

THE CLAY STUDIO PRESENTS THE ART OF THE CUP | REBRANDING LIBBY: A SUPERFUND TOWN TRIES TO SHAKE ITS STIGMA

MISSOULA  
*Independent*  
Vol. 29, No. 5 • Feb. 1–Feb. 8, 2018 Western Montana's Weekly Journal of People, Politics and Culture

**FLOATING  
HOPE**



A Flathead homeless shelter promises respite for veterans.  
Why do so many veterans say it doesn't deliver?

by Susan Elizabeth Shepard

A promotional banner for the Snow Joke Half Marathon. On the left is a circular logo for the '15TH ANNUAL SNOW JOKE HALF MARATHON' featuring a snowman and the location 'SEELEY LAKE'. The main text reads 'GOT THE GUTS?' in large orange letters, with 'WE WANT YOU FOR THE SNOW JOKE HALF MARATHON!' below it. On the right, it says 'PAGE 32 FOR MORE DEETS!' in a stylized font.

**G**lacier Hope Homes was supposed to help Terrance Taylor get his life back together. The 30-acre rural property in a scenic stretch between Whitefish and Kalispell was a place for homeless veterans to stay and heal, according to its founder, Jason Stevens, its livestock, barn, farmhouse and residential duplexes gave it the appearance of a bucolic retreat.

Taylor wasn't a country guy. He is an African American from Los Angeles who had served in the Marines, and then the Army, in the 1980s. He had a welcoming smile and an easy way of communicating, drove a red Porsche and had worked in sales for Charter Communications. He'd moved to Whitefish in 2014 after coming there on a job for Charter, and rented half a house there while traveling around the country working for them. After one extended absence in 2015, Taylor returned to find that his roommate had rented his part of the house out from under him. In need of a place to stay, Taylor says he was referred by Veterans Affairs to a new shelter called Glacier Hope Homes. He got to know Stevens a little, talking at dinner, and the two were impressed with each other: Taylor with Stevens' vision for a homeless veterans' shelter, and Stevens with Taylor's marketing and sales experience. He offered Taylor a job doing both for the shelter on the spot, but Taylor left after a short while and moved out of the Flathead entirely. He kept in touch with Stevens on Facebook.

The next year, after Taylor left a private security gig in Colorado that ended

when he was assaulted by one of his clients, Stevens again offered him the job, and this time he accepted. So Taylor drove his prized Porsche up to Montana last January. He didn't realize then that months later, he would be sneaking out of the Glacier Hope farmhouse to talk to Flathead County sheriff's deputies, asking them to keep him safe, or desperately trying to cobble together a few hundred dollars to fix his car so he could leave. Out of money, unpaid for months of work he'd already done and worried about his boss' temper, Taylor made his way to the United Way in Kalispell, where he got help to fix his car so he could get out of town. Taylor says it was a relief to get away from Glacier Hope Homes, which, far from a respite, had turned out to be a place of isolation for many of its residents who didn't have the resources to leave. Some, like Taylor, would leave the shelter worse than when they arrived. They tell stories of a house so unkempt there were rodent feces in the silverware drawers, of a kitchen kept locked to veterans and of being forced to work, even while disabled, in order to keep a roof over their heads.

Taylor is now living out of his car in Missoula, staying at motels or with an ex-girlfriend, and trying to blow the whistle on Stevens. "He exploited a weakness in my life," he says.

**J**ason Stevens had once been homeless himself. When he first came to the Flathead Valley from Omak, a town in Eastern

Washington, in 2014, he was struggling financially, with a series of failed business ventures and the end of a long-term relationship behind him. Stevens stayed at Samaritan House, a homeless shelter in Kalispell, and got a job at a grocery store. He later told reporters that while he hadn't served in the military himself, the stay at Samaritan House introduced him to how many veterans needed help, and so he decided to create a shelter of his own for their benefit.

In photos on the Glacier Hope Homes website, Stevens has an unassuming, clean-cut appearance. He has a fatherly gray mustache and eyes that could be described as twinkling. By multiple accounts, he can talk circles around almost anyone and persuade most listeners to his cause. That was a valuable talent to bring to the task of starting Glacier Hope Homes. He didn't even have a computer. He used the public library to research how to start a nonprofit business and a homeless shelter.

