressing the root causes of poverty and homelessness.

**GOAL:** Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc. will move from a direct service organization to a systemic change organization.

SORC will have accomplished these goals when the following are true/completed:

- By 2005 we will have 3 months operating reserve that will be sustained through 2008.
- All hourly workers are receiving a livable wage
- The research project findings are published and marketed
- SORC’s dollars allocated to systemic change equal/exceed those allocated to direct service.
- The policy making leadership is primarily composed of men and women who have experienced homelessness and poverty.

Thank you for being a part of our community and supporting the work we do at Sisters to end poverty and homelessness on a systemic level through community organizing, non-violence and gentle personalism.

## ***Crossroads and the Right to Sleep Campaign***

*By Bruce Anderson, Board & crossroads member*

### **The problem with sleeping -**

Because there are insufficient shelters, transitional, and low incoming housing in Portland, at least 1571 people were sleeping on Portland’s streets this April. People without shelter and housing options have no choice but to sleep outside. The problem is this violates the city’s anti-camping and trespass laws. Consequently, sleeping becomes a crime for one of the most vulnerable segment of our population. And for crossroads this cannot stand.

Unfortunately, our laws are based on incorrect assumptions, so instead of helping they make the whole issue of homelessness worse. For instance, public dollars, time, and energy are used to push homeless people from area to area, attempting to make people experiencing homelessness invisible and punish them for making the “poor” choices that led to their homelessness. This assumption about “poor choices” skips past the facts of unemployment, low wages and high rents. Then, when homeless people are caught sleeping, their situation is prolonged by a downward cycle of tickets and fines received for illegal camping or trespassing. This too frequently leads to criminal records that make it much harder to find employment or housing.

### **Laws that target the poor-**

Citizens with private property or money to buy space (to sleep, sit and just be) are exempt from this law and middle class reasons for violating the anti-camping ordinance (i.e. camping in ticket lines, for the Rose Parade, or for Crispy Cream Doughnuts.) are not defined as illegal. People who have no choice but to sleep and live outside are the object of this law. We have documented that police, park personnel and Clean and Safe officers specifically go to areas homeless people are likely to sleep to enforce the ordinances.

### **Degrading violations of human rights-**

When resources are overburdened and underfunded, as in Portland, the only place for homeless men, women, and children is on public property. Anti-camping, trespassing and sit-lie laws prevent people who cannot afford private space from having anyplace

*Continued on page seven, column two.*

# ***Sisters*** ***Announcements***

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## **Sisters Kicks Off Our Celebration of Our 25<sup>th</sup> Year of Building Community**

November 2003 through November 2004 will be Sisters 25<sup>th</sup> year of service, systemic change and community organizing – and we are going to celebrate! Please join us for a kick-off celebration from 5:00 – 9:00 pm at Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center– 1819 NW Everett to celebrate the history and work and community of sisters. You are a vital part of Sisters– so please join us. We would like to celebrate you, our community as well and say thanks for making Sisters what it is today.

## **Sisters will be highlighted in the Syracuse Cultural Workers 2004 Peace Calendars**

Sisters Of The Road Café will be highlighted in the 2004 Syracuse Cultural Workers 2004 Peace Calendars available through their web site: [www.syculturalworkers.org](http://www.syculturalworkers.org) or by calling 877-265-5399. The Peace Calendar is 33 years-old and is distributed across the nation to celebrate inspirational efforts toward non-violence and justice in the world. Sisters will be highlighted in April. Individual calendars are \$12.95 each.

## **Thanks to all who helped set the Guinness World's Record for the World's Largest Guitar Jam!**

Thanks to the over 500 guitarists and countless supporters singing “This Land is Your Land” who came out on a very hot and sunny day to set a Guinness World Record and be a part of the World's Largest Guitar Band! We hope to set it again next year...if you would like to be involved in the planning or become a sponsor for the event contact Debbie Fox at 503—222-5694 ext 15. See you at the jam next year!

## **We are proud to present crossroads very own website!**

Now available at <http://www.crossroadspdx.org>/ Go to the website to learn about all the exciting work of *crossroads*!

## **Speakers Bureau Training**

Would you like to be on Sisters Speakers Bureau? Then come to the Speakers Bureau Training September 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 8:00 pm in the Café. Come learn more about Sisters and spread the good works of Sisters in the community. Time Commitment = 3 gigs a year – either tabling and/or public speaking.

## **Special Thanks!**

Thanks to all who have supported Sisters over the last few months with your time, energy, financial support and/or hygiene supply drives. We couldn't do it without you!

## **Emanon Café to Benefit Sisters!**

Sheila Scott, proprietor of Emanon Café, has offered to donate a portion of sales of food and beverage to Sisters Of The Road Café all day Saturday, September 13th! Sheila is the restaurant owner who purchased Boxcar Bertha's from Sisters Of The Road Café and has made Emanon a delicious and welcoming stop for all!

Emanon hours are 8am to Midnight on Saturdays with breakfast served until 5:00 pm, dinner from 5:00 on and special happy hour menu prices from 3:00 to 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm to closing.

