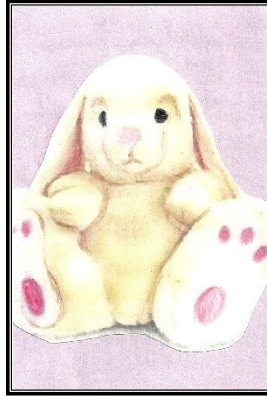


## **HOMELESS IN PARADISE**

**June 9, 2017**

**Column #139**

### **The NIMBY Syndrome – Part 4**



#### **Who Left Peter Cottontail Lying on the Homeless Trail? By Wanda Sue Parrott**

**FINDING** Peter Cottontail lying on the Homeless Trail on Thurs., May 25 moved me to tears.

If Aroara French and I hadn't been scoping out houseless cats and people, we'd have missed the Easter Bunny.

"Look, it's got jellybean toes!" Aroara exclaimed as I drove up Canyon Del Rey toward Fremont Ave. near Safeway.

The white plush toy was atop black trash bag-suitcases in which the owner's possessions had been dragged and dropped.

Aroara was acting as my eyes and ears for investigation into locations for a potential "Tourist's Guide to Homeless Sites on the Monterey Peninsula."

#### **The Fabled Feral Felines Of Seaside**

Aroara's challenge was to count Seaside's fabled feral felines.

According to local animal control last year, homeless cats lived on every block in Seaside, and about three people fed each of them.

We began before dusk on streets behind Kentucky Fried Chicken where herds of cats were reputed to have roamed recently, but Aroara spotted only two short-haired felines in driveways, one friendly alley cat and a passionate Persian that tried to attach itself to her jeans.

#### **Under The Eucalyptus Trees**

It was burning sundown as we headed for the Seaside section of Laguna Grande Park's Eucalyptus Area.

Besides the ravines near Del Monte Shopping Center in Monterey and the dunes all along the beach, Laguna Grande Park is a known gathering spot for homeless campers who move from the park out to the area surrounding Seaside Highlands and back.

Loners with or without dogs also sleep around libraries, under or behind buildings on Cannery Row, and in shopping centers.

Aroara noted the park people assembling. “There was a blanket laid out and clothes were everywhere. They were women’s clothes—a lot of tee-shirts—and people with bikes and blankets laid out by the trees. And they all seemed to be talking. There were about nine of them, both men and women. Some looked like they were in their 20s and early 30s, and others looked like they were 40. None looked old.”

She also observed, “A woman and her daughter by their car looked like they were getting upset with each other. Three men came by and started talking and propping up their bikes. They were at the picnic area but weren’t eating.”

### **Big White Bunny On The Bridge**

We had exited the Eucalyptus Area onto Canyon Del Rey and were turning right onto Fremont Ave. when Aroara spotted the cuddly white rabbit on the bridge where the homeless enter Laguna Grande Park via the native plants garden. Aroara said: “I also saw some trash heaps and bags down the little area.”

We turned right on the Monterey side of Laguna Grande Park and passed Laguna Grande Court off English Ave. “I didn’t see anyone, but I heard a man and woman yelling in Spanish behind the No Dumping sign,” Aroara said. “They couldn’t have been more than 100 yards away. People in the houses could hear it.”

When we retraced our drive over the bridge, the white rabbit was gone. So was the sun. We went home.

### **Something Must Be Done**

Aroara was concerned about the girl she heard yelling. “I worry about things a lot,” she said. “I would try to look into it on my own.”

A day after Aroara’s observation, a post appeared on Next Door Sand City online neighborhood watch network from a resident who confirmed Aroara’s report.

On June 6, AS of Seaside posted on Next Door Sand City:

“I’m not ok with the homeless hanging/parading around. I’ve been yelled at and harassed and at times have felt pretty nervous. I think it’s a HUGE issue . . . WE need to do something and not tolerate this. I pay taxes and work two jobs and I should be able to feel safe.”

EM of Del Monte Grove Laguna Grande posted recently:

“Monterey City Council is working on the idea of putting together a committee to address this ongoing issue specifically. . . There will be a variety of non-city staff on it as well that are involved in this issue already. . . I’ve suggested they must have a separate way of dealing with the vagrants who give the truly homeless looking to raise themselves out of it a bad rap.”

### **Is A Regional Solution The Answer?**

I spoke with Supervisor Jane Parker on May 21. She said the supervisors and city managers from throughout Monterey County are forming a regional coalition to address the problem of shelter and affordable housing for the homeless.

May they provide safe shelter so the huggable white bunny’s owner and others like her can rest in peace!

So with apologies to my Inner Buddha, I say no thanks to producing a tour map of homeless sites in Monterey, as must Aroara, 12, who lives safely in Strafford, Mo.

Therefore, entrepreneurs, take it away!

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