

Our American society's culture and way of life is to live for the American Dream, become successful or for the most part take care of oneself. A former veteran of the U.S. military should never get to the place of being left behind as in the case of Larry Hogue.

Our society has an issue of not handling its problems until it has become a vital issue. In other words not until it has become life threatening. But it is also hard to take care of the larry's if they do not want to be helped. On the street they are known as *lifers* – begging, drugs, living day to day on change cups, etc is a lifestyle and they like it. In their minds on the street they are free and have freedom. Most will not go near a shelter for fear of getting robbed or stabbed. In the case of Larry Hogue, I believe a good portion of it is his fault and it has been his choice. In his mind he doesn't think so because again he likes his lifestyle. He was very well presented on his court date. Then it was back outside on the street to freedom!

We as a society are not very good at preventative measures because we are a procrastinating and 'don't bother me' type culture. In other cultures in Europe for example, it would be unthinkable to allow a larry to go on this long. A prison cell is not going to solve the problem and a psychiatric hospital that someone doesn't want to stay in won't help either. But I think that we must study what other cultures are doing, what their success rates are, and do the same thing. Also, since we are at Nyack College I am going to say this. A larry problem is not all psychological or natural. It is also spiritual. The civil system cannot change something it does not know how to change if it doesn't even know what the real problem is. The church has to step-up and I don't mean doing more works of handing out blankets or holding food drives. The church has to stop being afraid of applying other solutions that really work that as a majority it has not wanted to learn. When that occurs the alternative to a prison cell or a psychiatric hospital will prevail.