The History of The Homeless Grapevine

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ABSTRACT

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The History of The Homeless Grapevine  

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The Homeless Grapevine was a street newspaper that was written, produced, and distributed by homeless individuals in Cleveland, Ohio, and their advocates, from 1993 to 2009. The Homeless Grapevine sought to promote equal treatment and justice for the homeless of Cleveland through its grassroots reporting on the issues surrounding the marginalized population. Through a deep reading and oral history interviews with former Grapevine editors, writers, contributors, readers and vendors, this study is a historical look at The Grapevine’s sixteen years of production and the changes it made in individual lives as well as in awareness on a local, state and national level.
For Kevin and Ron

from streets of tar to streets of gold
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

From the most famous newspapers, such as the New York Times, to the small penny press publications, throughout history the goal of newspapers has been to make the public aware of happenings going on around them, to spread “the word.”¹

*The Homeless Grapevine* was an advocacy street paper that was published by the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless in Cleveland, Ohio, from 1993 to 2009. The publication covered news relating to the homeless and impoverished in the area and nationwide. It was the first street paper of its kind in Ohio since the early 1900s and was used as both a means of income for the homeless population and a tool for the advocacy of human rights.

*The Homeless Grapevine* sought to promote equal treatment and justice for the homeless of Cleveland through its grassroots reporting on the issues surrounding the marginalized population. It successfully provided an outlet for a usually unheard population’s voice. *The Grapevine* brought the opinions of the homeless on political and social issues to the forefront within their own publication and, through this, caught the attention of audiences both locally and nationwide. *The Homeless Grapevine* was also influential in starting three other street papers and was one of the founding papers in the North American Street Newspaper Association, an organization that bands together over

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forty street papers from across North America and Europe with the goal of promoting justice for the homeless.²

This study is a historical look at *The Grapevine*’s sixteen years of production. Through a deep reading and textual analysis of the eighty-seven issue population and through conducting oral history interviews with former *Grapevine* editors, writers, contributors, readers and vendors, this thesis tells a history of the life of the paper, from its meager photo-copied beginnings to the final issues that gained nationwide media attention.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY AND METHOD

The Homeless

More than three million people in the United States experience homelessness each year and even more are at risk of homelessness. The fundamental causes of homelessness include lack of affordable housing, cutbacks in social services, and reduction in government assistance to help those with lagging incomes. Millions of low-income households put more than 50 percent of their income toward rent, leaving them just one missed paycheck or medical emergency away from homelessness.3

Homelessness in America has gone through changes in cause and definition. Before the Industrial Revolution there simply was not enough shelter to go around. In the early nineteenth century, the influx of immigrants to America caused many people to be homeless at least temporarily. What Shields refers to as the third period of homelessness from the 1870s to the 1970s was defined largely by income and capitalist societal trends. As larger monetary gaps were created between the rich and the poor, the rise in price of living forced many onto the streets. The fourth wave of homelessness, which is still continuing, is uniquely characterized by the influx of women, children, and families on the streets due to a rise in economic inequality beginning in the 1980s and 90s."4

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Homelessness is described as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and has been around for centuries, but it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that the term was widely accepted. Before then, those who are now thought of as homeless were “vagabonds,” “drifters,” “hobos,” “hermits,” “gypsies,” and “rail-riders.” The issues related to the lives of these individuals first entered the public eye as a concern in the writings of journalist Jacob A. Riis. His 1890 book *How the Other Half Lives* described the ways in which impoverished people of New York survived. He covered homelessness from the young “street arabs,” (boys who sold newspapers) and “street urchins,” (people who lived on the city’s streets).  

Riis, who had lived on the streets himself for a time after immigrating to the United States from Denmark, brought to light the plight of the homeless in a sensory and tangible way. The reaction was almost instantaneous: public parks were established, better housing codes were developed, and churches began charities all over the city. Yet homelessness still existed, and soon the impoverished around the nation began to look for an outlet and information exchange concerning their own issues beyond what regular newspapers provided.

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6 Ibid., 268-80.
Historical Street Papers

Street papers began in the early 1900s as an alternative to larger city papers covering the local news. The street papers tended to focus solely on issues surrounding poverty and unemployment. Ohio had early, significant street papers. The International Brotherhood Welfare Association published *Hobo News* out of Cincinnati from the late 1910s through the early 1920s. The paper was geared largely toward traveling laborers who found themselves without stable housing. *Hobo News* provided information on labor organizing and unemployment as well as personal stories of the struggles and happenings of life as a hobo.⁷

Historical street papers disappeared at the end of the 1920s, with the onset of the Great Depression. But as the nation climbed out of impoverishment in the early 1940s, many Americans were left behind, unnoticed.⁸

Mainstream Media Coverage of Homelessness

In the 1980s, homelessness emerged again from the “margins of public awareness” as an important issue in the mainstream news. Until 1983, print stories on homelessness had been scattered under categories of vagrancy and housing.⁹ According to Shields,

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⁹ There is no concrete reason why 1983 was the year that marked this change in attitude and title from “vagrant” to “homeless” scholars such as Toro, Buck and Ramos suggest it may have to do with increased numbers and therefore visibility of the mentally ill population who had been deinstitutionalized through out the 1970s and thus became homeless. The increase in cocaine and drug use that characterized the 1980s could have also contributed.
“Homeless persons did not even become a classification in the New York Times Index until 1983 when the print media finally recognized the problem as a unique political development and homelessness finally became its own narrative classification.”\(^{10}\)

News coverage of homelessness rose dramatically in the early 1980s. The increase in reporting on homelessness in both print and television news could have been a result of the visible increase of homeless families and individuals because of changes in housing prices, poverty levels, massive income inequality, reductions in employment opportunities, and reductions in public benefit programs. Also, the recent closing of mental institutions and thus deinstitutionalization of thousands of patients in the preceding decades left many people who could not care for themselves or function properly in assisted living facilities, fending on the streets.\(^{11}\) Regardless of the causes, by the end of the decade, most major newspapers were printing, on average, one story about homelessness a day in each paper. However, even during the times that homelessness was in the media’s eye, it was not properly represented, according to social scientists and the homeless themselves.

Mainstream news coverage tended to depict the homeless as deviants reaffirming the boundaries society had created between “us” and “them.” Reports expressed that the

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homeless were invading parks and sidewalks and portrayed the homeless as a threat to the established order.\textsuperscript{12} According to Eunguin Min:

> To be marginal presumes an association with centralized power. But the peripheral condition of homeless is not even recognized by the group. . . .The modern homeless is literally no body because they do not appear in the collective memory of the group bureaucratic entity. They are invisible in the sense that no one cares or takes responsibility for them.\textsuperscript{13}

The media pushed audiences to view the homeless as “the other,” as “deviants” of society, and as a matter of fact not victims of an issue of social justice. The social forces and political inconsistencies responsible for homelessness were ignored in most news stories. Instead, the focus was on “do-gooders,” volunteers and organizations that aided the homeless.\textsuperscript{14}

These stories celebrated the individual volunteer efforts and the ideas of charity while allowing viewers to feel sorry for the homeless. In stories of this nature, temporary, or “band-aid,” services are seen as the effective solution for homelessness when in reality they are only meant to be transitory relief. But the lack of reporting on causes of homelessness and means of finding a long-term solution wasn’t the only issue with the media coverage of homelessness in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{15} In the stories, the voice of the homeless was rarely heard. When the homeless were interviewed on camera, their attributions


\textsuperscript{13} Eungjun Min, ed. \textit{Homelessness: The Other as Object. Reading the Homeless: The Media’s Image of Homeless Culture} (Town, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), 135-58.


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
further marginalized them. While other interviewees were featured with titles and full names, the homeless were traditionally referred to by first name only or street names, which dehumanized and identified the homeless individual as inferior to the others in the story.\textsuperscript{16}

The demographics of the homeless population were also misrepresented. The 1980s was characterized by the largest rise in family, children, and single mothers becoming homeless. At the time about 55 percent of the homeless population in Chicago, New York, and Kansas City were homeless families.\textsuperscript{17} However, when reported in the news, both print and broadcast stories portrayed the majority of the population as mentally ill men and veterans. The rise of homelessness in families, children and women was seldom mentioned, providing a sympathetic yet incorrect picture of homeless demographics.

Even the times of year that the news reports took place were misrepresentative of the population. A substantial part of news coverage of the homeless took place during the North American winter months coinciding with the holiday season. The amount of volunteerism and service provisions increase drastically during the holidays, providing for easy news stories, but this also implies the message that “being homeless is difficult during the cold weather, but otherwise unworthy of media attention.”\textsuperscript{18} During the rest of the year most news stories featuring homelessness show acts of violence or crimes. It is

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 214.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 202.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 201.
very rare that stories about the economy, government policy, or housing are related to the issues of homelessness at all.\textsuperscript{19}

By the 1990s, news coverage of homelessness started to dwindle. The diminishing interest is thought by scholars to be the result of multiple factors.\textsuperscript{20} Anti-vagrancy laws and pressure from various social groups forced homeless persons to become less visible in public areas. This decreased their public presence and in turn the broader community’s public consciousness of the issue.\textsuperscript{21} Many blamed it on the lack of caring from the public, however public polls showed otherwise. In their 2004 study, Buck et al. stated, “There is no evidence of the ‘compassion fatigue’ that the media have suggested began in the 1990s among the public. . . . it is the media that has experienced the fatigue.”\textsuperscript{22}

The lack of change in status, development, and solution in stories regarding homelessness removed the topic from the forefront of the media. In order to bring the issues of the marginalized population back into the public eye, old traditions were revived with the spawning of modern-day street papers.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 216.


\textsuperscript{21} Torck “Voices of Homeless People in Street Newspapers,” 371.

\textsuperscript{22} Buck, Toro, Ramos, “Media and Professional Interest in Homelessness” 151-71.
Modern Street Papers

As press coverage of the homeless began to wane, modern-day street papers began popping up to take a closer look at the issues of poverty of the day. Modern street newspapers are committed to the mission of providing homeless individuals with an opportunity to express themselves as active members of society. Street newspapers put a human face on the issue of homelessness by giving readers the direct voices and opinions of the homeless, somewhat filtered through editors and publishers.23

Throughout North America and parts of Europe, street newspapers are written and produced by homeless individuals and their advocates. Most papers are distributed through the street vendor programs. Homeless vendors are trained and licensed with official vendor badges by the specific paper and/or umbrella organization the produces the paper to act as independent contractors for the papers, and they typically make 50 to 75 cents on the dollar for each sale.24 The vending system was designed to build economic self-sufficiency and the self-esteem of its members.25 Produced and run by non-profit organizations, the papers are funded through homeless coalitions or outreach organizations for start-up costs and continued based on sales of the paper. According to Dodge:

With names like Real Change, StreetWise and the Homeless Grapevine, they cover topics rarely given much space in the corporate press, and their viewpoint is often entirely different. For example most street papers list

24 See Appendix: Street Vendor Contract, page 89
25 Ibid., 60.
free-meal sites, legal services, and shelters. Some report on weather as it affects homeless people, provide profiles of street musicians and review cheap places to eat.  

Street papers around the nation vary in style, length, distribution size, and topics covered. *StreetWise*, the street paper based in Chicago, is a weekly publication with a distribution of 60,000. Papers in cities such as Charlotte, North Carolina, and Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio, have a smaller distribution and are published less frequently.  

The varying editorial styles of street papers is a sensitive topic in the discussion of such papers. Many paper producers believe that the papers should remain grassroots-oriented and publish only stories about homelessness and the issues surrounding it. Others have taken another direction and have added entertainment sections and a few scattered stories written by the homeless.  

Funding is a general problem for street papers. Some papers are supported by selling advertising space and others are funded completely by nonprofit support. Many street papers have closed and others struggle because of lack of funding, problems with vendors, and competition with other non-profits over sustaining financial grants.  

The first successful, modern-day street paper was *Street News* in New York, which was founded in 1989. A mere four years later, *The Grapevine* blazed the trail in Ohio.

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26 Ibid., 61.
27 Ibid, 60.
28 Ibid.


Studies of The Grapevine

In 1996, Jean Taddie performed a critical analysis on the Homeless Grapevine. Taddie studied the dynamics of the special-interest newspaper within the mature movement to end homelessness. Taddie posed the questions: What type of challenge does The Grapevine pose to the dominant ideology, and what was the response from the elites?

To answer her questions, Taddie performed a “naturalistic” study involving a year of active participation on the staff of The Homeless Grapevine and in-depth interviews with those involved with the paper. Her findings stated that in challenging the dominant ideology The Grapevine sought to “combat stereotypes, help the homeless express their opinions, help homeless activists express their opinions and provide an income-making opportunity for homeless people.”

In doing this, the newspaper did not attempt to overthrow the dominant power structure, but rather to make things better for the homeless within the current system by targeting individuals as the “locus of change.” The response of the elites included both support and opposition. Opposition to content and distribution methods were expressed through avoidance and suppression.

In 2010, a scholar from Akron University, Eve Hjort, performed a rhetorical criticism of The Homeless Grapevine. She explored the themes and identities of homelessness portrayed in a sample of Grapevine issues from 2003 to 2009. Her focus

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30 Ibid.
was the voice within the newspaper. Hjort investigated how writers of The Homeless Grapevine raised awareness of their disempowerment within the broader community using rhetoric; how homeless writers expressed their needs and concerns and what appeals were made to the readers; how the homeless framed themselves in their writings; and how their writings portrayed their views of people within the broader community. She found that through exposing the “darkside” of treatment in the culture of homelessness, the homeless writers of The Grapevine attempted to raise awareness of their marginalization. Four themes stood out in the writings regarding the homeless authors’ disempowerment and/or attempts at equality. They were “Sources of Oppression, Establishing Identification, Perceptions of Self, and Perceptions of the Broader Community.”