Saturday, September 13th is also the Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival - so stop by for a bite or a drink before, during or after the concert and dance! See the schedule of Festival events on page 2. Emanon will be celebrating their first anniversary on September 9th as well - so let's help Sheila celebrate! Thanks Sheila and Emanon Café!



*Guitars Up! Guinness World Record breaking world's largest guitar jam hams it up for Sisters.*

# ***WAYS to GIVE***

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## ***Planned Giving***

Planned Giving Brochure and Sisters' Planned Gift Policies and Guidelines are Now Available!

Did you know that you do not have to have a will to offer a planned gift to Sisters? There are many ways to give and we would love to help you consider all of the ways to meet both your families needs and your desires to participate through meaningful contributions to the community.

For a brochure and/or set of written guidelines/policies – please call Monica @ 503-222-5694 ext. 19. Thank you for your on-going support of and involvement in Sisters and for your consideration of a planned gift!

## ***Why Sustaining Membership?***

If the majority of our committed partners donated between 50 cents a day (\$15/mo) and \$1 a day (\$30/mo) the vital services of Sisters would be sustained on a day-to-day basis, regardless of the economy. It's Easy & Safe! \$30/month would pay cover yearly publishing costs for crossroads community organizing project monthly newsletter

If you are already a Sustaining Member—**THANK YOU!**

For more information, call Marilyn for a brochure at (503) 222-5694, ext. 12. or go to our website at [www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org](http://www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org). If you are ready to become a Sustaining Member—fill out the attached return envelope and return it to Sisters Of The Road Café. You will help sustain Sisters day-to-day. Thank you!

## ***Donate Safely On-Line***

You can donate securely to Sisters on-line. Just go to Sisters website at

[www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org](http://www.sistersoftheroadcafe.org) and click on *ways to give*. Then click on the *donate now through the network for good* button and directions will follow—you just need a credit card, debit card or bank account number to donate. It's SAFE & EASY

## ***Gifts of Stock***

Don't forget Stock Gifts. Stocks are a great way to donate to Sisters! Call Debbie Fox (503) 222-5694 ext 15 for more information.

## ***Combined Federal Campaign***

If you work for the federal government you can give to Sisters through the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)! The local campaign runs from September 15<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> with the campaign kick off event happening on September 11<sup>th</sup> at the Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt Building from 10 am-2pm.

If you would like someone from Sisters to come out for a presentation at your federal workplace call Debbie Fox at 503-222-5694 ext 15 and we will come to your workplace and tell you more about Sisters. For more information and to see the on-line searchable charity list go to [www.oregon.feb.gov/cfc.htm](http://www.oregon.feb.gov/cfc.htm). Sister four digit CFC code is 8230.

## ***Right to Sleep Campaign***

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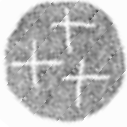
*Continued from page five.*

to sleep. It negates them as people. Active enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance includes police waking sleeping people and telling them to “move on”. This is degrading, humiliating and results in sleep deprivation. Perhaps even more significantly, the process of blaming homeless for their homelessness creates despair and feelings of worthlessness that are yet more barriers to overcome.

### **Nonviolent action-**

On June 25<sup>th</sup> (in conjunction with Street Roots) we hosted the Sleeping Bag Giveaway at City Hall. This led to a meeting with Erik Sten on July 30<sup>th</sup> to work together to find effective and respectful ways that allow people to do what is biologically unavoidable. We are committed to working in cooperation with all constituents. And what is unique about crossroads is that we take our lead from those who have, or have had, direct experience with homelessness and the enforcement of these of laws. One of our initiatives is to work within the city's planning process focusing on short-term solutions that can be implemented quickly through prototype models, trials, and pilot projects. We cannot wait for the community to build housing units to address these civil rights issues.

For more information or to get involved you can email Sisters Board member, Bruce Anderson, at [brucewa@hevanet.com](mailto:brucewa@hevanet.com) or come to an action-planning meeting on any Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the crossroads office.



Sisters Of The Road Café, Inc.  
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**Donation & Meal Coupon Order Form**

**Yes,**

I want to help Sisters work toward alleviating hunger and building supportive community in Old Town/Chinatown by making a donation.

\$10.00     \$25.00     \$50.00     \$100.00     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes,**

I want to respond to the needs of the growing number of homeless and hungry people in our community by purchasing and using Sisters Meal Coupons.

Send me \_\_\_\_\_ Meal Coupons.

(\$2 each; include \$.37 postage for 1-19 coupons and \$1.00 postage for 20-50 coupons.)

Please note change of address.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

My check is enclosed.     Please charge my VISA/Mastercard.

VISA/Mastercard No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us expand our mailing list. Pass on the name of a friend or relative who would like to learn more about Sisters.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Sisters Of the Road Café, Inc. 133 NW Sixth Avenue Portland, OR 97209 503.222.5694

**Thank you for your support of Sisters Of The Road Café!**