

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

December 23, 2016

Column #115



### HO-HO-HOLIDAY GREETINGS

**Homeless Santa and the Houseless Census are comin' to town**

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

**ACCORDING** to hearsay, Homeless Santa's coming to town; if accurate, he won't don a purple costume like he did in a scheme orchestrated by Ernie, the entrepreneurial homeless gay chef, two Christmases ago.

Ernie's get-rich scheme flopped because his white-bearded Homeless Santa was a no-show whose youthful stand-in panhandler passed out on a bench near noon.

Ernie no longer serves dumpster-dived dishes to homeless holiday-goers. He is learning a creative new profession: wig styling for women recovering from chemo, or male-pattern baldness, or simply in need of fast hairdos.

Ernie promises to share a post-holiday gourmet recipe soon.

### Feast At The Fairgrounds

The 31<sup>st</sup> annual free Christmas dinner sponsored by Kiwanis Club and volunteers will be noon to 3 p.m., Sun., Dec. 25, in the Monterey Room of Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairground Rd., Monterey. Assuring that homeless advocate Mrs. Claus is part of the community celebration featuring roast turkey and the trimmings.

A little anonymous elf told me that Mrs. Claus and Santa bear remarkable resemblances to Marge Ann Jameson, publisher/editor of the Cedar Street Times, and her jolly bewhiskered husband Neil of Jameson's Motorcycle Museum fame. Festivities start at noon and run through 3 p.m. Reservations are not necessary.

I am serving as a non-anonymous holiday hostess at the second annual Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program for Women (I-HELP) at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula on Christmas night. Between 10 and 20 homeless women are expected as guests at the holiday banquet, following which they will sleep in the cozy sanctuary.

Also, city of Monterey finally approved a private site for homeless women who live in their cars at St. John's Episcopal Church, 1490 Mark Thomas Dr., Monterey. Thus ends a long contentious process that started early this year with city council's veto of Monterey United Methodist Church as an adequate location for the One Starfish Safe Parking Program. As many as six women may now sleep overnight at St. John's Chapel.

## Homeless Census Takers Needed

Meanwhile, at least four homeless women in their 80s and one in her 90s could be out in the cold on the Monterey Peninsula during this frigid holiday season. If these statistics are correct, as shared with the Social Justice Committee at its Dec. 18 meeting at UUCMP, they should be confirmed or amended in January.

The 2017 Point-in-Time Census is scheduled for Wed., Jan. 25 to count men, women and children who are homeless throughout Monterey County. The census is coordinated by the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers in conjunction with community partners. CHSP is available by phone (831) 883-3080, or email [chspmontry4@aol.com](mailto:chspmontry4@aol.com).

If your New Year's resolutions include getting active in grassroots democracy, and especially to work toward easing suffering homelessness causes those who prefer to be housed, I heartily urge you to join me as a volunteer homeless-census-taker. See details at [www.chspmontereycounty.org](http://www.chspmontereycounty.org).

## A Peek At Peninsula Points Of Interest

Besides preparing to send out letters inviting all Monterey Peninsula cities to participate in the 2017 Matching Funds Challenge project to help support non-profits that serve the homeless, Monterey City Council is in the process of revisiting its earlier nix on second and granny units as a means of adding affordable dwelling spaces to its limited housing stock. Greater details will be covered in the near future.

## Christmas Cheer From CeliaSue

Remember Granny Annie's summer advice to homeless journalist CeliaSue Hecht to write publicly about her plight? Sue did kist that. She discusses her article about being unhoused while in her 60s that was published online in early October, <http://www.vox.com/first-person/2016/9/29/12941348/homeless-over-50-statistic>:

"I received emails from around the world. Offers for housing came from Turkey, New York, Texas, the Middle East. Most offers were not tenable. But I also received a couple of writing job offers. I jumped on those.

"A kind English gentleman and I spoke; and soon I was editing and rewriting his agency's once-a-week newsletter. His organization works with over 300 nonprofits worldwide. I was hired initially for a two-months probation period. Now they want me to continue working... My responsibilities and hours will be increasing.

"Considering going back to the desert, where I can buy a few acres and build my own tiny home on a trailer... Dreaming of a nest to call my own. With or without goats and chickens and a horse with no name. Cheers!"

So, who is Homeless Santa? He's the invisible guy I'm dancing with under the hat in this Tap Bananas salsa solo. We wish you Feliz Navidad! Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukah! and Candlelit Kwanzaa!



###

Photos provided by author or as shown; used for educational/illustrative purposes only; no copyright infringement intended.

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott at [amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com](mailto:amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com) or leave a message with

The Yodel Poet at 831-899-5887.