The thematic self-portrayal of homeless individuals has been studied as have the challenges the paper posed to the dominant culture. Both of these studies were done on limited samples. Now that the paper has completed its run, a more complete history can be gathered. Taddie’s study was conducted only a few years into the paper’s life. In the years following her research, the paper made significant contributions to the target populations and took on much adversity.

This study expands on her research by getting the full story of the paper through some of the same individuals that she had interviewed years earlier and others who were

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related to the paper. The historical perspective will provide revealing findings on the perspectives of the paper.

Hjort’s study analyzed a small sample of articles from 2003 to 2009. She did not analyze poems included in the paper or articles written by advocates or volunteers. The study of the entire population over all sixteen years looks at these overlooked issues and articles to gain a more rounded perspective on the image of homelessness that *The Grapevine* presented. This study also includes a separate aspect that Hjort did not by conducting interviews with former writers.

Very few studies have been done on this interesting and surprisingly successful form of media, and this thesis shows through documenting a rounded account of the paper’s history that the medium is a legitimate entity for advocacy, news and social change.

**History of The Grapevine**

*The Grapevine* took root in 1991, as a photocopied newsletter created by Fred Maier, a graduate student at Kent State University, and a few tenants of Project:HEAT, a system of overnight shelters in Cleveland, Ohio. After problems with distribution arose and Maier’s eminent departure from the project because of graduation grew near, the group approached Bryan Gillooly, director of the Northeastern Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH), and asked the coalition to consider publishing the paper.\(^\text{32}\) It was in

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1993 when the full-length, sixteen-page tabloid-shaped paper appeared on the streets as a publication of NEOCH and an official voice for the homeless of Cleveland.

NEOCH is a coalition of service providers, housing activists, members, and homeless people that serves to “organize and empower homeless and at-risk men, women and children to break the cycle of poverty through public education, advocacy and the creation of nurturing environments.” Upon agreeing to publish the paper, the organization acted as the parent group of The Grapevine.

The Homeless Grapevine was written by homeless individuals, the formerly homeless, and people working with the homeless population. They produced articles, editorials, and poetry/prose pertaining to life on the streets. “We tried to make sure that the people who wrote had as much leeway in what they published as they needed,” said Brian Davis, former director of NEOCH and editor-in-chief of The Grapevine.

The policy allowed those who experienced homelessness more freedom in what was written in comparison with the typical newspaper that would impose structure on stories for the sake of journalistic convention. “[Writers] could use colloquialism. [They] could use slang. Just as long as [they] were getting the point across we would publish it,” said Davis.

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The paper also was distributed and promoted by the homeless. After an issue was printed, trained homeless vendors purchased issues for ten cents each and sold them for a recommended donation of $1. All proceeds were then kept as salary by the vendor.\footnote{“Welcome to the New Homeless Grapevine,” \textit{The Homeless Grapevine}, April 1, 1993.}

Readers of \textit{The Homeless Grapevine} were middle- or upper-class. They were the educated and well-paid patrons of the West Side Market and those who worked downtown from Public Square to East Ninth Street, where vendors typically sold the paper.\footnote{“1996 Homeless Grapevine Reader Survey Results,” \textit{The Homeless Grapevine}, November 1, 1996.}

Vending on the streets during high foot-traffic hours allowed the vendors to become a symbolic message, putting a face to the issues. As Green described in her research, street sales forced customers to come in “deliberate contact with the disenfranchised who moved from the periphery and into the limelight, if only momentarily.”\footnote{James Philip Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand, \textit{Print Culture in a Diverse America} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 34-55.}

Over time, \textit{The Grapevine} gained volunteer writers with experience in journalism and became more focused on news and activism/awareness as opposed to the fully opinion-driven and commentary-based first issues. One such volunteer was Davis, who started as a volunteer writer while studying journalism at Case Western Reserve University. \textit{The Grapevine} covered issues that were not typically found in other press outlets, such as horrible conditions in the homeless shelters, unreliable and illegitimate service organizations, and even injustices from the city. The goal of the paper, according
to Davis, was to “have a venue for homeless people to say what they want, to say what their issues are and trust them without censorship or without fear of reprisal [from law enforcement, shelter workers, etc.].”

**Method**

This study is a historical analysis of *The Grapevine*’s life through fifteen years of production, challenges, triumphs and ultimately its demise. Through studying the entire eighty-seven issue population of the original hardcopy papers, loaned to the author by Davis, and collecting oral-history interviews from former *Grapevine* editors, writers, contributors, readers and vendors, this study creates a “biography of the paper” from its birth as a stapled collection of photocopies to its national-news-making final issues.

Areas studied include the paper’s background information, content, adversity the paper faced, the influence that the paper had on the surrounding community and beyond, and major events that had an effect on the paper. The background information includes the need and purpose of the paper as well as the writing, production and distribution process, the audience, and the general structure of the paper. The content study takes a closer look at what was published in the paper from news on housing issues to editorials and poetry.

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39 Davis interview, February 4, 2012. Homeless individuals are often taken advantage of by people in positions of power due to their lack of voice. Examples are given throughout this study.

40 Archived articles also available on microfiche at the Cleveland Public Library and in hard copy at the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, Wisconsin. NEOCH is also in the process of archiving the issues online at www.neoch.org.
The adversity section focuses on *The Grapevine’s* legal battles and internal and external conflicts that threatened the paper throughout its run and eventually led to its closing.

Interviews were conducted with former editor in chief Davis, former writer, editor and researcher Taddie, Cleveland City Councilmember Joe Cimperman, and original founding member, writer, and vendor Angelo Anderson.

Davis began working with the paper in 1994 as a volunteer; he became editor in chief in 1996 and remained in the position until its end in 2009. Davis also acted as the director of NEOCH, the parent organization of *The Grapevine*, from 1996 to 2009. He currently acts as editor in chief of the *Cleveland Street Chronicle*, *The Grapevine’s* successor.

Taddie, now a Community Organizer for the Community Improvement Collaborative in Mansfield, Ohio, conducted her thesis research on *The Grapevine* in 1996. She worked on the paper as a volunteer writer, editor, and distribution manager during her yearlong research from 1996 to August 1997.

Councilmember Cimperman began reading and contributing to *The Grapevine* while working as an outreach worker at West Side Catholic Center. He was elected to City Council in the late 1990s and remained an avid reader of the paper. As an advocate for the homeless, a Cleveland native who grew up in poverty, and an elected official who was often written about and/or interviewed for the paper, his opinions contributed much to the research.
Anderson, a co-founder of the paper and currently a coordinator at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, was formerly homeless and worked with *The Grapevine* as a writer, vendor, and associate editor.

The information gained through interviews with those close to the paper was supplemented by a basic textual analysis of the paper as well as further investigation of certain issues and events found in the pages of *The Grapevine*, such as common issues and major events affecting the paper, the editors’ and reporters’ roles, the adversity the paper faced, and the paper’s effects on the community and beyond.
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The Story

*The Homeless Grapevine* began with a spark of interest. A drifter from New York stumbled into Cleveland toting the knowledge that would stimulate the minds and awaken the voices of members of the homeless community in Cleveland for years to come. Anderson, a giant of a man with a booming voice and friendly smile, recalls the interaction. “We ran across a guy from New York City who was selling the paper [*The Street News*] in New York and he told us about how they were doing it there and we thought it was a good idea and we decided we could try it here.”

Anderson and three others took the idea to heart and almost immediately began to put their words into print.

It was a way for us to generate funds, a way for us to not have to sleep on the sidewalk, or be a part of the shelter system, which at that time was pretty poor. We started out as one page. Me and three other guys would write our story of livin’ on the street and we would sell it for a dollar. We went to the library and typed up some stuff and got it printed -- paid for the printing over at Brother’s Print Shop, which is a little shop by Cleveland State. It cost about 25 cents a page to print. It took off from there.

An asset to the men came in the form of a graduate student from Kent State University. Fred Maier to gather articles and photocopy them more efficiently and at a

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42 Ibid.
lower cost for the authors/vendors. The partnership wanted to develop a work that would make a public statement that would not only allow Anderson and the other men to express themselves and their opinions but also earn money.

The paper, being simple photocopies, was easy to bootleg. Vendors found that others would make copies of single pages of their publications and sell them for higher prices. This hurt the credibility of the infant publication and the vendors’ already minimal income.

Another early problem faced was the closing of the temporary shelter where Maier, Anderson, and the others had met. Without a place to meet, problems with credibility, and Maier soon to graduate, the paper was suspended.

The recollection of the depth of Maier’s involvement of the paper is somewhat in doubt. An article in The Grapevine from its second year of publication describes a previous story where, in an interview with Anderson, he recalled:

A gentleman from Kent State, who came and hung out with us for two weeks writing his thesis . . . thought it was a good idea, what we were doing and he helped us to write a grant with NEOCH being the executor of the grant. We got a onetime grant to do a newspaper with the understanding that we had to stand on our own after that. I don't remember how much the grant was worth.43

No matter the extent of Maier’s time with The Grapevine the team asked Bryan Gillooly, former executive director for NEOCH, if the organization would sponsor the paper through a grant. Gillooly related in an article by Jean Taddie “The Grapevine

43 Ibid.
Empowers Cleveland’s Homeless,” “They [Gillooly and Maier] both came to me separately.... I’ll admit I was reluctant because I knew it wouldn’t pay for the time we had to put into it . . . but [I] decided, ‘What the heck, we’ll try it, There were a lot of hopes for what could happen if the vendors would work together—the political force.”

With that the paper was off and running. The first issue of the newsprint version of the newspaper came out in August 1993 under the title of *The New Homeless Grapevine*. The title was meant to both relate it and distinguish it from its photocopied predecessor. The paper looked a bit different being printed on newsprint by gracious donations from PM Graphics. Vendors at the time paid ten cents per issue. The then sold each issue for $1 and we’re able to keep the difference.

*The Grapevine* chose to view the vendors as independent contractors. They were selling *The Grapevine*’s product, but they were really working for themselves. By reselling the paper and keeping 90 cents per paper, the vendors were making an actual income. This allowed for *The Grapevine* to act as an agent of change in the lives of homeless individuals. Not only were they striving to publicize real portrayals of the plight of homelessness through first-person, second-person (meaning, they said “You” did this and “You” did that?) and investigative accounts, but they were also markedly working toward an individual avenue of change for each vendor.

The money earned by selling *The Grapevine* could be the difference between going hungry or affording a meal, riding public transportation or walking, and even sleeping outside, in a shelter, or having a place of one’s own.
But even with funding and plenty of vendors wanting to work, the paper faced its share of problems. Anderson said, “It was pretty much, I guess, like anything you try to get off the ground. There were some ups and downs. Some of the downs came from the fact that we were all homeless. We were all fighting addictions of some sort so we weren't always reliable even to each other and ourselves.44

Reliability proved too large of a challenge for many of the original members. Putting the work in to ensure a fresh product each time was difficult and in the end Anderson was the only one who remained involved. “The other vendors just walked away from it because they actually had to put in some work to produce a product so you don’t put out the same product over and over again,” said Anderson. “In the end I was the only one [of the three founding vendors] left standing.”45 The first three issues were produced almost completely by homeless individuals recounting their personal experiences. But by the production of the fourth issue, getting enough material and retaining members proved difficult.

Homeless or formerly homeless vendors were offered the incentive of free newspapers for writing or being interviewed for articles instead of having to buy them for the usual cost of 10 cents at the time. This meant an instant profit if they were able to sell the papers. Because the goal of the paper was to provide a voice and an outlet for those experiencing homelessness, preference was given to any article or poem that was

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
submitted regardless of the contribution’s relevance to the paper’s central theme.46 “It was effective to the degree that we got some new vendors and some of those vendors stuck with the program,” said Anderson, looking back.

Gillooly told Taddie, “Eventually we learned that some of the vendors didn’t want to write or simply couldn’t write.”47 NEOCH began to rely more on staff and outside volunteers for contributions. Volunteers consisted mainly of interested college students, but business men and women began to dedicate some of their free time to the publication as well.48

The paper continued to develop and transition, figuring out how to balance subject matter, staff, contributors, vendors, and adjust pricing and advertising to balance the budget. The first year of publication, the four issues were released. The first emerged in early summer and reached a length of eight pages. Eventually the paper became extended to a sixteen-page publication that was published roughly six times a year.

The Contents

The initiation of the paper, its vendors, and its writers were enough to distinguish The Grapevine from other news publications in the Cleveland, but as the saying goes, “It’s what’s on the inside that counts.”

48 Anderson interview.
The pages of *The Grapevine* contained poetry/prose and news articles written in the uncensored voice of some of Cleveland’s willing homeless individuals as well as hard-hitting policy pieces, interviews, commentary and editorials from homeless advocates, NEOCH staff, volunteers and Grapevine Readers. According to Cimperman:

The paper was unique in that they had the first person writers who knew what it meant to be homeless, who wrote about the pains and the hope they had and that they had the staff and writers who were policy oriented and focused on whether the government was helping or not. It was an interesting dichotomy. [It’s] rare that you have that blend of policy and personality.  

Cimperman, who was raised in Cleveland by his mother, a first-generation immigrant from Slovenia, began to read *The Grapevine* during its first year of publication. Before he was elected to City Council in 1997, Cimperman’s work with people living on the streets as well as his upbringing made him aware of policy problems that helped to maintain homelessness as an issue within the city. He became interested in the paper as a voice of reckoning for the individuals without homes in his city.

The “pains and hope” of homeless writers were portrayed mainly through poetry and prose. One such poem was that of Donald Whitehead, who submitted “You Could Be Me” to Issue No. 12 of *The Grapevine*.

