

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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### Column #13



(L to R) Sheridan Stephens, Wanda Sue Parrott, Yvonne Hildebrand-Bowen, Debbie Reed, Edna Tichai  
(back) Tammi Ross; Photo by Mary Ann Carbone, Board President of Community Human Services

## CEDAR STREET TIMES WINS TOP HONOR AT 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ALL WOMEN'S BALL

By Wanda Sue Parrott

A *Cedar Street Times*' writer won the Monterey Peninsula's version of Hollywood's Oscar at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual All Women's Ball sponsored by Community Human Services (CHS) on Sat., Jan. 17, at the Elks Club in Monterey. Wanda Sue Parrott's gold trophy—a *la* fashion designer Oscar de la Renta—for Best Dress of the evening was presented by last year's winner, Sheridan Stephens, attired in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French peacock-feather mask with matching fan.

Wanda's dance dress was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century American bridal apron hand-stitched from muslin, and decorated with two wooden spoons, a cook shawl and lace-trimmed cap. Lingerie was a pair of long johns trimmed with pink ribbon and lace.

"I accept this honor on behalf of *Cedar Street Times*," Wanda said. "The only reason I wore this apron was to introduce Books for Beds, a new project in which local authors who have been homeless perform readings of their books, then donate a portion of proceeds from book sales to charitable organizations that provide beds for homeless persons. I thought it might help raise bids in the silent auction. Thank you."

She donated a copy of her cookbook "There's a Spirit in the Kitchen—Recipes and Reflections of a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Ghost" which contains a section about bridal aprons worn by pioneer women as everything from wedding dresses to baby carriers and burial gowns.

The 21<sup>st</sup>-century octogenarian in the apron did the Monkey and Watusi under a revolving orb on a disco-like dance floor reminiscent of the 1970s. Under faux-black light, the dance floor was crowded with women who swayed, gyrated, hopped, kicked, skipped and shuffled.

Partygoers wore neon red and green wigs, with hair of every color in between, and ranged in age from their early twenties to their eighties. Highlights of the night came when disc jockey Tammi Ross played “The Electric Slide” for shoulder-to-shoulder line dancers, and Nancy Sinatra’s “These Boots Were Made for Walking” for gals in boots, tennis and sox.

Amid so many colorful costumes, Wanda was surprised to be announced 1<sup>st</sup> Place winner. “The book was dictated by Amy Kitchener, my muse, who claimed to be the spirit of a humble Iowa farm woman born in 1820,” she said. “Amy taught me how to cook and hand-make the bridal gown, a one-size-fits-all garment that was the pioneer woman’s workplace answer to a modern woman’s office.”

Other winners were: 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Yvonne Hildebrand-Bowen, in a southern belle’s hoop-skirt dress; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Debbie Reed as Lady Godiva; Runner Up, Edna Tichai in a red silk strapless mermaid gown.

Photos were taken by Mary Ann Carbone, CHS Board President. Other volunteers who staged the extravaganza were Renee Hammonds, Marilyn Mancini, Jennie Rouch, Karen Araujo, Sarah Elias, Sam Rapp and co-founder Deborah Smith, who was honored with two cakes as a *bon voyage* wish before she embarks on a 6-month cruise. Rob Rapp, CHS’s Development Director, was male *fac totem* at the dance that promised women a grand night of rock and roll. They got their \$20 worth!

Approximately \$4,000 was raised from the ball. All proceeds will directly support the Community Human Service’s Community Service Foundation’s Elm House, transitional living program in Monterey County for single woman in early recovery from substance abuse, and Safe Place, Runaway and Homeless Youth Program.

Community Human Service The Community Service Foundation is a non-profit 501 © (3) and Joint Powers Authority that has served Monterey County since 1969. It is a United Way certified funded agency.

The All-Women’s Ball, now an annual fundraiser, started in 2007. According to co-founder Renee Hammonds, a Commissioner on the Status of Women, “It was a fluke. It was in Carmel. It was raining and we only made about \$700. It was only supposed to be one time, but the ladies loved it. Women know how to party better than men!”

Of the 100 women in attendance, no couples were observed to be ballroom dancing to “Goodnight, Sweetheart” as the party wound down at 11 p.m. However, two young ladies assumed dance position and tried to do the foxtrot. Neither seemed to play the traditional male role as leader, but one of the pair sported a 6-inch-high tattoo of Abraham Lincoln on her left bicep. Hollywood couldn’t get any better than that!

The *Cedar Street Times*’ award was given with the stipulation the winner will return it next year at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual All Women’s Ball, also to be at the Elks Club. which one partygoer described as “simply the best party all year on the Monterey Peninsula.” Until then, the award will be on display in the *Cedar Street Times* office at 306 Grand Ave., Pacific Grove,

For information about how to contact Books for Beds, call The Yodel Poet at 831-899-5887 and leave a message.

To contact Community Human Services (CHS), visit [www.chservices.org](http://www.chservices.org) or call 831-658-3811.

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