

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

August 25, 2017

Column #150

Dining without Dollars—Part 11



"I know living in your car is illegal, but God! It's just an empty parking spot no one is using at night."

Photo and text by Kelly F.

From "What We See--Photographs by Women without Shelter"

*On exhibit through Sept. 4, 2017,
Monterey Museum of Art—Pacific St.
559 Pacific St.*

Monterey, CA 93940

CAN SHERIFF'S KNOCK-AND-TALK RESTORE HOMEY FLAVOR TO FINGER-FOOD CAMPING?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

PLANNING home-cooked meals was a crucial practice that prevented World War II families from going hungry, broke, or homeless.

If Mother hadn't stuck to a thrifty menu list, I'd have not learned survival tips I still use, such as shopping sales and with coupons.

Distribution centers like today's free Food Bank for Monterey County didn't exist in Los Angeles County where Mother sent me on foot to neighborhood merchants for fresh food items. Deciphering a grocery list was like learning shorthand.

Mother's "1/2 #tom" meant "half a pound of tomatoes" from the grocer and "1 lb gr" meant "one pound of ground round" from the butcher shop.

That was then. This is now.

Knocking And Talking On Lapis Road

Wheelers (migrating campers) who've been moving between Lapis Road outside Marina and Seaside since 2015 are now the focus of a project about which I learned from Supervisor Jane Parker (District 4) on Aug. 18, which includes a program they're calling "Knock and Talk."

"Monterey County staff began conducting a 'knock and talk' operation along Lapis Road last week. The Sheriff Deputies informed individuals of code violations and issued notice to remedy those violations..." she said.

"Social Workers followed behind the Sheriff's staff and counseled individuals about options for public assistance and other housing-specific services that they might be eligible for."

Supervisor Parker says, “Everyone needs a safe place to sleep. I am committed to identifying safe options for vulnerable individuals who are sleeping in their vehicles throughout Monterey County.”

What the wheelers eat is not on Jane’s menu; it’s on mine.

Jane said, “I have been carefully monitoring the increase in vehicles that are parked along Lapis Road... Individuals who are parking on Lapis Road do not have traditional housing or other safe places to sleep.”

Calling all cities!!

Supervisor Parker says, “The County of Monterey is working hard to identify locations and funding for homeless shelters, safe parking programs, and a full spectrum of solutions—and we need local cities to partner with us.”

The County of Monterey issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Safe Parking Program last week.

Attention Qualified Contractors For Countywide 10-Year Plan!

Supervisor Parker says two agencies earlier expressed interest in such a program and “we are hopeful that they will respond to the current Request for Qualifications (RFQ)... online at <http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/Home/Components/RFP/RFP/1078/4032>.

“The contractor shall manage and operate a Safe Parking Program throughout Monterey County, with one of those locations on the Monterey Peninsula.”

Supervisors Jane Parker and Mary Adams met in July with Seaside Mayor Ralph Rubio, recently appointed to represent Peninsula Mayors on the Lead Me Home Leadership Council.

He is compiling a summary of homeless support services provided by each of the cities on the Monterey Peninsula “as a starting point for discussion about additional service gaps.” Parker invites city managers and other interested parties to contact her: district4@co.monterey.ca.us.

Veterans Transition Center Community Food Pantry

Jack Murphy, Deputy Executive Director of Veterans Transition Center, Marina, says the VTC provides transitional housing for homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.

He says, “VTC assists all veterans, not just those in our program. Every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., we open our food pantry to those in the greater community. Pantry appointments can be made as necessary.”

For information, contact Jack Murphy at www.vtcmonterey.org, jmurphy@vtcmonterey.org, 831-883-8387.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

Wheelers who migrate aren’t always on the local Lapis Road to Seaside route. Help is available, however, across the county through the Food Bank’s EFAP program, which provides basic nutritious staple foods at 26 sites and serves in excess of 8,000 families, or more than 20 percent of the Monterey County population, half of whom are children.

According to Melissa Kendrick, executive director, “They distribute more than eight million pounds of food annually and are also the sole resource for members of their Agency Clearinghouse Program, a network of more than 140 local non-profits who rely on them for food to stock their emergency pantries and serve hot meals.

For details about the Food Bank facilities in your area, contact Melissa Kendrick, 831-758-1523, mkendrick@food4hungry.org.

“Everyone deserves a safe place to sleep” (Supervisor Jane Parker).

Shopping lists are meaningless to unhappy campers who miss their own kitchens, larders, and family meals, but who gather tribal-style in finger-food rituals during this postwar homeless epidemic:

Unhappy Campers
Some sleep under the stars
I sleep in my car

Kelly F., homeless photographer, says, “I know living in your car is illegal, but God! It’s just an empty parking spot no one is using at night.”

Next week: Food bank locations on the Monterey Peninsula.

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Photo by Kelly F. From “What We See,” exhibit at Monterey Museum of Art— Pacific St.;
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