

## **Visitation of New Hope**

**Yeaton Clifton**

*“The cause of homelessness is lack of housing” ~Jonathan Kozol*

The barter club went to a homeless shelter. The shelter was named New Hope.

We came to tell them how they could join and trade their time for our time.

Most were scared of us. Who were we with membership forms to sign and ways we claimed might help them in fair exchange of time?

We agreed to take who they were on faith. Sign up whether you can prove who you are or not. Strange how the news assumes all undocumented people are alien.

One man did join and said he wanted help with computers and the Internet.

He was starting an online business and had already bought some services.

He was told he could be an online merchant in exchange for small amounts of money, although amounts large to him. He'd bought the services.

I met him at the library and showed how to develop a Web presence for free. I was trying to help him reduce what he must invest.

The library closed due to snow. I told him I would check up on him in a couple of weeks to see if what I gave him was helpful.

I went to my car. I know that he was out in the snow until the shelter opened in the late afternoon.

He never phoned again, so I called back in two weeks, as I said I would. I called his number, which was disconnected.

Then I was told that the shelter did not know how to contact him either.

He did not respond to email or to messages through his website.

Of course, they say don't worry, don't wonder if there was a better plan

He could make to get back to world of the well sheltered.

He was indeed brave enough to seek sheltered life.

He had the courage to try to sell things to homed people.

Certainly the people at the shelter who politely sent him into Michigan's cold

At 7 every A.M did not see their job as teaching him to make good choices.

If I knew where to find the group that helps them make a strategy for escape,

That's the group I would join. Perhaps it lives in some shadow of hope.

There are those to give fish, and there are those who educate them in dogma

Of religion. Who teaches strategizing a way out of homelessness?

Where are the ones who would be true to the Old Chinese cliché "Teach a man

How to fish." I'd like to volunteer time with those people.

Don't call my meditation guilt. It is a shadow of hope: an idea of how the world

Could be better if men acted. Loneliness is closer to what I really feel.