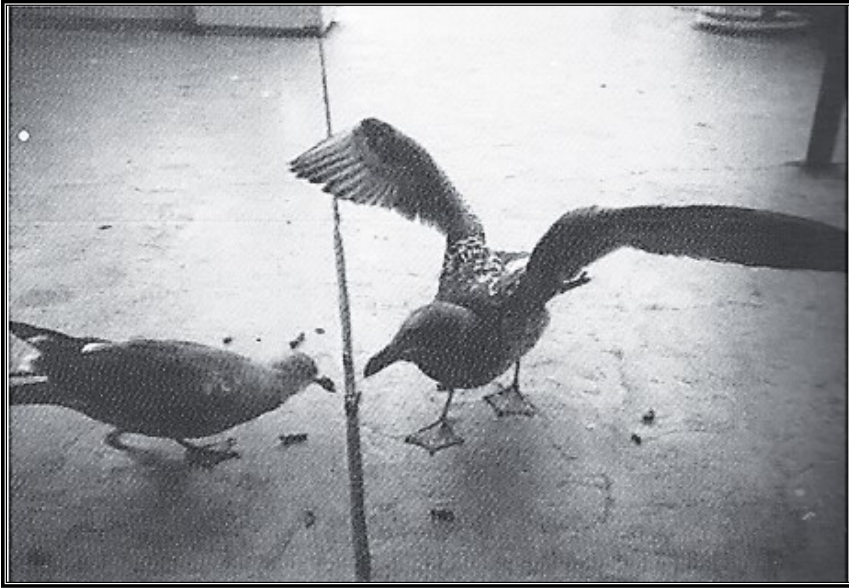


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

August 11, 2017

Column #148

Dining without Dollars—Part 9



“McDonald’s Birds—I like seagulls. I especially like how they can adapt to whatever food they can find, just like the homeless.”

Photo and text by Liz L.

From “What We See--Photographs by Women without Adequate Shelter”

On exhibit through Sept. 4, 2017

Monterey Museum of Art—Pacific St.

559 Pacific St.

Monterey, CA 93940

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD NEVER WENT THROUGH THIS CUPBOARD!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

RIPPING off a local food pantry isn’t something you’d expect a couple with an infant to do in broad daylight in Pacific Grove, but such an “Old Mother Hubbard” crime did happen, sans the baby. Remember your nursery rhyme?

*Old Mother Hubbard went to her cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone.
But when she got there,
the cupboard was bare,
And so the poor doggie had none.*

According to Tom Wright’s follow-up feature in the Monterey County Herald, the robbery happened during busy daylight hours at St. Mary’s by the Sea Episcopal Church on Wed., July 26.

The perpetrators acted as a needy couple with an unseen infant in the presumably empty baby carrier they used to haul out the heist by stripping the pantry bare-bones empty.

The stalkers also stocked their car with clothes, then split.

Which leads to the last newsworthy local free-food crime.

The Food Bank For Monterey County Fire

Back in April 2015 a brutal fire caused by unknown arsonist(s) in Salinas destroyed four Food Bank of Monterey County food trucks and a refrigerator, leaving around \$1 million in food damage.

The community rallied to restock the food bank that feeds 1 in 5 hungry people in the county.

I did an Irish waltz clog in sparkly green vest in a spontaneously assembled fundraiser spearheaded by Darby Moss Worth at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula.

Poets, musicians, storytellers, singers and other artists held the audience spellbound.

When I took my bow, I passed my green bowler Tap Bananas' hat.

The event collectively raised around \$4,500, which was then donated to a greater recovery fund generated throughout the county.

After slight delays, the Food Bank for Monterey County continued the vital work it's been doing for the past quarter century-plus and is doing today.

Family Market Program

Across the state there are 40+ food banks that design and facilitate distribution of foods through the California Association of Food Banks.

A major feature is the Family Market Program that runs from April through October each year to provide fresh produce and dairy products.

The program operates like a Farmer's Market, but without charge, where families select their own seasonal fresh produce such as broccoli, lettuce, tomatoes and fruit, as there are no pre-packaged goods.

Ten sites are available throughout Monterey County. Along with free food, clients get information on nutrition, how to apply for EBT (formerly Food Stamps) benefits, and other health and human services programs.

Emergency Food Assistance Program

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is the largest supplemental free food program the Food Bank operates.

The United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) food commodities are distributed at 26 sites throughout Monterey County via tailgate distribution on a monthly basis.

On average, 8,500 households are served each month, with a total of 2.6 million pounds of food annually.

To qualify to receive USDA food, families or individuals must certify they live in the area served by the distribution and have income at or below these guidelines, excerpts of which follow:

1-person household: monthly income, \$1,507.50; annual income, \$18,000.

2-person household: monthly income, \$2,030.00; annual income, \$24,360.

5-person household: monthly income, \$3,597.50; annual income, \$43,170.

10-person household: monthly income, \$6,210.00; annual income, \$74,520.

(For more than 10 family members, add \$522.50 each per month.)

Weekly Food Banks At Community Centers

Food banks at community centers often appeal to the homeless who use restroom facilities many outdoor food bank venues lack.

For instance, each Wednesday, 10 a.m. to noon, a free food bank functions beside the reasonably priced Farmer's Market at Sally Griffin Meals on Wheels, 700 Jewell Ave., Pacific Grove.

Come early for best picks, bring a shopping bag, but leave things like empty baby carriers outside.

The couple who pulled off the Mother Hubbard Heist didn't strand the hungry for long. The community restocked St. Mary's shelves with more food and clothing than it's had in its 130-year history!

To contribute, visit St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church, 146 12th St., Pacific Grove, CA 93950, or call 831-373-4441.

For details about the Food Bank for Monterey County, contact Melissa Kendrick, executive director, at 831-758-1523, mkendrick@food4hungry.org.

Speaking of food, don't miss the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) for Men and Women annual fundraising Italian feast and silent auction "Pasta with the Pastors" on Thurs., Aug. 24, 4:30 p.m.– 6 p.m., San Carlos Parish Hall, 500 Church St., Monterey.

Suggested donations are \$20 per adult and \$10 per child aged 4-11 accompanied by an adult.

To reserve, contact wehelpihelp@gmail.com or call Karen Araujo at 831-601-6866.

See more food bank dates and locations next week.

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