The three-stanza poem touches on a range of emotions, from the first sentence, which comments on the “fear and dread” of “not knowing where the next place I’ll lay my head” to the lack of compassion and dehumanization he experiences from the “fat cats” and other people. The most telling line in the poem is, “My past is such a bitter pill

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49 Joe Cimperman, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, October 3, 2012.
to swallow, my past so dark/my future so hollow.” This line expresses his disbelief of his current situation and his lack of hope for getting out of it. He admits to making mistakes in his past, but also that he is human and that others could easily end up in the similar situations.50

Articles and commentaries by homeless or formerly homeless individuals ranged from relating their experiences as vendors to providing suggestions for the citizens of Cleveland. The Grapevine often took a cheerful, somewhat humorous and bright tone on some articles, such as Yvonne M. Lossow’s recommendation in Issue 52 for readers to check out the new graffiti artist brightening the walls of the RTA Red Line, a route on the rail section Cleveland’s regional transit system. Lossow describes the art as “alive with faces and expressions” and testifies that “the creatures portrayed seem to jump out of the concrete right into the train at you.” “Whoever you are,” she says, addressing the artist, “go to art school or something because you are good.”51

An interesting thing to note about The Grapevine was that homeless individuals’ articles and writings were not edited. The Grapevine made it a point to maintain its grassroots values of providing an outlet for the marginalized. This meant that anything, as long as it wasn’t too off the wall, was published. Authenticity was also a large concern for the paper. This meant spelling errors, slang, and choice of topics were left unchanged. If the author repeated a point multiple times in an article, it was left in. In most mainstream


newspapers editors have the right to change sentence structure, cut material and even change specific words from any writer’s materials. Within The Grapevine the editors chose to leave articles as submitted. The pieces written by homeless individuals were mainly poetry or prose, but occasionally the journalistic articles were also left alone or at least not edited carefully.

To the reader the spelling errors and repeated points may look like faults of the editors, discrediting the publication as a worthwhile read or serious form of media. It may reinforce stereotypes that homeless individuals are uneducated and sloppy and that even their news media forms follow suit. The editors chose to leave the mistakes to express the reality of the situation in that writing skills and formal education are often underdeveloped in those who become marginalized. Permitting the writers to write what they want and in their own style allows individuals to express themselves the way they are able and it also challenges the reader to think about the life of the homeless in new ways. It challenges the educated reader to connect with the sometimes uneducated writer on the level that the writer demands, as opposed to the typical paper that requires writers to cater to their audiences.

This decision by the editors of The Grapevine to have both uncensored and unedited voices in the publication raises important questions about the differences between journalistic and advocacy integrity.

Some studies of street newspapers refer to the common issue of giving homeless writers bylines. In most articles written by the homeless, individuals are bylined with
only their first names. Torck claims that this takes away from journalistic integrity and can even further marginalize the homeless writers by separating them from their fellow journalists or housed counterparts.\textsuperscript{52} However, it is important to understand the culture of both advocacy and street newspapers as well as the culture of homelessness.

In an essay by Daniele Torck comparing compared street newspapers from various parts of the world, Torck points out a cultural difference between dominant society and that of street culture:

In the world of homeless people, on the streets, first names are the rule. The use of family names is seen as a breach of privacy. This custom seems to apply also to articles about or by Homeless People in Street Newspapers, in a similar fashion to what can be observed in the media in reference to unemployed or poor people.\textsuperscript{53}

She notes that the use of full given names are usually reserved for the individuals who have passed away or are no longer homeless and have at least partially assimilated into mainstream society. Also in most street papers, pictures as well as some articles are published with complete anonymity or under the use of pseudonyms. She makes the claim that by maintaining the custom of anonymity, first names and street names only, the papers willingly “refuse [homeless people] the instrument that allows an individual to assert himself as a subject.”\textsuperscript{54}


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
However the vendors, writers and editors disagree with this statement. For various reasons people living on the streets tend to drop last names and pick up new identities such as “Jungle Lips” or “Worm.” This allows for a level of secrecy as well as protection. Because this is such an ingrained part of street culture and of individuals’ identities it is only right for publications to publish their writings, photos and poetry under the names they request. However, in many cases throughout the history of *The Grapevine*, individuals without homes or those who were formerly homeless did publish articles and sometimes poetry under their full legal names.

Where many may say it is marginalizing, rather it is simply not forcing individuals to assimilate to another culture, that of what the general population expects. This not only allows for freedom of expression for the writers to act within their identities and culture and express their opinions on their level but also allows for readers to better immerse themselves within this culture that they do not understand.

When mainstream media refer to homeless individuals by simply a street name, it often is constituted as marginalization because they are contrived as the other, as having a less important identity regardless of whether the subject requested to be called by simply his/her first name. The difference between *The Grapevine* and mainstream media is that *The Grapevine* was written from the perspective of homeless individuals and advocates who take special care to not show homeless as “the other” but rather to display the similarities between those who are unhoused and those who are.
In each issue there were approximately three pieces written by homeless or formerly homeless individuals. As mentioned above they were usually written as direct first-person accounts of events. According to Anderson, first-person narrative was the easiest and most effective way for homeless individuals to relay their experiences to the readership. But writers were not limited to one style or topic of writing. “I was active in some of the issues that surrounded homelessness so I wrote about some of those issues. I wrote about the struggle of actually living on the street and sometimes I just wrote about what I was feeling,” he said.

Poetry and articles written by homeless individuals vary in topics from describing the terrible treatments in shelters and on the street, to opinions about politicians, to issues faced in their past and dreams of the future. Personalities are what gave the topics new life each time. As Hjort expressed in her analysis of *The Grapevine*,

The voice of homeless individuals is not uniform. Many subcultures rest underneath the much larger culture of homelessness. There is a variation within and among homeless individuals and their experiences, beliefs, values, and attitudes. Homeless people are often seen as having one voice that only revolves around their hardships in life. The act of stereotyping leads to the broader community to distance themselves from the homeless community. It is important to note then, that each homeless individual provides a unique voice, and although there may be common themes found among those voices, they should be looked at individually first and foremost.

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56 Anderson interview, July 24, 2012.

One such unique voice was that of Donald Norman, whose article “The Plain Truth” in Issue 2 of The Grapevine shows his personality and major concerns through colorful language and narration.58 “Homeless,” he begins “—eeegh just the word leaves a bad taste in your mouth. . . . I not only stand accused, but am found guilty of being homeless (there’s that bad taste again).” He goes on to describe different types of homeless people, not shying away from stereotypes and describing what he refers to as the “permanently homeless” as “loud obnoxious, greedy and partially ignorant, living for today—and tomorrow another hit or another drink.” He then refers to “the homeless” as people who are “not really weak,” but lonely and “loneliness causes mental pain.” He warns how to tell the difference between the two. The article takes a turn at the end when Norman goes from sharing his views on those he shares a social status with to placing a personal add. “So ladies if you’re wondering where Mr. Right could be, or you’re not sitting on the pedestal you should be, look at one of the homeless, claim a prize from the lost and found, one man’s junk is another man’s treasure,” he writes. “I asked God to send me an angel and he hasn’t. Cleveland . . . will you?”59

Other voices unique to The Grapevine were those of Cleveland’s homeless children. The Grapevine strove to show that homelessness knows no boundaries and can affect anyone regardless of age, race, or background. Through their voices in the children’s sections that ran periodically throughout the paper’s history and their various features

59 Ibid.
regarding issues surrounding children, they offered an insight into the homeless population that is often overlooked. In Issue 5, *the Grapevine* worked with Project ACT, Action for Children and Youth in Transition, which provided tutoring and support services to youth in emergency shelters and transitional housing, to bring the children’s perspectives to light. The ranged from clever and sweet to heartbreaking. One fifth-grader wrote about a desire to be a president like Bill Clinton. “He is my model of success. He is the best president we’ve [sic] had since Richard Nixon.” The aspiring politician continued, “I really like Mr. Clinton alot [sic] I think he is a nice person.”60 Under the headline “I Wish,” another fifth-grader told about a more simple desire. “I would hurry up and grow up so I can move away from my brother’s and sister and Monte so he can get away from me. So I can get away from everybody in the world.”61

Not only did homeless and formerly homeless writers share their voices, they often told of happenings on the streets that they alone had exposure to, expressing not only their own plights, but those of their homeless neighbors. In the article “Two Weeks Old and On the Streets,” *Grapevine* distributor and writer Rita Ramos told of Lenore, a new mother she had encountered in line at the Halle Building where she was passing out sandwiches and milk.62 “It seemed obvious that whatever was inside that blanket was too small to be a baby. She got an extra milk and I decided to confront her,” Ramos said. “She opened the blanket and there was a two-week-old baby boy, one of the smallest

61 Ibid.
babies I’d ever seen.” Lenore justified taking the extra milk by telling Ramos, “I’ve got one can of formula left and I don’t get my check ‘til next week. My milk’s no good because I don’t eat right.” Ramos informed the reader that Lenore and her baby had been staying in a hotel, but would have to leave the next day because the hotel only accepted residents for a few weeks at a time. Ramos too had been a homeless mother, living in a car with her two children and eating out of the trash. She knew what it felt like and she wanted to help. Ramos tried to call the hotel on Lenore’s behalf and get an extension on her stay, but when she showed up at the hotel with a collection of clothes and formula the next day, she was informed that Lenore was not granted the extension and was gone. “I wonder where Lenore is with that tiny person wrapped in a blanket, I wonder what kind of chance he has for success. . . . I wonder if he’ll even live.”

The paper also included many editorial-, news- and policy-focused articles written by NEOCH staff and volunteers. Taddie, a graduate student studying communications at Cleveland State University, got involved with the paper by accident. Originally Taddie had planned on writing her thesis about NEOCH’s involvement with the Homeless Stand Down, a yearly event where volunteers, sponsoring businesses, and service providers come together to offer free hair cuts, health screenings, meals, and donations of clothing and hygiene items to those living on the streets. However, she had to find a new angle when NOECH’s involvement declined due to funding issues. She said, “Of course there


64 Ramos, “Two-Weeks-Old and On the Street.”
was a really great synergy between the paper and a communications grad so that was what drew me in and the fact that it was very much an attempt to empower folk that probably had the least political and social voice of anybody.”

Taddie began working at the paper shortly after NEOCH moved its offices to West 25th Street downtown. She tried to immerse herself as much as possible. She wanted to experience and participate as much of the story as she could. She began writing for the paper frequently, conducting subsequent research for other reports and helping with layout and editing.

Most of the articles Taddie and other volunteers were involved in related to what was happening within the local, regional, and national policymaking and how those decisions would affect those in Cleveland who lived on the brink of or in poverty. Housing, Social Security, health care, and welfare were common topics.

As in mainstream news entities, stories within *The Grapevine* were written in a variety of styles. Some were written in interview style, some are news articles including quotes from various sources involved with the topic. Sometimes the articles were written to show third-person accounts of a homeless person’s struggle with the issues, such as Taddie’s “The SSI Disability Blues.” The article tells a man’s personal story of struggling to make rent and maintain a life while suffering with the results of an injury.

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65 Taddie interview.
that destroyed a third of his brain. It also describes his disappointment with being denied Social Security payments for the third time.66

Voices of the homeless were not the only voices within The Grapevine. To maintain journalistic integrity, outside sources involved with issues were often included. In an article written by Davis in May 1998, Issue 27, about the issues with Managed Care cuts, shelter workers and care providers were interviewed about their experiences with homeless individuals who were discharged from the hospital and left to change wrappings and fight infections on the streets due to changes that were meant to prevent people from taking advantage of hospital resources unnecessarily.67

Gerald Hilinski, the nurse practitioner at CHCH, described Managed Care as a serious problem that forced shelters to provide health care to people with serious illnesses whom they were not equipped or trained to care for. He said that without the proper recovery time, people have a relapse and are back in the hospital or at the clinics operated by CHCH. He admitted there is also the possibility of developing an infection, which could lead to losing a body part or death. Hilinski summed it up by saying, “It is my belief that we are not saving any money (under managed care). We are paying twice, three times because they didn’t fix the condition in the first place.”68

It was a bit tricky for a newspaper that publishes only every few months to keep articles timely and to feature reactions to significant events. However, because it was

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68 Ibid.
such an uncommon alternative publication, the paper’s particular view and many of the issues it deemed important often went uncovered elsewhere. This allowed for *The Grapevine* to remain fresh and interesting to readers even though it was not exactly timely.

“Toxic Waste Stored in Neighborhoods” was the headline of an exposé article written by Davis in Issue 12. The article addressed the improper storage of hazardous waste under overpasses and on the sidewalks in Cleveland. Whereas the waste was deemed relatively harmless to the population in general, it became more of a concern for homeless individuals who lived in the area and were exposed more readily and frequently to the materials. The lead paint dust produced by sandblasting overpasses was removed from the sidewalks but remained under the bridge and in the abandoned buildings until the contractor of the blasting project had produced enough to make the pick up and proper disposal cost effective. Even though the area manager for Environmental Quality for Conrail, the company, which was responsible for the materials, ensured that the materials were not a major risk to the general public, he did admit that the situation “raises eyebrows.”

An editorial written by Davis headlined “Camelot Is Taken” recalled a story that intrigued the city in 2002. A group of people had been staying in a long-deserted bakery and had dubbed their space Camelot. During the summer of 2002, Mayor White ordered service organizers to get people out of the building because it was scheduled for

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demolition. Of course, the inhabitants of Camelot were not willing to leave their “homes” so easily. Eventually the police and the media became involved. The story Davis’ article offers a third-party account of the events after their completion, and his opinions of the city’s actions were scathing.

Over the three-page article, Davis used an extended metaphor of the inhabitants of Camelot as Knights of the Round Table, protecting their castle against destruction by the forces of the city and the evil mayor. Davis reminded the readers of the stories they had seen in the local news that portrayed the people of Camelot as they truly were, people fighting for their home. He reinforced positive imagery of the individuals who had set up a mini-neighborhood within the building complete with a garden and a makeshift shower and separate apartments. He also continued to picture the city officials as insensitive, uncaring, shady, and dangerous. He wrote of the irresponsible inspection of the property, the disregard for the known asbestos there, and the mayor’s ordering of demolition.70

Attention-grabbing editorials that both exposed mistakes and expressed staff opinions such as these made up a large part of The Grapevine’s copy over the years. Letters to the editor became more frequent as the paper grew, bringing in voices of the public into the medium.