Stevens told the *Daily Interlake* in May 2015 that he had a funding plan in place: "We have private investors, a block grant from (the U.S. Department of Housing and Development) and about a third comes from what we call 'earned income.'" The story explains that earned income "includes Medicaid, Medicare and Veterans Administration benefits." He'd secured a beautiful location for his shelter, the former Haymoon Ranch Resort, five miles south of Whitefish. It had multiple cabins and a large main lodge, and Stevens told the *Flathead Beacon*

that "the word that always comes up when people visit here is 'serene.' That's what we're going for — serenity."

He registered Glacier Hope Homes as a domestic nonprofit corporation with the Secretary of State's office in early August of 2015 and opened the shelter doors that month. Sen. Steve Daines visited for the ribbon-cutting and spoke to the first group of veterans to stay there. A photograph Daines posted to Twitter shows him standing on a portable stage in front of rustic buildings, talking to a number of men in veterans' regalia sitting on folding chairs arranged on the grass.

Local news outlets published human-interest stories about the man who'd gone from staying in a homeless shelter to running one. Stevens told the *Beacon*, the *Interlake* and the local NBC affiliate that his would be a 24/7 facility where veterans would have access to specialized care for PTSD, counseling, job training, benefits assistance and a host of services above and beyond those traditionally available at homeless shelters.

What he told the *Interlake* about a block grant may have been based on applications that were never submitted. The state Department of Commerce, which administers HUD block grants in Montana, says it never received any applications nor awarded any funding to Glacier Hope Homes. Without federal funds, Glacier Hope Homes would have to rely on private donations. Stevens assured the people he began hiring to staff the shelter that those donations would be forthcoming.

# FLOATING HOPE



A Flathead homeless shelter promises respite for veterans.  
Why do so many veterans say it doesn't deliver?

by Susan Elizabeth Shepard • photos by Terrance Taylor

One of those staffers was Tim Merklinger, a member of the Flathead Marines, a veterans group based in Kalispell. A mutual friend introduced Stevens to Merklinger, and after a meeting where Stevens presented his plans for Glacier Hope Homes, he asked Merklinger to come on board as operations manager in fall 2015. Merklinger says Stevens told him he'd already closed a deal to buy the Haymoon Resort property.

"Then I found out he hadn't closed on it. And then it got to the end where, after a month, come time for me to get paid, he was nowhere to be found," says Merklinger. "So shortly after that, I filed

the fall of 2015, and was unaware that his name still appeared on company records. "I got involved to help the program get set up, and when some of the funding didn't come through, the direction was to develop a different kind of center, and it didn't make sense for me to be involved any longer," Grachek says.

Karen Porteous, who was hired in 2017 to run the shelter's mental health operations, says that two weeks after she started, she was told by Stevens that he wouldn't have money to pay her. "I was promised \$3,000 a month, but I guess I knew going into it that it all depends on funding. But I certainly felt strung along for that couple of weeks," Porteous says.

solutely cordial to the woman, philanthropist and heiress Dr. Mary Stranahan, a retired osteopathic general practitioner who had founded a social impact investment firm called Goodworks Ventures. Stranahan's office confirms that she was approached by Stevens, and did tour the Glacier Hope Homes grounds in fall 2015, but that Goodworks didn't offer the shelter funding.

Shortly after that, Stevens had to move the shelter off of the former Haymoon site after just a few months in business. By the late fall, Stevens had moved himself and the veterans to a rental property in Foy's Lake, southwest of Kalispell. That house was in a residen-

come rent for \$700 a month, including utilities. He says that's the income he uses to pay his landlord \$5,000 a month. The main farmhouse has the capacity to house 10 residents, who are asked to contribute \$80 a month for food and \$250 a month for rent after a trial period.

The spacious property included horse pastures that caught Nicolle Chapman's eye when she was visiting Whitefish from California in 2016. She'd been training horses since she was a young girl, and was caring for several rescue horses. She stopped by the Glacier Hope Homes property to check out those pastures and met Stevens. In what had become a pattern, he extended a job offer



The entrance to Glacier Hope Homes near Columbia Falls.

against him and the nonprofit and the members of the board in small claims court to get paid." Regarding Merklinger's missing salary, Stevens now says Merklinger was a volunteer, not paid staff. Merklinger says a board member made sure he got paid by Stevens after the claim was filed.

That board member was Mike Grachek, the owner of an insurance agency in Kalispell, who helped Stevens file his incorporation forms. Grachek was a founding director for Glacier Hope Homes, Inc., and is listed as president on the company's 2017 annual report. Today, Grachek says he is no longer involved with Glacier Hope Homes, having terminated his involvement shortly after

Stevens says that Porteous, as well, was a volunteer.

