



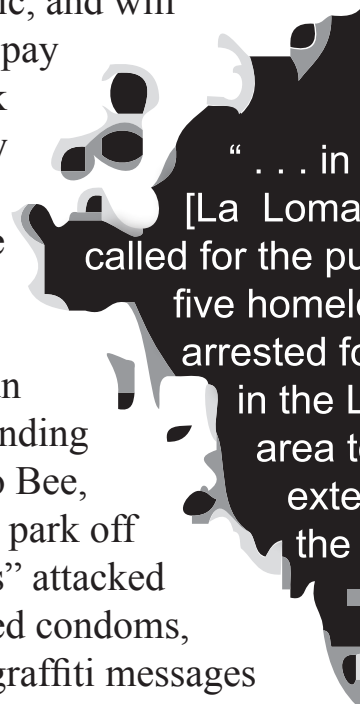
WHO RUNS DOWNTOWN?



WHO RUNS DOWNTOWN?

In the last month, the city council in Modesto ruled that the small downtown “Paper Boy Park,” is to be turned over to the McHenry Mansion. The park will become fenced off from the public, and will only be accessible to those willing to pay a fee. The idea to close off of the park was put forward to the city council by a committee that includes District 4 (La Loma, Airport) representative Joe Muratore. The committee claimed that the park has become a haven for the homeless who have made it run down, becoming a nuisance to surrounding businesses. According to the Modesto Bee, the day after the decision to fence the park off to the public, “Paint-wielding vandals” attacked the McHenry Mansion with paint filled condoms, broke surveillance cameras, and left graffiti messages that read “The Rich Can’t Keep Us Out” and “We Kill Yuppies.” Despite increased police patrols of the area, homeless and other people have not stopped using the park and the city has not yet made an attempt to shut it down and erect a fence.

The La Loma Association, an organization made up of residents and business leaders in the upper scale La Loma neighborhood in recent years has waged an ongoing battle against homeless people. Many homeless sleep in the Dry Creek area at night



“... in
[La Loma
called for the pu
five homele
arrested fo
in the L
area t
exte
the

and use La Loma Ave. to go between the Airport District (where the Gospel Mission is located) and the Downtown (where the Salvation Army and the Homeless Shelter is located). City Councilman

Joe Muratore is a member of the La Loma Association, and the organization has

pushed several anti-homeless initiatives

in recent years. These include an

ordinance in 2007 that criminalized

dumpsterdiving, making the “crime”

of digging through trash a misdemeanor

offense that could land one a \$500 fine

and up to six months in jail. In 2008, the

group pushed for the installation of

video surveillance cameras through-

out local parks in an effort to drive

out homeless people. Also in 2008, the

organization called for the punishing of

five homeless men arrested for sleeping in the

La Loma area to the “fullest extent of the law.”

In 2009, the La Loma Association also removed

bamboo located in the Dry Creek area in an effort

to aid law enforcement in stopping homeless squat-

ters who camp in the area.

It is of no surprise that people like Muratore and the La Loma Association President are also large movers and shakers in the Modesto business community and involved heavily in real estate deals in the local area. Muratore and his ilk profit from the removal of poor, homeless, and working class people

2008, the
Association]
punishing of
homeless men
for sleeping
in the La Loma
area to the ‘fullest
extent of
the law.’”

from the downtown. This is a process known as gentrification, which removes 'undesirable' elements and makes the downtown safe for business interests. Such a process is a threat to all broke, poor, and working people, as it pushes for higher rents for all of us. The government directs police powers and controls public space for the sake of upper class interests. This shows the current power structure to be exactly what it is: a system of violence that protects the divisions between the rich and poor.

**YOU CAN'T VOTE AGAINST
A YUPPIE TAKEOVER
ONLY DESTROY IT**



PRODUCED BY MODANARCHO.ORG