In July 1999, The Grapevine had a heated exchange with the Cleveland Plain Dealer over commentaries published by the PD and specifically comments made by writer Beth Barber of the Plain Dealer. In a PD article published on June 13, entitled

“Tugging Heartstrings For the Homeless, Aimless and Clueless,” Barber referred to advocates’ explanations of the causes of homelessness and the quality of the shelter system as “boncumbe.” She criticized the efforts to improve shelter conditions and claimed it was all a ploy for “persuading the public to pour more resources . . . into coaxing the dysfunctional off the street.” She wrote “there should be no forgetting that self-determination played a role in reducing many of them [homeless individuals] to shelters.” She continued, “Sheltering the uncooperative, the belligerent, the drunk and the drugged is a hard, thankless job for whoever's in charge, a tourniquet on the bleedingest hearts. And to those who demand a bed, a shower, a john, a TV without reciprocal effort and minimal personal restraint, whoever's in charge will still have to say: Hit the road, Jack.”

In its next issue, The Grapevine published fourteen letters to the editor it received in response to Barber’s commentary. Many were letters of disapproval to the editor of the Plain Dealer for publishing Barber’s comments. From time to time, The Grapevine also featured articles and profiles of individuals who had marketable skills and were looking for work. This was in part to dispel the myth that people experiencing homelessness are unwilling to work and can be labeled as

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71 Chris Smekal and Dinah Blake, “Protesters Demand Better Treatment for Project HEAT” The Homeless Grapevine, July 1999.


“bums.” The articles also provided contact information for the individuals, giving readers the opportunity to change the situation by hiring the profiled people.74

Issue 5 featured four individual profiles on men living on the streets or in shelters who had skills that ranged from tractor-trailer driver, to route sales and elevator repair.

One such profile was that of Bob Matthews, a former shipping and receiving worker at Weldon Tool. “You think after 17 years you’re going to be spending your life doing the same thing, but the economy said no,” recalled Matthews in his interview by Connie Davis. Matthews did not adjust well to unemployment and he did not want to. “I’m the kind of person who loves to work hard,” he said. “That’s just the way I am.” Under Matthews’ profile his voicemail number was listed for individuals to call with opportunities.

The voicemail numbers listed in the profiles were part of an initiative set up by the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services that offered fifty voicemail boxes and free 800-number access to the homeless of Cleveland, people with no permanent address, no phone line, and few quarters to spare for pay phones a way to be contacted to help connect them with jobs, housing, and human services. The Grapevine helped to advertise this and other employment services to both potential employees and potential employers.

For instance, the article “DialAmerica Reaching Out to the Homeless,” related the story of Bonnie Hunt-Gallo, the employment coordinator at DialAmerica, who purchased

an issue of *The Grapevine* from a vendor and had the idea that homeless individuals could be useful telemarketers. "Being assertive, assumptive and persuasive, yet not overbearing," were qualities she listed as ideal for employees of DialAmerica, qualities she believed many people living on the streets most likely possessed. "I just thought perhaps there were some people that might have done sales work, got divorced, developed a drinking problem, but yet the strength of their personality is still there," said Gallo. Gallo presented information and employment opportunities at NEOCH membership and shelter provider meetings in order help people turn their luck around.

Another initiative covered closely for a period of time was the Labor Pool, a cooperative worker-run employment agency. Ernest Marshall and Bob Matthews were among the founders of the Labor Pool, which was a group of volunteers both homeless and not who worked to find jobs for the homeless. "We’ve got over 800 people on file here, 400 with resumes, some with bachelor and master’s degree," explained Marshall. "We’ve got carpenters, electricians, gardeners—you name it! If you’ve got a job that needs doing, we’ve got someone who can do it. All we’re asking for is a chance, an opportunity to become taxpayers again. We’re selling self-esteem and pride here."  

Outside employment opportunities were welcomed in the pages of *The Grapevine*, but it was also important for them to establish the vendors as legitimately employed. The article “Vendor Lands on Her Feet with Support of Grapevine” described Cathy Brown

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and her journey from homeless teen, to vendor, to life beyond the streets. Brown attributed her becoming homeless to “leaving her parents home at too early of an age and getting involved in difficult romantic relationships.” She also related the differences between homeless men and women. “It’s harder for a woman. A woman has more needs. . . . It’s not like being a man. He can lay his head down anywhere. A woman’s got to be more careful.” The article goes on to illustrate how Brown found respite from the streets by supplementing her disability check with wages earned from selling the Grapevine four times a week. Brown was able to turn her life around with a strong work ethic and the opportunity provided by the Grapevine. and she, like many vendors, continued to sell the paper to maintain income to help her with rent and also to stay connected with the homeless community and work towards preventing and beating homelessness in others lives.

Other contents of the paper included obituaries and memorials for individuals who had died. The issue of death related to homelessness took a good portion of copy space whether it was a tribute to individuals, who died while living on the streets or who had played a large role in the community, or informative articles about the process of funding funerals for those who have no family or means to pay for burial costs. The Grapevine paid particular interest to this topic because it was something that was not published

78 Ibid.
elsewhere. If *The Grapevine* did not take time to honor the deceased homeless, then no one would. Davis emphasized the importance of this recognition of the deceased:

> Because the population is often forgotten, we think it is very important to, at least, provide dignity when somebody passes, to talk about them and remember them. The memorial for the coalition is very important and we think that for documenting for history’s sake, that people were here and they passed away and that somebody, at least, remembered them, somebody, at least, talked about them is important if nothing else. If the paper gets archived then somebody can look back. We get at least one call a month about the people who pass away from people who didn’t know, like family members who had been looking for them.\(^{79}\)

Humorous ads and articles and commentary with sarcastic or joking undertones brought a refreshing break from the heavy topics regarding homelessness. For example the article “Grapevine Founder Terminated by Salvation Army Shelter” was featured as a local homeless news brief that mentioned Angelo Anderson’s dismissal from his position at the Salvation Army-run men’s shelter at 2100 Lakeside Avenue. Instead of disclosing the details of Anderson’s termination, the news brief related a rumor that Anderson would be joining up with longtime mayor and nemesis of *The Grapevine*, Michael R. White,\(^{80}\) to form a gardening club.\(^{81}\)

*The Grapevine* sold advertising, but the paper’s main source of funding was sales. In fact, the most notable and frequent advertisements in *The Grapevine* were house ads from *The Grapevine* encouraging readers to buy advertising. One such ad was a bit racy,

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\(^{79}\) Brian Davis, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, February 22, 2012.

\(^{80}\) Mayor Michael R. White served as Cleveland’s mayor from 1990 to 2002 and was featured frequently in the *Grapevine* for ordering multiple street sweeps and demolitions of homeless camps, as well as trying to force the requirement of paper vendors to purchase vendor’s licenses as a means of shutting down the *Grapevine*.

featuring an assumed flasher wearing a trench coat and the words “expose yourself.”

The paper caught a bit of flak for its humor from the readers, and the ad was removed from future layouts.

Advertising with *The Grapevine*, as is common with street newspapers, was a constant battle of ethics. According to scholar Kevin Howley:

More often street papers accept advertising revenue from local businesses, religious groups and social service organizations which support the paper’s efforts in providing an alternative to panhandling. The role of advertising in supporting street papers is hotly debated among street paper advocates. For some, advertising is anathema; for others advertising is part and parcel of running a newspaper. The issue gets far more complex when the question arises of what sort of advertising is deemed acceptable for a street newspaper.

Getting businesses to advertise was not easy, given the scope and audience of the paper. In occasional issues law firms, medical groups, and other non-profit/service organizations would advertise. In the late 1990s and 2000s as the staff grew in experience and fresh journalistic faces came in and out thanks to programs such as AmeriCorps and school internships, layouts changed and finding advertisers as a form of not only funding, but also community support and networking, became more of a focus. Frequent ads began to include coffee shops, events in the area, medical services, psychics, and more.


83 Davis interview, February 22, 2012.

However, the ads were not consistent and therefore not enough to sustain the paper as a concrete source of funding.85

The Poetry

Poetry within The Grapevine began appearing in the first issue. A poem by Lee “Doc” Jordan was featured in the middle of the front page. Jordan’s poem “Homeward Bound” described the feeling of a home where you can “remove your coat and shoes, where you find your mate and set your heart anew.” The poem ends with the lines, “[I]f you want to make me happy, say the words, homeward bound.”86 This haunting line and the four other poems published in the first issue of The Grapevine were the beginnings of the emotional expression from those on the streets.

From there the poetry took off. While many individuals living on the streets often felt burdened by the thought of researching, writing, and typing an entire article, submitting a poem seemed less daunting. The poem could be any length, it didn’t have to have correct sentence structure, and it was emotionally freeing for writers. It could be personal and did not have to relate to a particular topic. This allowed The Grapevine’s poetry to take on a life of its own. In 1998, a “Five Years of Poetry” issue was produced celebrating not only the fifth anniversary of the paper but the outlet and awareness that

85 Davis interview, February 22, 2012.
the poetry alone provided. Staff members picked their favorite poems from the first five years of production and reprinted them in one expressive issue.

Over the years many poets published works in The Grapevine, from children in shelters to Daniel Thompson, the poet laureate of Cuyahoga County. Thompson got involved with The Grapevine in 1995 as an advocate. He offered to publish in every issue in hopes of bringing more returning readers to the paper. Thompson also began using his poetry to raise funds for the paper in other ways. In 1998, he released a book and an audio CD that was used as a fundraiser for The Grapevine. In 2004, Thompson died after a two-year battle with leukemia. During his battle The Grapevine issued two special Thompson-only poetry editions featuring poems published during his nine years as a member of the Grapevine staff. Upon his death, Issue 71 served as an extended tribute to the fallen advocate who had challenged everything from homeless sweeps, discussed below, to the racist qualities of the mascot of the Cleveland Indians, the city’s major-league baseball franchise.

Poetry in The Grapevine ranged from personally descriptive to abstract and in its variety was often very powerful. For instance, early in the paper’s life, Patricia Baker wrote and contributed the poem, “I the Battered Woman – Speak . . .” in which she connects the reader to the realities of life on the run from domestic abuse.87 “You call the police they come to your house/ they play judge and jury then side with your spouse/ so you run to a shelter to get out of harms way/ only to be told its a thirty day stay.” Her

words convey the feeling of betrayal by the law enforcement who do not seem to be protecting her in her eyes.\textsuperscript{88} She also touches upon an issue that commonly faces both men and women in the shelter system, the length of stay. The desperation of the poet is apparent as she questions the logic behind turning out a person after a limited amount of time—one who has nowhere safe to go, nothing to call her own, and often times is still in danger. “Yes, I’m a battered woman whose \textit{sic} had to leave my home with not even a toothbrush to call my own, and what will I do when thirty days are up? Stand on a corner and pass a tin cup?”\textsuperscript{89}

The verses within \textit{The Grapevine} did more than describe the plights of the homeless. Often times poets used the medium to inspire others. The poems “Untitled” and “The Great Tre-a-Sure (A Map to the Road of Recovery)” and “Stories” featured in Issue 43, were examples of this.\textsuperscript{90} In “Untitled,” Elf wrote, “Without remembrance of our pain, our value of sober bliss is lost. Balance is never achieved without and equal. Remember silence is sweet, but only if there is peace within.\textsuperscript{91}” The last three lines of his/her poem seem to urge the reader to look on the bright side of things reminding, them that suffering has a purpose and the hard times in ones life make the balanced, blissful and silent times possible.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{The Homeless Grapevine}, July 2000.
Poet/author JSP’s “The Great Trea-Sure” shows a route to recovery employing physical directions, instructions to ask for life’s “open door” and words from scripture.92 “First go to VOA [Volunteers of America shelter], take 12 step; turn right. Take a Leap of Faith to the Tree of Knowledge, turn right, humbly ask for the open door, turn right.93” The repetition of the phrase “turn right” could be taken as literal directions or as an urging for the reader to change their lives, to “turn right” through repentance or a change of heart, mind and attitude. The author drives this idea further by quoting Matthew 12:35, “A good man out of good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.” 94

In “Stories” written by an anonymous contributor, a list of “ways to help” is conveyed to readers.95 The author answers those who wish to “help the homeless” with inspirational instructions that vary from the typical “volunteer at a shelter” response. The author urges readers to “Explore what community means to you,” ask themselves “If you were starving what would your priorities be?” and to “Be curious, not cynical.”96 “Use less resources,” “Laugh,” “Stretch yourself to be uncomfortable,” “Pray”—these and many other words of advice show that there are multiples ways in which people can help.97

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
The Vendors

The vending of the *Homeless Grapevine* was perhaps the most complex aspect of the newspaper. When NEOCH agreed to take on *The Grapevine* it was established that the vendors would have to be trained and sign a contract agreeing to abide by certain rules. After vendors went through a one-hour training session, where they learned recommended vendor strategies and the policies of NEOCH, new vendors signed the Street Vendor Contract. They then became a part of a monthly vendors meeting in which all vendors’ names were put into a hat and picked at random. At the meetings, the order of numbers called determined when vendors reserved the first-come, first-served vending spots on that month’s schedule. From the beginning, managing multiple independent contractors, especially contractors in such desperate need, proved difficult for *The Grapevine* staff.