Stevens courted private donors with mixed success, Merklinger says. "He had a lady show up one day, he told me she was going to 'save the day,' she was going to write a check and purchase the grounds for Glacier Hope Homes. And I met her in the parking lot because Jason was busy and I spent five, maybe 10 minutes talking to her," Merklinger says. "Well, later, she decided she was not going to write the check, and Jason Stevens told everybody that it was my fault, that I was out there talking to her like I was a drill instructor."

Merklinger, who says he is in fact a former drill instructor, insists he was ab-

sentive to the area, and after one of the residents damaged a neighbor's fence while driving his jacked-up Chevy around, they were asked to leave.

In 2016, Glacier Hope Homes moved to its third, and current, location, a 30-acre property in Happy Valley. While not a resort like the Haymoon, it had room to build additional housing. Former staff from the current location say that Stevens moved his mother into one of the residences on site, and the adult son of his ex-wife came to live there as well. The property owner financed the construction of five one-bedroom duplexes that Stevens says veterans with in-

come rent for \$700 a month, including utilities. He says that's the income he uses to pay his landlord \$5,000 a month. The main farmhouse has the capacity to house 10 residents, who are asked to contribute \$80 a month for food and \$250 a month for rent after a trial period.

Stevens says that Porteous, as well, was a volunteer.

Chapman says her therapy program helped the veterans in the time she was there, from last February to the end of April 2017. "Somehow, the horses just induce them to talk, they feel very comfortable," she says. But weeks, then months, passed without a paycheck. "His excuse was that the deal didn't go through, or they're still working on it, or they're getting their funding so I should start getting paid, but that just never happened." Stevens disputes this, and says Chapman

brought her horses to Glacier Hope Homes of her own accord and was never hired.

Chapman, who now lives in Bigfork and works at a hotel, says she occasionally returns to visit with the veterans at Glacier Hope Homes. She says some of them need more patience than Stevens can provide. "After being there and listening to the guys, listening to how Jason would talk to the guys, it's just — they don't need [that]." Chapman says. "If something went wrong, he would start yelling and cussing at them. And it's like, 'Whoa dude, back off.' These guys are here for help. They're not here for any of that."

Merklinger says Stevens' manner with the veterans concerned him as well.

"Any veteran that would question Jason Stevens, he gave them their walking papers quickly. He would kick them out," Merklinger says. "And I told him, 'These are veterans, the guys are going to ask questions,' but he didn't want to listen to me. I knew I wasn't going to be sticking around because [of] Jason. The vision of Glacier Hope Homes was a good idea. He was just the wrong person to be in charge and get it going."

Equine therapy would have joined a long list of services advertised on the Glacier Hope Homes website: housing, job training, psychotherapy, education assistance, drug and alcohol counseling and legal aid. Stevens now says that these services are not provided on-site, and that veterans are taken to local mental health nonprofits for counseling services. The Montana Department of Probation and Parole put the shelter on a list of post-release housing options it provides to newly released prisoners, which is how Allen Johansen learned about it. Johansen, who served in the Army from 2001 to 2015, left prison in the summer of 2017 after serving five months for a felony DUI.

"The reason I went to Glacier Hope Homes was to get PTSD counseling that I was promised," Johansen says. "When I got there, there was absolutely nothing."

But he says Stevens told him he could earn some money if he stayed and worked. Johansen stayed for three months, but instead of getting paid, he says he ended up lending money to Stevens. Dave Castro, the Department of Probation and Parole's deputy chief in charge of Region V, says Glacier Hope Homes remains on its list of post-release housing options, and that the department doesn't make recommendations.

Johansen paints a picture of a barely functional residence. "The living condi-

tions are ridiculous. There's a huge pool of raw sewage in the front yard. The house is infested with rats and mice," Johansen says. "A couple times the power company would show up to turn the power off, so [Stevens would] run around to all the people there to take up money for the bill, and never once was anyone paid back."

In November, Johansen was angered that Stevens was embellishing Glacier Hope Homes' services in an attempt to qualify for Veterans Administration shelter grants, which require recipient facilities to provide case management and, for some grants, chemical dependency programs for residents. "He was saying he was providing those things and he wasn't, such as the counseling.

the largest judgment — nearly \$85,000 — coming against a countertop installation business he used to run.

