

# HOMELESS IN PARADISE

July 21, 2017

Column #145

## Dining without Dollars—Part 6



*"...Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..." (excerpt from The Lord's Prayer)*

### **POETS, GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD!**

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

**EXPLORING** attainment of free meals on the Monterey Peninsula entails qualifying for the third "If" that will provide free food from Gathering for Women (GFW) and Food Bank for Monterey County.

If a bit of poetic philosophy is added, it might shed light on those who give food freely so you're comfortable dealing with them.

First, no men allowed. You must be female to participate in the GFW program.

However, no gender rules apply to Food Bank bounty.

Second, asking for free food for the first time can take courage or involve swallowing your pride.

To qualify for GFW, you should be needy, unsheltered or threatened with homelessness, or otherwise having a hard time.

Note that I said "should" rather than "must" because GFW and the Food Bank are run by POETS, an acronym for "People Openly Empathetic Toward Suffering."

Third, even if you're an old hand at snatching and grabbing freebies, the POETS aren't likely to judge you unless you greedily overtake far more than your fair share.

Such is the case of one local homeless woman who took more than just multiples of free food. She stuffed bags with free clothing she was later found to be selling at garage sales.

Criminal charges weren't pressed; she received harsher punishment.

She was banished and her friends—surrogate extended family—now shun her.

## Meeting The Muse

The Muse is the supreme motivator of truly philanthropic POETS, whether or not they write poems. Do not fear them. In fact, perhaps you are destined to become one of them.

They serve the inner spirit that impels, compels, and propels them to strive for highest human expression as expressed in the 1928 version of the Catholic and Episcopalian communities' versions of the "Book of Common Prayer (BCP)" and which is a marvelous metaphor for the meaning of our daily bread.

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Gathering For Women

Gathering For Women started as an idea after the first Homeless in Paradise Symposium in 2012, an event spearheaded by now-Monterey Councilmember Timothy Barrett.

It revealed hundreds of unsheltered women lived invisibly on the Monterey Peninsula, most of them unrecognized and underserved.

Five years later, many inadequately sheltered women still live here but they aren't quite as invisible as they were, and they're far better fed and clothed because GFW serves hundreds of sumptuous meals per year at absolutely no charge.

Almost 200 volunteer POETS work at everything from coordinating clothing giveaways to preparing meals, many dishes for which are contributed by local restaurateurs, including the Shake family of Fisherman's Wharf fine food fame.

GFW's long-term goal is to buy its own building.

Meanwhile, a GFW day center at 187 El Dorado St., Suite D, Monterey is open Mon., Wed. and Fri. between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Snacks might be served at the day center, but elaborate weekly luncheons are served every Tues. from 11 a.m. through 1 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel.

If the women cannot get there in their own vehicles, by bicycle or on foot, transportation is available.

Complete details about Gathering for Women are available on their website at:

<http://www.gatheringforwomen.org> or you may call 831-241-6154.

Or, for first-hand information, why not attend the next meeting of Friends of Homeless Women, where representatives of Gathering for Women will be on site to provide latest updates on their program and answer questions.

Mark your calendar: Friends of Homeless Women, St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church, 146 12th St., Pacific Grove, Wed., July 26, 10 a.m. through 11:30 a.m. Possible affordable housing for homeless women at Ft. Ord will be discussed.

Meanwhile, you don't need to be a poet to agree that man cannot live by bread alone. He must also have peanut butter, jelly and the fixings found at the Food Bank of Monterey County, to be covered next week.

May the Muse be with you!

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