Taddie recalled her experiences as distributor of the papers, meaning she sold the individual vendors the papers they would be selling for the following months:

Distribution of *The Grapevine* was probably, certainly, my most entertaining sessions because you would meet a lot of the vendors and they’re all sales people. Imagine a highly motivated salespeople trying to part me with some newspaper and they didn't have the dime or the dollar to put in it and saying “I'll pay you tomorrow.” I was like, “No, Dear, I'm not believing that. Take this dime, take this paper and come back to me with this dollar and I'll give you ten more,” type of thing. The realities of dealing with some folks are some of them are from the heart and totally honest and then some folks are trying to make it through the day in whatever way they can and that’s certainly energizing, to say the least.  

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98 See Appendix: Street Vendor Contract.

99 Taddie interview.
The Grapevine staff soon realized that there were a lot of characters, usually individuals posing as vendors, who would take advantage of them by getting copies of The Grapevine and then using it as a way to entice the public to give them money without being a Grapevine vendor, thus cheating both the true vendors and the newspaper. Very early on the staff began featuring a note on the front page in the masthead that read “Buy From Badged Vendor Only.”

But impersonators were not the only problem. Often times untrustworthy vendors left their specified vending areas, trying to sell outdated papers and sometimes simply taking donations without producing a paper. The staff worked overtime to constantly police new vendors. Eventually the staff was able to weed out untrustworthy vendors and those who stuck became the regular vendors. However, due to the pressures of vending and the difficult issues of life on the streets in general, vendor turnover was still fairly high. “Cleveland is a newspaper town so it made sense to have a paper be the product sold,” said Cimperman. “People love to sit and read to stay informed, but people didn't understand that it was a product being sold at first. They thought it was another form of panhandling. 100

Cimperman’s quote describes perfectly the conflicting ideas that drove The Grapevine. The staff believed that the newspaper was a way to inform the people of Cleveland of a life they were not familiar with. They believed it would be a way to break

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100 Cimperman interview.
down assumptions and stereotypes of the homeless and in the form of a paper

Clevelanders would be receptive of it. But the stereotypes and assumptions in place often prevent individuals from purchasing the paper. Anderson explained:

Those guys who are on the highway holding the signs “will work for food,” or the panhandler with the cup that is begging for spare change, we get painted with that same brush. We actually have to dress cleaner, talk clearer, and present ourselves in a way that is uplifting, not only to the face of homelessness but to the person we’re talking to so that it changes their perception of what we’re doing. 101

In the beginning, Anderson described a lot of “nose up in the air” when a vendor would ask someone to buy a paper. The phrase “get a job” would be thrown at them by people not realizing that vending the paper was a lucrative employment opportunity and also that many homeless individuals work every day. However, for Anderson and other vendors these responses thickened their skin and forced them to accept rejection and try to find a way to turn that person’s attitude around.102 “You see that turn around when you actually get people talk to ya. It’s a way to start that conversation and to get a person to listen to what’s really happening in Cleveland,” said Anderson. “When you see that turnaround it changes you and it gives you strength to ask that next person [to] talk to the next person.”103

*The Grapevine* was able to change attitudes not only through encouraging and coaching vendors but also by furthering awareness of issues surrounding homelessness

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101 Anderson interview.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
and exposure to vendors themselves in other ways. NEOCH created a speakers program in correlation with *The Grapevine* that allowed vendors and others involved with the paper to travel to venues such as schools churches and civic groups and talk about homelessness in Cleveland and attempt to change the community’s perceptions of it.104

This program proved successful in two ways. It familiarized the audiences with the vendors and the idea of the paper in a safe, comforting environment that they were familiar with, and the vendors become more comfortable speaking to people about the paper, knowing what kind of questions people have and learning to approach them in a better manner. Eventually *The Grapevine* received positive feedback from the Cleveland Police Department and news organizations, once they realized that paper sales were a way to generate funds for oneself as employment and an alternative to panhandling. The biggest reward for the vendors, though, was the confidence it generated and a way to viably lift themselves off the street. Cimperman said, “Once the people of Cleveland got used to it, they really thought it was great. The paper gave vendors the chance to be entrepreneurs. The vendors could see their own words in print and knew that people were reading it. That was very valuable.”105

However it took the city quite a while to get used to *The Grapevine*. The city’s service providers, businesses and politicians were not used to having an eye watching them from that angle. Often times what popular media referred to as a beautification

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104 Ibid.
105 Cimperman interview.
processes *The Grapevine* would call forcing people who have nowhere to go out of their homes. The shelters and service providers that society thought of as a solution to homelessness were often criticized for their unsanitary and unjust conditions. In the summer of 2002, the men’s shelter Salvation Army 2100 Lakeside Avenue was under fire from it’s residents, their advocates and the city for its poor practices.\(^{106}\) In a news analysis written by Davis, he reported that men were lining up outside of the shelter up to two hours ahead of time to ensure a spot for the night, during which time they were told they were not allowed to use the rest room. With few public facilities within the vicinity and removal from the line resulting in no shelter for the night, “In the two hour wait outside many of the men with chronic health conditions were forced to use the alley as a bathroom,” wrote Davis. “This disgusted the men and made them feel like dogs, according to an angry letter sent to City Council about the situation.”\(^{107}\)

When residents complained to City Council they were encouraged to create a petition, but while collecting signatures Raymond Robinson was stopped by the shelter staff and was forced to sleep on the floor after they took his bed from him as punishment. Davis reported that there had also been reports of food dropping on the ground and being served anyway as well as “charges of extreme mental torture especially of the men with mental illness.”\(^{108}\)


\(^{107}\) Ibid.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.
The Restructuring

Immediately the “voice of the homeless” was controversial. Through the newspaper allowing its constituents to write whatever they wanted without censorship, many social service providers who supported NEOCH found themselves being criticized in the publication. In Issue 3, the publication featured its first big story. In the summer of 1993, a sit-in was staged by residents of Project:HEAT Site F to prevent the seasonal closing of a shelter. Residents were concerned about the closing because it would force many of them to sleep outside.

While other publications such as the Plain Dealer published stories on the event, The Grapevine provided articles written by the men who participated the sit-in, getting their point of view. The article “Where am I going to live?” by Steve Spalek, a first-person account of the sit-in, gave a critical view of the men’s shelter that was provided as an alternative for the closing of Site F. One person described the alternative, Harbor Light, as “terrible.” Spalek wrote, “The basement hall they put us in it has no ventilation - no windows or air of any type. The bathroom facility has only one toilet and one sink for 40 plus guys to use, and no shower. Then they wonder why the guys stink.”

NEOCH supported the men’s right to express their side of the story, but it caused problems with the social service providers and shelter leaders. By Issue 4, the Coalition began including a disclaimer on page two of the paper:

NEOCH believes homeless people are too often excluded from expressing their views and concern on matters that will personally and directly affect their lives. All articles in this paper are about homelessness, and may be
written by homeless and formerly homeless people. The articles are not intended to reflect the views of NEOCH, the NEOCH board of trustees or our member agencies or individuals, but to help homeless people and advocates express their opinions.\textsuperscript{109}

Letting writers express their own experiences with the shelters and service providers in the area was an important part of the paper. It revealed how bad the conditions really were. Written with the intention of showing the audience of the paper that, in fact, the shelters and charities they were donating to or suggesting people seek help from were often only contributing to the marginalization and mistreatment of human beings. “It could be prosecutory. It doesn’t hold back. They name names,” said Cimperman, “but it tries to present a viewpoint that no one else was presenting.”\textsuperscript{110}

During that time, the NEOCH board was made up almost entirely of shelter directors and social service providers. There were some on the board who wanted absolute separation and freedom of speech for the homeless, but many social service providers argued that because they were raising money to produce the publication the patrons should not be criticized. According to Davis, it was difficult to navigate “allowing [homeless] people to say whatever they wanted about the shelters” and “the fiduciary responsibility of the board member to be a part of the organization” when the criticism was of those funding the publication.\textsuperscript{111}


\textsuperscript{110} Cimperman interview.

\textsuperscript{111} Davis interview, February 22, 2012.
In an issue of *The Grapevine* published in February of 2000, a controversial “Wall of Shame” was featured.\(^{112}\) The article named individuals in the social service realm who had attended a meeting dealing with homeless sweeps. “Sweeps” are when police arrest or ticket homeless individuals in order to remove them from a specific area to improve the image of that area.\(^{113}\) In Cleveland during the 1990s, sweeps were common on Public Square, the hub of downtown, around the holiday season.\(^{114}\)

The meeting with City Council was held by social service providers, some of whom were members of the NEOCH board of directors. The purpose of the meeting was not to object to the discriminatory arrest of individuals on public property, but to decide what to tell the people they served who were ticketed or arrested. The homeless writers were offended by the actions of those who were supposed to be advocating for them so they called out the individuals on the “Wall of Shame.”

“They still do not understand that any involvement of the law enforcement community in serving otherwise law abiding citizens who happen to be homeless is wrong and morally indefensible,” stated the editorial writers. “Being homeless is not a crime, and the involvement of police is unnecessary and harmful. It alienates those on the streets and makes it more difficult to build a trusting relationship.” \(^{115}\)


\(^{113}\) Sweep is defined as:
a: to remove from a surface with or as if with a broom or brush  
b: to destroy completely  
c: to remove or take with a single continuous forceful action  
d: to remove from sight or consideration  
e: to drive or carry along with irresistible force:  

\(^{114}\) Brian Davis, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, February 4, 2012.

\(^{115}\) Ibid.
The “Wall of Shame” specifically named names of service providers from the City Mission, Mental Health Services, Catholic Charities, Volunteers of America, the Veterans Administration and many other agencies that NEOCH worked closely with. Many of these individuals served on its board. “Having board members put on the wall of shame for their activities was very bad. They hated that and they objected,” said Davis.116

Criticisms and letters to the editor rolled in expressing displeasure over the “Wall of Shame” nominees. Dan Joyce, then the Executive Director of the Cleveland Mediation Center, wrote in his letter to the editor, “People of good faith can disagree; before a resolution can be even contemplated each side must be heard.” He went on to defend the integrity of the nominees stating, “There are times when I strongly disagree with them about policy and program implementation. I have never questioned their integrity, motives, or dedication and for you to do so is unfair and I think unfounded.” 117

The Grapevine refused to apologize to the meeting attendees, responding to the criticisms in an editorial. “While we agree that most (but not all) of the people on the Wall of Shame have a big hart and are basically good people, they did not think of the consequences of their actions,” wrote The Grapevine staff. “We stand behind the editorial and make no other apologizes for publicly identifying a shameful act of cowardice in the face of power.”118

116 Ibid.
After the “Wall of Shame” issue, some members of the NEOCH board proposed that they, as a governing source of the organization, should have the ability to view the material in the paper before it was published and approve or disapprove of it. But opposing board members and the homeless writers realized that this would limit the freedom of the authors and refused to compromise.

Davis requested Taddie compile a report for the NEOCH board on the editorial functions of other street newspapers. As a student Taddie acted as a third party having no real investment in the issue either way. As she put it, “I didn’t have any baggage with me. They didn’t know me so I just laid it out.”

Taddie performed extensive research about how street newspapers across the country ran their papers and how they dealt with the issue of freedom of speech. She conducted phone interviews with more than a dozen paper staffs. She then put the results into a spreadsheet for the board. Taddie found that half of the papers researched were run by service agencies and their board had control over what was published. The other half took a more grassroots approach and focused on trying to portray the voice of the people. “When I went to see the board I saw a lot of folks that worked for agencies,” Taddie recalled. “You could tell by the way they dressed and the kinds of questions they asked and, you know, how they introduced themselves. You knew there were a lot of agency folks.”

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119 Taddie interview.

120 Ibid.
The controversy proved too much for the service providers, even many who had voted in favor of maintaining the writers’ freedom of speech, and most resigned from their positions. The resignation of seven out of nine board members caused a near fatal loss of members for NEOCH.

It felt good [to have our voices heard], but [now] I work in the industry and I understand frustrations from those who had been exposed or thought that we were over the top with some of our reporting. But I think at the same time they were always given the chance for rebuttal or to dispute or explain so, I mean, fair is fair. And I also think that it has made our service [The Grapevine], it has been made better because of it. 121

Even with the program facing self-destruction, the paper continued unfailing in its mission to let the homeless be heard. NEOCH started over with a complete restructuring of the organization. “The board at that time decided to become more representative of homeless people, which strengthened the position of The Grapevine,” said Davis. “If you’re going to represent the interest of homeless people, you’re going to need an outlet for them to speak, and The Grapevine fit into that.”122

The new NEOCH board, consisting of homeless individuals and advocates, called for not striking down the views of the homeless because they contained criticism of services provided by organizations that worked with NEOCH. Thus, the group strove to represent the interests of homeless people. However, the board allowed the paper to continue only if someone from the coalition with journalism experience was in charge. Its

121 Anderson interview.
122 Davis interview, February 4, 2012
fear was that if it allowed the homeless writers complete freedom the organization could be sued. This put Davis in charge of both *The Grapevine* and NEOCH.  

**The Adversity**

Because there is simply nowhere else to go, people experiencing homelessness must carry out everyday life-sustaining activities in public. Due to legislation, which prohibits specific activities conducted within public space, homeless persons experience civic inequalities, which remove their dignity, civil liberties, and often their humanity.  

Often, homeless individuals fall subject to having their possessions removed, burned, or bulldozed. They are ticketed or arrested for sleeping on public sidewalks or benches, which is more a sign of status than a crime. People are “swept,” or forcibly removed, like vermin from areas in order to keep up appearances and social vitality.