Stevens started Jason's Place in Omak, Washington, in 2011, an adult-care home he cites in his biography on the Glacier Hope Homes website. Records provided by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services show that Jason's Place was investigated at least twice, in late 2012 and early 2013, when the agency received complaints that Stevens was running an unlicensed adult family home. Stevens was fined \$3,000 and told to get a license, as required by Washington state law, after the first investigation. An investigator on the second visit reported that Jason's Place was still unlicensed. The owner of the

he was first starting Glacier Hope Homes, United Way of Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Glacier & Sanders Counties Executive Director Sherry Stevens (no relation) says he hasn't formed relationships with the existing network of service providers, and hasn't requested funding from her agency.

"I've never been to Glacier Hope Homes. I saw a presentation, and I met once years ago with Jason," she says. "They've pretty much stayed to their own. I don't know that he really has any relationships with any of the services." Jeni Leary, who runs the VA's Homeless Program for the area, says she's aware of Glacier Hope Homes, but says the VA doesn't contract with Stevens' shelter for any services.

about outcomes, I wonder about the number of people served. Why is there no community collaborative effort?"

Glacier Hope Homes had one consistent and generous benefactor, a Fort Benton business owner named George Ackerson whose company, Safer Medical, manufactures natural supplements that it sells through Amazon. Ackerson formed his own nonprofit, Veterans Seal Team, in October 2015 and says he supported Glacier Hope Homes with donations amounting to nearly \$500,000 in 2015 and 2016. In early 2017, business troubles kept Ackerson from continuing to donate to Glacier Hope Homes. Merklinger says that an apparent quid pro quo arrangement in which Ackerson would get endorsements from Glacier Hope Homes about the efficacy of a new supplement to treat PTSD bothered Stevens. "Jason, he was very upset about that, he was pacing and throwing up his hands in the air."

Stevens disputes this claim and says that Ackerson only provided supplements to the veterans and asked for feedback on their efficacy. Ackerson says testimonial videos were made at Glacier Hope Homes, and Stevens' notes from a 2015 staff meeting say that Glacier Hope Homes and Safer Medical would partner to market a new supplement to veterans.

Ackerson says he gave Terrance Taylor personal financial assistance, but doesn't wish to speak to him anymore. "I told him I was leaving the country," he says. Ackerson considers his donations to Glacier Hope Homes worthwhile and helpful for veterans who are able to do their part. But, "what we've found are the vast majority of these vets [in the Flathead] are non-combat. They want to take, take, take, don't want to give anything back," Ackerson says. "I've been in combat. It changes the perception you have in life, but when you've got these guys that never had a bullet go by, what are they pissing and moaning about?"

When Taylor was trying to leave Glacier Hope Homes, he came across warnings about Stevens' inability or unwillingness to pay his debts in the comments on a 2015 post on the now-defunct Montana politics blog 4&20 Blackbirds, and took it upon himself to start connecting people who had worked for Stevens or stayed at Glacier Hope Homes and received poor treatment.

Taylor spent the longest time of anyone he's met working without pay — several months — after Stevens hired him as marketing director. "He and I were under the understanding [that] I'm not in [the] homeless veterans program," Taylor says.



Glacier Hope Homes is situated on a 30-acre property owned by local businessman Dan Scheffer.

... And I said, 'I don't want you getting [money] from the VA for me when you're not providing me with services.'" Johansen says that Stevens gave him three days to leave the facility, so he asked to be repaid the money he'd lent, and Stevens wrote him a check that Johansen says bounced. Johansen says he's filed a complaint with the Flathead County Attorney, and the Flathead County Sheriff's Office confirmed that it has issued a warrant for Stevens' arrest on a felony bad check charge.

Stevens says that Johansen gets a substantial monthly income from military retirement and disability benefits, and that the money Johansen calls a loan was actually his back rent on one of the duplexes.

Bad debts and unpaid taxes show up in a review of Stevens' entrepreneurial career. Several different building-supply businesses owned by Stevens were taken to court between 1995 and 2010, with

house out of which Jason's Place operated said he had no knowledge of the business, but he, too, said he was owed several thousand dollars by Stevens.

Stevens' website biography also claims degrees from the University of Illinois and the University of Nebraska, including a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, though neither institution was able to find records matching Stevens' claims. Stevens later told the *Independent* that he never completed his bachelors, and obtained an associate's degree from the University of Illinois.

Glacier Hope Homes has remained isolated from the Flathead community of nonprofit service providers and veterans' groups, according to executive directors of Kalispell nonprofits and workers with homeless services. Aside from Stevens introducing himself when

Glacier Hope Homes' most recent publicly available 990, for 2016, states that the organization had expenses of \$181,387 that year. The document lists no paid staff and indicates that Stevens did not draw a salary from the nonprofit. Chris Krager, executive director of Kalispell's Samaritan House, remembers meeting Stevens when he stayed there years ago, but says Stevens never asked him for help launching Glacier Hope Homes. Krager says that for a 24/7 shelter facility to have no paid staff is unusual, and that an annual budget that size wouldn't cover even the basics. "Even if you're just serving eight to 10 people, there's still personnel, maintenance," Krager says.

"There's all kinds of times we've invited [Stevens] to veterans' services providers meetings, and he hasn't participated," Krager says. "There are some things I'd like to know about it. I wonder

"I work here and I expect to make a wage, based on my performance, and a guaranteed wage." Taylor pursued grants and donations for Glacier Hope Homes and worked on the shelter's social media and crowdfunding presence. After Taylor's car broke down, Stevens started making him do farm labor on the property. "Jason forced me to work [against] doctor's orders because of my torn Achilles," Taylor says. "He forced me to do heavy labor or I wouldn't have a place to live." The United Way's Sherry Stevens remembers helping Taylor, and also remembers his distress: "He seemed fearful. I said, 'If you feel like you need to leave, you should.'" Taylor says he had become afraid in part because Stevens and his stepson and friends would make jokes or threats—he wasn't sure which—about hanging Taylor, who is black, from a tree.

Taylor filed a wage complaint with the state Department of Labor and Industry, but failed to follow up on it. Stevens says he never hired Taylor, and that the state determined Taylor had not been an employee. Documents supplied by the DLI do not indicate a determination of employee status, but do confirm that Taylor's complaint was dismissed. By September Taylor was in Missoula, staying at the Poverello Center, where he met other veterans who'd had bad experiences at Glacier Hope Homes. Taylor also reached out to a man named Preston Crowl, who he'd heard had lost a significant asset in his attempts to help Stevens.

Crowl runs a landscaping business in Hawaii, but took regular trips to Montana to stay at a home he owned just down the road from Glacier Hope Homes. He hadn't noticed the shelter while visiting in the fall of 2015, but saw a front-page feature story about Stevens and his shelter in the *Flathead Beacon* when he picked up the weekly paper before a flight to Salt Lake City.

Crowl decided to call Stevens to see if he could help. The land his log-cabin-style home was on, where he took his children for Christmas vacations, was adjacent to the Glacier Hope Homes property. Crowl says Stevens described a desperate situation: He'd failed to secure a large loan from a private donor, and if he didn't find a solution soon, Glacier Hope Homes and the veterans staying there would be homeless by the end of December.

"At Christmastime of 2015, they have to move out of the place that they were renting, they were getting kicked out," Crowl remembers. "So push came to shove, these guys needed a home, it's the middle of winter," Crowl says. Crowl flew back to Montana for the holidays and decided he could save the day by offering

his own home as collateral for a down payment on a new 30-acre property that could not only house Glacier Hope Homes, but also generate lease income for the nonprofit. "With a little bit of knowledge of some people up there and a little bit of real estate savvy, I whipped together a private money lender and find a 30-acre ranch," Crowl recalls. "I put the real estate deal together, I go to a buddy of mine, who gives me a hundred grand in a brown paper sack." Crowl says he horsed around with the bag of money, putting it on the back of his 4Runner while his children took "gangster pho-

a deal on the new location for Glacier Hope Homes.

But he neglected to get one thing done before handing over the deed to his property. "This deal happened so fast, these guys were going to be homeless, and Jason always promised me that we were going to get paper together in writing when this went down," Crowl says. He asked his lawyer to draw up a repayment agreement and a lease. "Jason dogged me and never signed the papers. And trust me, I've learned a life lesson, and so have my children. Don't do any deal until all the papers are signed."



Jason Stevens at Glacier Hope Homes' second location, Christmas 2015.

tos" before taking the cash to the bank to be put in escrow. Stevens' end of the deal was to come up with \$100,000 to pay back the cash lender within a few months, or else the lender, armed with a quitclaim deed, would take Crowl's home. Stevens convinced Crowl that it wouldn't take him long to raise the money, that he had arranged meetings with Montana senators and donors. Within a week, Crowl furnished the quitclaim deed to the cash lender and closed

Crowl provided the *Independent* with correspondence between himself and his attorney, Leo Tracy, about the proposed paperwork. Stevens did not come up with the money to pay back the loan of the down payment, nor was he able to keep up with the payments on Glacier Hope Homes' new ranch, Crowl says. So the lender took possession of both by the end of summer 2016.