*The Grapevine* covered all kinds of injustices against people without homes. From homeless dumping to homeless bashing, *The Grapevine* tried to bring to Cleveland’s attention the issues that were blatantly violating basic human rights. One such incident was the case of John Mungai. After being arrested for drug trafficking (though never convicted), Mungai sat in prison for almost fifty days waiting to be arraigned. Whether he was guilty or innocent of the crime became a moot point when he had served more time

123 Ibid.
in prison waiting to see the judge than any verdict would have had him serve. Taddie said:

As media we were able to get there and sit down in a room and have a conversation with him. They ran it pretty much verbatim in *The Grapevine*. We were there on Good Friday and it was like crickets in that justice center, there was hardly anybody around. But don't you know after we were there he was arraigned that very same day and did at least get to see the judge.125

Drawing attention to injustices in the *The Grapevine* offered a framework different from that of mainstream news media. Being written by homeless and their advocates, *The Grapevine* allowed readers to see events from their perspective, in an extremely straight-forward and humanistic way as opposed to the constructed and informative way that most media present them.

Legal ramifications were also a concern for the paper. As *The Grapevine* gained popularity and credibility, it faced growing adversity. Perhaps the most important battle that *The Grapevine* faced was the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless vs. Cleveland.

In Issue 7, September-December 1994, under the headline “Extra! Extra! Read All About It!” the story described the beginning of a long, drawn-out battle between *The Grapevine* and the city of Cleveland:

Recently, a person was ticketed for vending without a license. Not long after, another vendor was handcuffed, driven out of the Flats where he was distributing this newspaper, and “dumped” or dropped off against his will near a West Side technical school. In November of 1993, a vendor was arrested and jailed for disorderly conduct, an offence [*sic*] that, if proven

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125 Taddie interview.
guilty should only warrant a fine. . . . These police actions attempt to inhibit the distribution of our paper, and rid downtown Cleveland of homeless people. The attempts to inhibit The Grapevine failed. The distribution of this paper has increased from about 1,600 per month to over 6,000 per month, and has helped homelessness remain a visible issue for the community.126

The article explained why Grapevine vendors should not have to obtain vending licenses by listing the city regulations. It listed the two codes, which excluded The Grapevine vendors from purchasing licenses, stating in “Section 675.01 (b),” “The provisions of this chapter shall not apply . . . to sales by charitable organizations in conjunction with solicitations for charity,” and in “Section 675.04 Street Sales” that “Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the distribution of non-commercial handbills, cards, leaflets or other literature on the sidewalks.”127

As an outreach worker at the West Side Catholic Center, a non-profit that aided the impoverished in Cleveland, and a volunteer writer for The Grapevine, Cimperman advocated for the vendors and their right to make a living. Cimperman explained his role within the debacle:

It was such confusion. People thought it was glorified free marketing. People didn't realize that this was a job and that people were gainfully employed by this. It was all of this wasted energy. We tried to do things to make it easier like mediate between businesses and vendors. Explain it to business owners or have vendors move away from entrances a bit. Nine out of ten times we were able to work it out.128

127 Ibid.
128 Cimperman interview.
In attempting to continue sales of *The Grapevine* and the protection of the rights of the homeless, *The Grapevine* had filed a complaint with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) before the release of the issue. Together *The Grapevine* and the ACLU sued the city. The article included a cutout urging readers to support *The Grapevine* and its vendors by filling out and mailing in a small section, titled “Protect The Freedom of Speech,” to City Council.

On May 3, 1995, U.S. District Judge Ann Aldrich ruled that the tickets imposed by the city and the vendor licensing fee violated the free speech constitutional rights of the distributors. The decision was based on the belief that the city’s intent was to prohibit the message in *The Grapevine* from getting out even before it was published. Requiring that each vendor pay for a vending license would eliminate the distribution of the newspaper due to a lack of available funds of the individuals, causing the message of the paper to be silenced before it was read. “Prior restraint is a particularly egregious offense against civil liberties, and prohibited by the Bill of Rights,” commented NEOCH lawyer Raymond Vasvari.¹²⁹

At the time of the ruling, the city was in the process of drafting legislation that would require vendors to still acquire licenses without having to pay the fee. One vendor, who chose to remain anonymous, replied, “What is the purpose if we don’t have to pay the fee? I think it is just another way that the police can harass us. They will stop us

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every time they see us to check if we have a license and to show us who the boss of the street really is.”\textsuperscript{130}

The saga continued into 1997, when the case was brought to an appeals court by the city. This time the judges ruled in favor of the city, which had initiated the requirement to obtain a license for $50 to $100. A fee of that size would “effectively regulate the paper out of existence,” according to research by Harold Dopman, the managing editor of \textit{The Grapevine}, in the article “Vendors Lose Appeal.” The case, featured in Issue 20, stated that the city “[realized] the impact a fee has on vendors, and are not as much concerned with the fee as they are over ‘protecting’ the public” from “fraud by unlicensed vendors,” according to comments by Cleveland Law Director Sharon Sobol Jordan.\textsuperscript{131}

\textit{The Grapevine} prepared to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court to challenge what it believed was a “clear violation of our free speech, and another effort to get rid of this blight on the city known as homeless people.”\textsuperscript{132} In 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case. According to Kevin O’Neil the lead counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, the City “drafted a lengthy and well-written brief urging the Supreme Court not to take the case…”\textsuperscript{133} The brief claimed that its “registration process enables the local authorities to have some ability to account for the many individuals who conduct their commerce on city streets and sidewalks,” that “Cleveland has a legitimate

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
and indeed unchallenged interest in regulating the business of peddling.”[134] The ACLU, which was defending *The Grapevine*, tried to fight, stating that “the City [was] playing a shell game with legal precedent” and pointing out that the city intentionally tried to eliminate the free speech element of previous cases, “choosing instead to focus on cases for their consideration of the right of regulation.”[135] The decision stood.

Because of the judicial prejudice that the paper felt it was experiencing, the twenty-fourth issue of *The Grapevine* was dedicated as the “Void Where Prohibited By Law Series.” Each page featured a small icon of the Constitution. “We the People” was printed legibly on the icon and the words “Void Where Prohibited By Law” written below it.

In the main article, “Supreme Court Declines to Hear Licensing Case,” Davis charged that the Supreme Court’s refusal to hear the case acted as a limitation of freedom for all citizens. [136] “This is absolutely a retreat from years of case law that protected the sidewalks as a forum for public speech. If we no longer have access to the sidewalks to speak to the public, then what is left? The sidewalk was the last place that government had not put its dirty, filthy, censoring hands.”[137]

Though the case was rejected at the highest court, the battle did not end there. After going from seventy-five regular vendors to seven because of a fear of ticketing and arrest,

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[134] Ibid.


[137] Hayes, “Supreme Court Declines to Hear Licensing Case.”
The Grapevine continued to limp along. The remaining vendors endured an influx of ticketing, but the excessive rates at which the city was handing out fines backfired.

In “Better Late Than Never,” Davis wrote that City Hall had “treated the paper very professionally and with a refreshing degree of respect.” He was surprised by its efforts in “trying to balance the Mayor’s demands with the needs of the paper.” This was a welcome change for The Grapevine because the paper had only faced adversity from the city and its officials in the past.

Eventually, because of lack of time and resources, City Council ordered Mayor White and local officers to cease ticketing Grapevine vendors. The courts were wasting too much time. Davis said in an interview:

City council is no friend of the vendors. They just felt that if there was a problem, like if Joe Cimperman, [Cleveland City Councilman] had a problem right now he could just call me up and say ‘Hey this guy’s a bogus vendor, take his badge.’ But if they had gotten a license then you have to go through this huge rigmarole. There is a whole process of bureaucracy -- they can appeal and they can have their license for a year before it gets pulled by the City. [City Council’s] interest was to get rid of people quickly, not to have to go through this whole appeal.

With ticketing stopped, The Grapevine regained some momentum, but it never again had the number of regular vendors that it had before the incident. Though it did not win the court case, The Grapevine was victorious because it could legally continue to advocate and raise awareness through the voices of the homeless.

139 Davis interview, February 4, 2012.
140 Davis interview, February 22, 2012.
“NEOCH board members, staff and former *Grapevine* vendors continue to hope for the time when the Supreme Court will be forced to consider the case due to a similar issue arising in the future,” said Davis.\(^{141}\)

**The Awareness**

After the legal battles over vending ended, *The Grapevine* continued providing readers directly with insight into the plight of homelessness, but it also indirectly raised the volume of the voice of the population through other means.

In 1995, *the Homeless Grapevine* moved beyond Cleveland. Through a partnership with the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, *The Grapevine* began to amplify the homeless communities’ opinions and situations throughout Ohio. Starting in Issue 11, advocates and homeless individuals in Cincinnati joined in the distribution of *The Grapevine*. “By sharing resources and trying to educate the public, we all work together to do the best we can to end homelessness,” wrote Pat Clifford in Cincinnati’s introductory issue.\(^{142}\)

Soon, the center four pages of the Cleveland paper became known as the *Cincinnati Grapevine*, featuring Cincinnati-based news and issues. It included a separate heading in order for Cleveland readers to notice the switch and also to allow the Cincinnati

\(^{141}\) Ibid.

distributors to simply “pull out” the four-page insert, put it on the front, and instantly have the *Cincinnati Homeless Grapevine* ready for sale.\(^{143}\)

“For three or four issues we would just meet in Columbus and we would print an extra 5,000, give them to them and they would sell them down in Cincinnati,” explained Davis. “The other twelve pages were Cleveland-centered, but we figured poverty is poverty. People would pay for reading about homelessness in Cleveland and Cincinnati, they’re both homeless.”\(^{144}\)

*The Cincinnati Grapevine* eventually separated from the paper to become a standalone street news source in Cincinnati known as *StreetVibes* in 1998. The two papers continued to work together for many years, publishing the other cities’ stories upon occasion but remaining separate entities. Today, *StreetVibes* has a larger distribution and vendor count than *The Grapevine* did at its peak.\(^{145}\)

The Cleveland *Grapevine* also played an integral role in the development of the other two current street publications in Ohio as well as the unification of street papers and homeless voices continentally. The Columbus *Street Speech* began in 2007 with the help of the expertise of *The Grapevine* members. The editors traveled to Columbus to help provide ideas for content and running a vending program. Since then, *Street Speech* has become a monthly or twice-monthly publication, reaching approximately 6,000 readers.

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\(^{144}\) Davis interview, February 22, 2012.

each issue and employing more than sixty vendors.146 The Toledo Street, a street paper in northwestern Ohio, also contacted The Grapevine for startup advice before it began publishing in 2009. Now, according to the website, the monthly publication is “empowering individuals struggling with extreme poverty to participate on a new level in the community through self-employment, job training, and contributorship [sic].”147

By paving the way as the first modern street paper in Ohio, The Grapevine helped to inspire other Ohio cities to open a forum for the homeless in their region. StreetVibes, Street Sense and Toledo Streets are current members of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA), an organization that The Grapevine helped to organize. 148 In 1996, a small group of Grapevine editors and contributors traveled to Chicago where delegates from other small street papers met to create a nonprofit network of street news. For years afterward, The Grapevine helped to plan and attended NASNA conferences.149

NASNA was described as an organization with the purpose of “sharing information, exchanging ideas and celebrating the existence of media outlets for voices from the streets,” by Davis in “Street Newspapers Organize.”150 The national linking of street papers allowed for homeless issues across the country to be discussed and made

known to advocates everywhere. *The Grapevine* featured news stories from other cities, often finding that many issues were relevant to Ohio as well. National coverage went both ways. Stories from Cleveland were featured in publications including Chicago’s *StreetWise*, San Francisco’s *Street Sheet* and Seattle’s *Real Change.*\(^{151}\)

In 1999, *The Grapevine* hosted the NASNA conference in Cleveland at Case Western Reserve University. Representatives from twenty-six street papers traveled from all over North America to attend. The Cleveland conference was hailed as “a great [conference] for the maturity of NASNA,” by Donald Whitehead, editor of *Street Vibes* in Cincinnati.\(^{152}\) Michael Walters, the editor of *Our Voice*, a paper out of Edmonton, stated:

> There was a lot of focus on the importance of the street paper movement and how specifically we need to work together to create a powerful mechanism that will help people living in poverty all across North America. In the past, this has indeed been an important issue but, in Cleveland, I think we started to believe that this was a realistic goal.\(^{153}\)

By 2004, the relationship between *The Grapevine* and NASNA was strained. The contributors believed that the NASNA mission was straying from the advocacy focus that *The Grapevine* endorsed during its inception.\(^{154}\) But there were other issues. In an article, Marsha Rizzo Swanson, a longtime *Grapevine* vendor and a regular attendee of NASNA conferences, shared her feelings on *The Grapevine’s* involvement with the organization. “I really don’t want *The Grapevine* to be involved with NASNA any more,” she wrote

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\(^{151}\) Brian Davis, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, February 25, 2012.


\(^{153}\) Ibid.

\(^{154}\) Davis interview, February 25, 2012.
after she felt the director of NASNA, Tim Harris, had treated her unfairly by
disqualifying her from the vendor competition during the conference in Canada that
year. She repeatedly sighted individuals and papers removal from the organization as a
sign that *The Grapevine* should also exit. “I believe that NASNA as an organization is
going downhill, and I mean that it is going to the dogs so let the dogs have it,” she wrote.

With the vendors and contributors displeased by NASNA, *The Grapevine’s*
withdraw was inevitable. *The Grapevine* formally withdrew in 2006, citing NASNA’s
loss of focus on community organizing as the reason. NASNA still exists today as the
unifying group of more than thirty street papers.156

### The Politics

Throughout *The Grapevine’s* existence one of the consistent topics featured was the
political side of homelessness. “[Housed people] don’t often think that the policies that
are developed in Washington, and even locally, have a huge impact on the shelter
population,” said Davis. In order to shed light on the role these political actions have on
the lives of the currently, formerly, and future homeless individuals, *The Grapevine* set
out to prove that even the impoverished have opinions on the issues.