Stevens says that the deal was entirely between Crowl and the lender, and

that problems arose when Crowl sought to get the lender to make a larger down payment. "The time came for the money to be paid back, and obviously I didn't have it and Preston didn't have it. I don't blame him," Stevens says. "I would be upset, too, but I would be a little more cautious in what I had done."

The lender was local business owner and developer Dan Scheffer, owner of the Midway Mini Mart in Whitefish. Scheffer formed an LLC called Vet Ranch to function as the owner of the property, and made his own deal with Stevens to allow Glacier Hope Homes to continue operating there.

Contacted by phone in January, Scheffer said he was not closely associated with Glacier Hope Homes. "I'm not behind them. I rent to Glacier Hope Homes," Scheffer said. Asked if Stevens had continued to struggle to pay rent for the property, Scheffer said, "A big chunk just got caught up. I'll just say this: We were struggling, but now we're doing very well."

A common refrain from those who claim they were burned by Stevens is that they wanted to help veterans, and didn't pursue money they say they were owed out of fear that any consequences for Stevens would be felt most keenly by the veterans at Glacier Hope Homes.

"I guess I just feel that was my gift to my veterans, and I don't harbor resentment for it," says Porteous, the former mental health staffer.

"I believed in his song and dance for the veterans. My heart was in the veterans," Crowl says.

A contract worker who says they're owed money for producing a benefit for Glacier Hope Homes and wishes to remain anonymous says they refrained from reporting theft of services for fear that the veterans would suffer if Stevens ran into legal trouble. The *Independent* spoke separately with seven individuals who say they're owed money for work they performed for Stevens and Glacier Hope Homes. Of those, the three who filed for relief in court or with an agency are veterans: Merklinger, Taylor and Johansen. Only Merklinger says he collected what he was owed. All were angered that a man who had never served was using their service as a means to house his own family members while not providing the counseling and help he claimed to offer veterans.

Stevens says that none of the people who say they are owed money were ever hired by him, and that all are either disgruntled former residents or volunteers who decided after the fact that they should have been paid. "There's been

so much of this, people coming in and [saying] 'I love this program, I want to help with this program. What can I do?' and then all of a sudden it's like 'Well, now you owe me,'" Stevens says. "And we keep running into that up here, and I'm not sure what it is."

Stevens says it's inevitable some residents won't be happy with their experience at Glacier Hope Homes. "There's a reason why any one of these guys are here. If they were capable of getting out of prison or if they were capable of getting out of the situations they were in, they wouldn't need our services. Every day we're dealing with mental health, we're dealing with guys who have drug and alcohol issues," Stevens says. "I understood from the get-go that there were going to be some that no matter what I did, that was not going to satisfy them."

Stevens says he now has volunteers sign an acknowledgment of their volunteer status in order to prevent further misunderstandings.

Taylor says that Stevens tried to discredit anyone who attempted to warn others about Glacier Hope Homes. "When you leave, he tells everybody that you're crazy." People who spoke to the *Independent* say Stevens told them Taylor has PTSD, which Taylor says he's never been diagnosed with, and doesn't think he has, since none of his military service was in combat.

After working for months unpaid at Glacier Hope Homes, then leaving suddenly and under duress, Taylor found himself living out of his Porsche on the streets of Missoula after getting into a fight with another Poverello resident. He says the agencies he was working with to find housing have blacklisted him because of what Stevens has told them. So he continues to try to prevent other people from getting involved.

Crowl says he misses his Montana home but has soured on the Flathead after his experience with Stevens. "I don't see really how I'm going to get anything back, because my deal in borrowing the money was all legit, it was all recorded, with a quitclaim deed," Crowl says. "I don't know what he's got up his sleeve, but he's not a straight shooter, Jason."

Stevens says he has been spending a lot of time traveling to Texas in order to set up another shelter, to be called Veterans Hope Home, in the Houston area. "We were just awarded our contract, so I will be headed back down there in a week," Stevens says. "It's a Homeless Veteran Grant. It's a grant for homelessness." The VA hasn't yet responded to a request to confirm the award. **■**

ssbepard@missoulaneus.com