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156 Davis interview, February 25, 2012.
With each update on federal, state and local housing issues, articles such as “104th Congress Will Make or Break Local Services for Homeless People (1994),”157 “City Holds Hearings on the Future of Affordable Housing (1996),”158 and “Ohio Foreclosures: Large Growth in 2003”159 were published. Each election year commentaries and articles also were published, outlining views and information on each candidate. When political candidates, such as mayors and county commissioners, were willing to participate, The Grapevine conducted interviews and held public forums where homeless constituents could pose questions to the candidates. In the October-November 2001 Issue, mayoral candidates Raymond Pierce and Jane Campbell faced off on issues of housing and homelessness in the pages of The Grapevine.160

Davis explained why it was important for The Grapevine and its members to approach political candidates:

It made them at least think about homelessness during their campaigns, which is one of the big issues. In the ‘80s homelessness was always part of local elections and [candidates] had to talk about homelessness. But the mainstream media doesn’t really press that issue anymore, and nobody forces the county commissioner or the mayor to talk about what their position would be with regard to homelessness. So, at least one time during the election if they get asked, it’s positive.161

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158 “City Holds Hearings on the Future of Affordable Housing,” The Homeless Grapevine, July 1, 1996.


161 Davis interview, February 22, 2012.
By holding forums and including the homeless in the political process, the homeless constituents are provided with more opportunities to voice their opinions and for those opinions to be heard.\(^{162}\) Local and state officials began to see *The Grapevine* for what it was, a powerful tool for advocacy and one that actively called for change. They realized that the audience of *The Grapevine*, both housed and unhoused readers and vendors, were people they needed to lead with dignity. In 2006, after thirteen years of publication and one mayor who actively tried to shut down *The Grapevine*, Frank Jackson became the first active mayor to sit down and speak directly with *The Grapevine*.\(^{163}\) Issues ranged from re-gentrification to assimilating ex-convicts back into society through work programs. The interview also allowed for insight into the thought processes of each side. For instance, *Grapevine* reporter Kevin Cleary raised the question of the possibility of reopening abandoned, and foreclosed buildings for people to inhabit.

*Grapevine*: One Question we hear a lot from homeless people is: Is there any way the Cleveland could offer some of the housing that was boarded up during Mayor White’s administration to homeless people? And if not, why not?

Jackson: Well, first of all, the City doesn’t own the property. So we can’t offer what we don’t have. Secondly what would they do with it? Because in order to allow someone to live in a house you have to give them an occupancy permit, which means it would have to be up to code. The vast majority of those homes are condemned or condemnable. So that means there would have to be a significant investment in the rehab of that house to get it up to code, in order for someone to occupy it. So, who would invest that money to give it to someone who doesn’t have a job? Or give it to someone who may have a drug or alcohol problem. I would imagine that the

\(^{162}\) Ibid.

scenario would work if there’s a non-profit who then gets who then gets receivership of the property, renovates it, and a homeless person is living there as [some form of] transitional housing. Because the person has become stable and things like that. It works in that fashion. But to say, even if the city of Cleveland did own them, who would make the investment to bring them up to code? You can’t just turn stuff over to just anybody.164

Though the answers were not always what The Grapevine representative desired, this interview, for the first time, allowed for the mayor of the city to express, in his own voice, his reasoning behind certain decisions and plans for Cleveland’s future. The balance of voices allowed for actual conversation and mutual understanding, which was a step toward the cooperation with government officials and the private sector that non-profits and the homeless they served so desired.

In challenging those in political positions both at NEOCH-sponsored forums and within the paper, writers reminded these figures that they too were citizens who deserved rights and held power along with all of the housed constituents. The writers of The Grapevine pointed out that they provided a unique view and could suggest solutions for simple issues within the city regarding homelessness that would not only act in cooperation with the homeless community but also advocate for ways for the broader community to eliminate homelessness.165 The Grapevine strove to be so politically involved because it believed that is where change happened. Anderson explained:

When you look at the number of homeless people who primarily seek services, and many of them sleep and reside in downtown Cleveland, that’s

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164 Ibid.

a block of votes that could way heavy on any politicians' issue. With the right leadership, that’s an important piece of power that we can utilize to have a voice in any issue that comes up that deals with Cleveland itself even with homeless issues. Homeless people need to recognize that as advocates we recognize it and we try to make sure that that is recognized on the other end by the politicians. We try to make sure that we're not forgotten. It’s not just homeless people that we advocate for. It’s all people who feel down trodden and forgotten.166

In order to bring about the changes and exercise their political power the staff and writers made valid efforts in their writings to convince the homeless and impoverished to not sit idly by but to vote. This proved difficult for many in the state of poverty due to lack of identification. Because of theft and constant displacement many homeless have difficulties keeping legal identification. In October 2006, NEOCH and the Service Employee International Union filed suit against Secretary of State Ken Blackwell over the state requirement that voters show identification before casting a ballot.

A commentary by Davis in Issue 79 of The Grapevine celebrated the victory of House Bill 3 settling in a victory for homeless voters. He explained that the settlement clarified the language of the original law and standardized the rules. He also quoted attorney Subodh Chandra, saying, “We achieved a consent order that contains major victories for voters . . . [ensuring] that thousands of Ohioans whose votes were at risk because of a vague statute . . . will be counted.”167

The importance of voting was stressed in many ways throughout the paper. Besides articles that informed readers of the legislation and of candidates’ political stances on the

166 Angelo Anderson, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, July 24, 2012.

issues, advertisements encouraging registration and voting were inserted. Post-election special sections were published explaining the outcome according to economic and political predictions and how they would affect the homeless. Following the 1995 election, a piece entitled “Damn I Wish I had Voted” expressed how important voting was by breaking down each newly elected change’s effect on the city.\textsuperscript{168} The article featured a side-by-side list of what had passed, labeled “Changes Ahead,” and how it would affect the community, “What it all Means.” As a result of that election, there was a change in aid to families with dependent children (AFDC or welfare), which according to The Grapevine translated to the creation of the Assistance for Needy Families Program, a state program that due to the State Block Grant “will not expand with economic downturns. When the money is out, there is no more.”\textsuperscript{169}

Being persistent with pushing politics and insisting to speak with political figures had its payoffs. When Joe Cimperman was elected to City Council in 1997 he helped the voice of the homeless be heard more readily, by continuing to work closely with the paper and NEOCH. According to Cimperman:

> In ‘99 we passed legislation that required formerly homeless to be on the board of outreach/service organizations. We [also] found a place for 2100 Lakeside, the men's shelter and advocated for permanent supportive housing for the homeless. It’s great to know that now there have been over 500 people get off the streets permanently.\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{168} “Damn I Wish I Had Voted,” The Homeless Grapevine, January 1996.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{170} Cimperman interview.
One of the last issues of the *Homeless Grapevine* helped bring the political views of homelessness into the national view. Before the 2008 national election, *The Grapevine* held an informal poll of homeless voters at several drop-in centers, meal sites, and shelters around Cleveland to see for whom people planned to vote. The findings showed that the majority of homeless supported the Democratic candidate, Barack Obama. Following the release of the polls, the story was picked up by national news outlets. In order to follow up their opinions with action, NEOCH and other organizations transported nearly 250 homeless people to the Board of Elections for early voting, and by Election Day nearly half of all of the people in the shelter system in Cleveland had exercised their right to vote.\(^{171}\)

**The End**

In 2008, NEOCH was running low on money. With the economy in a recession, the foundations that provided the most support to NEOCH and *The Grapevine* were being, as Davis put it, “stingy.” The state of the economy also proved difficult for sales, as most readers were trying to save money as well. Due to a lack of funding, the agency began to lay off “massive numbers” of staff. Many of the paid staff members of *The Grapevine* were let go in order to keep NEOCH afloat. The idea was to once again rely on

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volunteers for the paper’s labor, but the board refused to see *The Grapevine* end.\textsuperscript{172}

Davis said:

> The board actually decided when we almost shut down in 2008, to continue *The Grapevine*. That was one of the few programs that they kept and I actually think it was the recommendation of the staff at that time to close *The Grapevine* because it cost too much. But that was not the decision of the board because they loved *The Grapevine* by 2008. It did not stop publishing until 2009 and that was just because there was no money to continue to print. It was never a board position to close; there was just no money. We had to decide -- do we put our resources toward the paper or you know keeping our organization in business -- and the paper was just not the priority. \textsuperscript{173}

*The Grapevine* began to taper off in 2008, featuring only three issues as opposed to the usual five to six. Publication did not end until summer 2009, when the paper released its final issue after eight months of silence.

During the eight-month hiatus, vendors continued to sell the most recent issue. For the readers who regularly purchased the paper, vendors selling them the same issue for months at a time seemed like a form of deception and caused resentment toward the paper. Vendors, who relied on sales as a form of income, could not afford to not continue selling. The confusion of readers and vendors, along with the complete lack of funding, caused the formal end of *The Homeless Grapevine* in 2009.

The final edition, Issue 87, featured an interview with Councilman Cimperman and Councilman Matt Zone, as well as articles outlining the big changes to come with voting in the state, the city shelters and the national stimulus package. Poetry as well as personal

\textsuperscript{172} Brian Davis, interview by Magdalena I. Chapin, February 12, 2012.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
success stories of men and women within the shelter system were shared, but there were no signs that this would be the final publication of the sixteen-year-old publication.

*The Chronicle*

The paper’s death was not mourned for long. In December 2010, NEOCH re-emerged with a new paper entitled *The Street Chronicle*. Behind *The Chronicle* were many of the same faces. Davis acted as editor in chief and Angelo remained a regular vendor. *The Chronicle*’s layout was simpler than that of the final years of *The Grapevine*, but the topics and writing styles remained similar to those in the previous publication.

The transition was necessary. A new name and a fresh look helped to distinguish *The Chronicle* from *The Grapevine*, which due to the continued sales of old issues had lost credibility and support. Anderson recalled the transition:

...The transition was smooth and necessary. It wasn’t as chaotic as the first time when we actually created the wheel from scratch. We didn’t have to start all over from scratch, we just had to make a few changes and then explain to the public why we had to make those changes, which was easier because we had a reputation of being fair and honest and open. ¹⁷⁴

*The Change*

*The Grapevine* acted as a tool of change and tangible voice for those ignored. By reporting on issues from a different perspective and releasing that perspective into the public, political change and public awareness in favor of homelessness grew. Other

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¹⁷⁴ Anderson interview.
papers were started and societal issues were brought to the attention of the public, which resulted in laws passing to protect those in need of housing and bring them up from the margins of society. “The homeless didn't even have a voice, didn’t even have an avenue before. With The Grapevine, they had a voice. Cleveland has become a lot more sophisticated with how it addressed homelessness,” said Cimperman.175

Beyond this sophistication and addition of a collective voice, The Grapevine also brought about personal change, a change that was not making front-page news but was really what kept the paper going for sixteen years. Personal change ranged from readers, who re-evaluated their views of the homeless, to the individuals, who sold the paper, learning to interact with the public as sales people and gaining confidence to make money as well as use the money to work toward fixing their situation.

Anderson’s change began with the photocopies and continues today with his continued work with the Chronicle and as program manager at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries Men’s Shelter 2100. Anderson said:

My work here at 2100 and my work with the paper helps to keep me focused and centered. I realize that at any given moment I could be homeless again through some tragedy or loss of employment. But it has also given me a sense of self worth and confidence because I have overcome a whole lot of adversity and barriers that may have seemed insurmountable at the time. 176

During the duration of The Grapevine, Cimperman went from publishing within the pages to being the topic of articles. “You learn to be that kind of person,” he said of

175 Cimperman interview.
176 Anderson interview.
reading about himself in *The Grapevine*. “People will question you because they think you are crazy. You have to have the confidence to do what you think is right despite what people might say.” He continued to value the paper and the voices it provided even from his public office.\(^{177}\) Cimperman explained:

> I felt that as an elected official I should subscribe because there are viewpoints in there that you don't get to hear a lot. I've never missed one. I still think I have them all in my office files. As a councilman you get a lot of papers coming across your desk, but that was one thing I always read. I always appreciated that perspective.\(^{178}\)

Even Taddie experienced personal change during her short time as a graduate researcher and contributor to the paper:

> You know that really was something to me, the grass-roots empowerment was something highly energizing to me. The research changed me. It awakened me to how extremely challenging it is. There’s always going to be that tension when you want to get people to be empowered and you certainly can do a lot of powerful things without money if you have people, but to keep the electricity on, to keep staff paid, and to pay the copy bill, to do all of these things that does take money. It’s hard to ask a homeless person to give you 50 bucks, 100 bucks. That’s how it changed me. I was this idealistic grad student -- you know you want to serve the world, save the world maybe even. That there are so many ins and outs to that from the people, from the money interest from the system that disempowers. That disempowers over and over again, makes us wait, gives us a number, gives us a name, disenfranchised, homeless, dislocated. There are so many things working against empowerment at the grassroots level that it’s possible and certainly rewarding, but it’s challenging and it continues to be challenging.\(^{179}\)

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\(^{177}\) Cimperman interview.

\(^{178}\) Ibid.

\(^{179}\) Taddie interview.
The Grapevine was just that, challenging. It challenged stereotypes of the homeless. It challenged laws and regulations that discriminated against those experiencing homelessness. But most of all it challenged people on individual levels to re-evaluate themselves. Vendors, writers, readers and politicians were challenged to use their voice and power to give equal rights, consideration and care to all of Cleveland’s citizens, even those living in the streets. As Anderson put it, “It is a voice for homeless people. It is a voice for them and we use it for that. That’s gonna always be what we were for and that’s what we try to do. At the same time we try to utilize it for a voice of good in positive issues and while that may be hard we get it done. We seem to be able to get it done.”

180 Anderson interview.
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

*The Grapevine* was an inspirational and effective form of advocacy in Cleveland. As a news entity, the paper was poor. With often lousy (or deliberately non-existent) copy editing, poorly titled and labeled articles, misplaced humor, and extremely editorialized articles, many journalists would consider the paper unreliable and poorly put together. However, from the stance of an alternative and advocacy publication, the paper was a success. The paper managed to put across an alternate viewpoint on many common issues. The uncensored writing of homeless individuals’ articles and poems caused the paper struggles that could have been avoided, but only at the cost of the integrity of its mission. It is necessary to remember that *The Grapevine’s* main role was not to be an informant on what was going on with the homeless of Cleveland but rather to liberate them, to bring them from the margins back into society as people with voices and power. The paper served as an educational tool for readers to open their eyes to how political, economical, and even personal decisions affect more than what mainstream news media report or what the day-to-day perceived effect is.

It forced readers to restructure their way of thinking. The paper was accusatory and in its accusations it made readers re-examine themselves as others. Instead of the dominant culture being the authoritative voice as in so many media, the assertive voice
was that of the homeless, formerly homeless, and those writing from the perspective of service to the poor. For many it was an entirely new lens.

As the paper developed, so did the journalistic side of things. It became less of a newsletter from the streets and more of an informative entity. Where personal stories seemed to be less frequent, calls to action of those in power and the promotion of power of the impoverished were more readily seen. The paper’s layout style and writing also developed. As with any business, it took a few years to get the hang of things. Things began to run more smoothly with experience.

Through sixteen years of reporting The Grapevine fought to bring awareness to the unaware and justice to the impoverished of Cleveland by providing an outlet for the homeless to express themselves. Though homelessness remains an issue in Cleveland and throughout the nation, during The Grapevine’s run many battles, be they legal, political, or simply the battle for respect, were fought and won for the justice of the homeless due to the efforts of staff writers and vendors of The Homeless Grapevine.
APPENDIX A: IRB FORMS

Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: Cleveland’s The Homeless Grapevine: A History of a Street Paper from 1993-2009

Researchers: Magdalena Chapin

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

This study is being done to explore the political, social, or economic issues or major events that affected the paper, as well as what roles editors or writers played on the paper, the adversity the Grapevine faced, what the Grapevine contribute to the residents of Cleveland both housed and non-housed.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer open ended questions regarding your involvement with the Homeless Grapevine.

Your participation in the study will last approximately one to two hours.

Risks and Discomforts

Risks or discomforts that you might experience are the presence of a recording device, or discomforts about the topic at hand. If any of the discussions about homelessness, the issues surrounding it, or the Homeless Grapevine make you uncomfortable please let the researcher know.

No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

Benefits

This study is important to science/society because it increases amount of research on the industry of street newspapers. It will call to attention some of the issues of both homelessness, independent street newspapers, muckraking, first amendment rights, human rights and alternative news sources.

You may not benefit, personally by participating in this study.

Confidentiality and Records

Your study information will be transcribed and quoted by Magdalena Chapin, but all recordings will remain confidential unless you request release.
Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Magdalena Chapin at 740-605-3271 or mchapin10@gmail.com

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
• you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
• you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
• you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
• you are 18 years of age or older
• your participation in this research is completely voluntary
• you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature __________________________ Date 3/22/2013
Printed Name ________________________

Version Date: [07/03/12]
Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Magdalena Chapin at 740-605-3271 or mchapin10@gmail.com

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

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* your participation in this research is completely voluntary
* you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: 4/2/13
Printed Name: Joe Cimpesan

Version Date: [07/03/12]
Confidentiality and Records
Your study information will be transcribed and quoted by Magdalena Chapin, but all recordings will remain confidential unless you request release.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
- Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
- Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

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- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature ___________________________ Date 7/25/10

Printed Name ___________________________ Version Date: [07/03/12]
Confidentiality and Records
Your study information will be transcribed and quoted by Magdalena Chapin, but all recordings will remain confidential unless you request release.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
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- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature __________________________________________________________________________
Date 7/31/12
Printed Name ________________________________________________________________________
Version Date: [07/03/12]
Street Chronicle Vendor Contract:

1. Every vendor of the Cleveland Street Chronicle registers with the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless and affirms the values of the paper by signing this contract.
2. I understand that I am an independent contractor of the Cleveland Street Chronicle. As an independent contractor, vendors are not employees of the Chronicle or of NEOCH.
3. Every vendor must go through 1 hour of training before receiving a temporary license. At which time the vendor is on a 30 day trial/probation period.
4. Every vendor must display his or her ID badge while selling the paper.
5. After selling 300 Chronicles within the first 30 days the vendor can receive a permanent badge. The badges are property of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. If you do not sell 300 papers you must be retrained to be issued a new temporary badge.
6. The Cleveland Street Chronicle will be distributed for a $1.25 voluntary fee. I as a vendor agree not to ask for more than $1.25. Also, I understand that I will be able to keep .90 cents of each dollar collected. The Chronicle is purchased from NEOCH for 35 cents each.
7. We do not accept third party checks from vendors. Customers that want to donate must send those in by mail or deliver to NEOCH.
8. I will never distribute the Chronicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
9. I will not vend the paper after 12 midnight.
10. I will treat others with respect. I will not use abusive language or force someone to buy a paper.
    I will not give a "hard sell" or make someone feel threatened.
11. I will not supply copies of the Cleveland Street Chronicle to persons who are not registered distributors for resale.
12. I will not sell the paper near (within 10 feet) of an ATM machine, telephone, crosswalks, bus stops or in the doorway of a building.
13. I will not deceive the public by saying that I am collecting for a not-for-profit charity or that I am collecting for the "homeless" in general. I will be honest in stating that all the profits from the sale of the Chronicle go to each vendor who distributes the paper. Avoid using the word "donation."
14. I will not use the paper as a front for panhandling. Customers that give more than the cost of the paper will receive a paper.
15. I will not sell the paper while selling any other items including but not limited to flowers, beads, candy, etc.
16. I will not contest territories with other distributors. When a vendor begins selling, it is common courtesy to give that vendor the space. First come first serve for most territory in Cleveland. A vendor should not be in sight of another vendor.
17. The vendors adopted a policy that they could request to control certain territories in the community at certain times of the days. These locations are under the exclusive control of the vendor for the time period that they stated (even if they show up late). If a vendor does not show up without calling on three consecutive days they lose this territory.
18. There are special rules for selling at the West Side Market, which have been established by the vendors. Those who do not sell a minimum number of papers at the West Side Market are not eligible for bidding on the West Side Market for the next two weeks.
19. The paper can only be sold on the public sidewalks (15 feet from public streets). This does not include parking lots, shopping centers, and other private property areas of Greater Cleveland.

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Updated 6/14/2011

Suburban locations that have public sidewalks with some foot traffic are good places to sell, but usually have special rules for newspaper sales. Check with the NEOCH offices to learn about those rules.

20. I understand that the Chronicle strives to be a self-supporting paper created by people who are homeless or formerly homeless. To help in this effort I agree to volunteer to assist in the production or publication of each paper.

21. I will attend monthly vendor meetings.

22. Papers become the property of the vendor, and cannot be exchanged if they are damaged or are old.

23. It is the responsibility of each vendor to police fellow vendors or former vendors. Report violators of the rules to NEOCH. The value of the paper depends on keeping it credible.

24. At this time, the paper is constitutionally protected on the streets. Please report all negative encounters with the police to NEOCH immediately, and always get badge numbers of the police officers.

25. I understand that any infraction of the above rules will result in suspension of my privilege to sell Chronicons, and possible termination from the program. The editor of the paper makes the initial decision about suspensions or terminations.

26. Those vendors terminated from the program can volunteer with the paper to show a commitment to be reinstated. This volunteer time has to be done over a 30 day period.

27. An program committee will govern the paper made up of vendors, board members and volunteers. Any appeal of a suspension will be made to the program committee within 10 days of the grievance. Any further appeal will be made to a outside organization to resolve the issue. Please see a more complete explanation of the vendor grievance procedure that should be displayed at the office.

28. This paper belongs to the homeless/low income in Cleveland. The purpose is to get the voices of the disenfranchised into the media. We encourage every vendor to write for the paper. If a vendor has an article or poem or photograph is published in the Chronicle, the vendor will receive 60 papers. Also, the vendor will receive 15 free papers on your birthday as a gift.

Signature______________________________ Print Name______________________________

Date______________________________ Telephone/Voice Mail______________________________

Date of Birth:______________________________

__________________________________________Chronicle Staff Fill out______________________________

Temporary Badge #_________________________ Permanent Badge #_________________________

The Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless is located at:
3631 Perkins Ave. #3A-3 216/432-0540
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Buzz number 32 at the front door.

D:\brian\neoch\chronicle\vndrcart.doc
West Side Market Policy
As voted on by the vendors over the last 4 years
Updated 6/2008

1. All shifts are assigned at the bi-weekly meeting.
2. There is no giving away of any shifts (permanent or weekly shifts.)
3. Permanent shifts are assigned for two months, and voted on at the monthly meeting.
4. Permanent shifts are taken away if the vendor does not show up for three shifts in a row without calling into the office, for not buying at least $5 per shift (currently 20) papers per shift, or for receiving customer complaints.
5. Vendors can request only Saturday shifts, but may not request any other shift during. They may not bid on non-permanent shifts that may be available at the bi-weekly meeting. If you have only two Saturday permanent shifts those are the only West Side Market shifts that you may request.
6. The Saturday permanent shifts must rotate, and are not restricted to only the morning shifts.
7. Permanent shifts are only available to vendors with a permanent badge. The vendor must have a permanent badge by the time the vendors vote on the permanent shifts at the monthly vendor meeting.
8. Permanent shifts are listed in bold on the schedule.
9. The vendor assigned the shift is allowed one half hour at the 7 a.m. shift and 15 minutes for every other shift to be late and still can still keep the shift. So a vendor assigned to the 7 a.m. shift has until 7:30 to show up and can still keep the shift.
10. The official time at the West Side Market is held by the first pedestrian that walks by. The vendors ask the first pedestrian to settle any dispute about time.
11. Vendors that do not have permanent shifts get first choice on the open shifts.
12. If a vendor does not show up for a shift that is an open shift and is available to any vendor.
13. Open shifts are given out to those who are on-site at the start of the open shift.
14. You must be present at the start of an open shift to take it. So if one vendor shows up at 10 a.m. for an open shift and the another vendor shows up at 10:07, the vendor that showed up first gets the shift. You cannot show up early for an open shift, because you would not know if it is open until it starts.
15. If a vendor takes an open shift and the assigned vendor shows up 10 minutes late, the vendor that took the shift must leave the area immediately. The assigned vendor keeps the shift even though they were late. If the assigned vendor shows up at 17 minutes after the start of the shift they missed their shift, and must leave immediately.
16. DO NOT ARGUE OR FIGHT OR CALL NAMES OUTSIDE AT THE MARKET!!!! If you have a problem bring it up at the meeting or risk being suspended.
17. Only one vendor behind the West Side Market. No other vendor can be in sight of the vendor selling behind the West Side Market.
18. There is no need to involve the Coalition in the distribution of open shifts at the West Side Market. No staff person can give any shifts away.
19. The vendor with the least amount of shifts assigned or worked for the week gets an open shift if two people show up at the same time. So if vendor x and vendor y both want the noon to 2 p.m. shift and both are there at noon to take the shift then the vendor with the least of amount of shifts for the week gets it. This includes assigned shifts and those that the vendors picked up throughout the week.
20. If there is a tie in the number of shifts between the two vendor requesting a shift, then the vendor that worked the shift closest to the one in question does not get the open shift. The vendor that worked last would need to leave the site immediately.
APPENDIX D: WEST SIDE MARKET SCHEDULE

West Side Market Schedule

Week of February 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday 2/6</th>
<th>Wed. 2/8</th>
<th>Friday 2/10</th>
<th>Saturday 2/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.-10 a.m.</td>
<td>Angelo</td>
<td>Bobbette</td>
<td>Angelo</td>
<td>Buzzy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 a.m.-Noon</td>
<td>Buzzy</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon—2 p.m.</td>
<td>Mike Boyd</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Bobbette</td>
<td>Delores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 p.m.</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Delores</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Mike Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 p.m.</td>
<td>XXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXX</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Buzzy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Week of February 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday 2/13</th>
<th>Wed. 2/15</th>
<th>Friday 2/17</th>
<th>Saturday 2/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.-10 a.m.</td>
<td>Buzzy</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Angelo</td>
<td>Angelo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 a.m.-Noon</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Bobbette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon—2 p.m.</td>
<td>Bobbette</td>
<td>Mike Boyd</td>
<td>Mike Boyd</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 p.m.</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Delores</td>
<td>Bobbette</td>
<td>Delores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 p.m.</td>
<td>XXXXXXXX</td>
<td>XXXXXXXX</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Buzzy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next West Side Market Meeting is: Thursday February 16 at 3:00 p.m.

The Rules for Open Shifts at WSM:

1. You cannot sell a shift or give it away—not even to family members
2. Call in if you cannot make your shift 432-0540 ext 100
3. You must buy $7 worth of paper for every shift you work.
4. The shift is open after the first 15 minutes. You must call the office to say that you have taken an open shift or to report that you will not be working a shift.
5. If 2 vendors show up for the same open shift, then the shift goes the one who showed up first starting at the beginning of the open shift.
6. If two vendors show up at the same time, then the shift will be assigned to the one with the least number of shifts scheduled and worked that week. This includes assigned shifts and those that the vendor has picked up as open. The week is defined as Monday to Saturday.
7. If the two vendors have the same number of shifts that week, then the open shift goes to the vendor who did not work more recently to the shift in question. The vendor that worked the most recent shift needs to leave immediately.
8. If there is a question about time, ask the first person walking by what time it is and that becomes the official time. They are neutral and have no stake in the fight.
9. Don’t forget to work as a team.
10. Do not argue or agitate or fight or call each other names!!!
11. Just walk away if there is a dispute and we will settle it at the meeting. If a vendor improperly took a shift they will lose future WSM shifts. Do not risk being suspended.