

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #162

In Their Own Words – Part 3



TOURIST DISTRACTIONS: THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO HAS LESS

By Wanda Sue Parrott

DEBATING whether to form a “committee” or “commission” on homelessness dominated Seaside City Council’s November 2 agenda:

If councilmember Dave Pacheco had prevailed, a commission--with authority to move swiftly--would be getting things done now.

As it was, the vote came at a time of mounting pressure by Monterey County Supervisors to resolve the safe parking issue with Lapis Road residents whose live-in vehicles must be gone from the stretch of county road north of Marina by Dec. 1.

District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker fought hard to form a coalition with city managers and mayors of all Monterey Peninsula cities to locate and identify safe parking sites for peninsula residents living in vehicles.

Councilmember Dave Pacheco regularly participated in such meetings, even though Seaside, which has \$30,000 in its budget for local homelessness, did not contribute financially to the matching funds challenge grants.

Mayor Ralph Rubio’s persuasive “haste can make waste” argument resulted in council’s 5-0 vote to form an exploratory committee before a formal commission is empaneled, proof that the wheels of social justice turn more slowly than necessary.

Flop, Failure, Or Fortuitous Move?

Former Seaside mayor Felix Bachofner addressed council, calling past efforts to address homelessness by a coalition of cities “a failure.”

He was referring to the matching funds challenge grant originated four years ago by Pacific Grove in which participating cities each contribute \$1 per resident to a fund that supports service providers to the homelessness.

Meanwhile, with both cities in stall mode regarding pinning down locations for shelters and safe parking, evidence of homelessness and hunger escalate.

Tourist Distractions

Women with filthy hands and smelly bodies flop beside trash bags near fast food restaurants on Fremont Blvd. Men with skin like faded saddle leather linger, loiter, and lie near liquor, convenience and retail stores on Fremont and Del Monte Avenues.

Instead of being gaunt, many malnourished unfortunates appear obese because of edema and other conditions resembling corpuscular corpulence.

While city protocol drags on, Reyes Bonilla, executive director of Community Homeless Solutions, writes:

Thank You For Helping The Homeless And The Hungry

By Reyes Bonilla

It is common knowledge to say that a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast are the best way to start the day.

Science reveals this, our parents told us this, our experience confirms it.

But what happens when these two basic essentials are missing in someone's life?

In January 2017, the Monterey County Homeless Point-In-Time Census & Survey found 2,837 homeless individuals in Monterey County, and of those only 26 percent are sheltered.

According to Hunger in Monterey County 2016, one-third of local residents cannot afford to feed themselves regularly, while the Food Bank for Monterey County provides food to one in five local residents.

In short, three-fourths of homeless children and adults lack two of life's basic necessities.

According to one study at the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School in 2007, individuals who do not get proper rest will have difficulty focusing on simple tasks, and can become overly emotional, forgetful, and show signs of decreased motor skills.

Over time, this can lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, obesity and a weakened immune system, as well as numerous other negative effects on the mind and body.

Children and adults who do have access to housing and food are better prepared, performing better in school and on the job. Concentration is improved, behavior and emotions are more stable, attention is more focused, and hyperactivity is decreased.

Long-term health benefits can include lower risk for heart disease and diabetes.

It is clear that homeless individuals are better equipped to succeed when given a foundation on which to rebuild themselves, making for a healthier society.

National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week is November 11-19 and is the perfect time to think about all we have to be thankful for.

Free Thanksgiving Meals On Thurs., Nov. 23, 2017

Consider showing your support by volunteering or donating to the agencies and individuals who provide a warm bed and nourishing food to the homeless and hungry.

No matter how little we have, there is always someone who has less. Together we can help those who have less start the day right.

Kiwanis Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Road, Monterey; Noon-3:00 p.m. Additional Information: 831-372-5863.

Lapis Road Wins Precedent

Monterey County Supervisors voted 5-0 last Tuesday to allow a 1-year Safe Parking Pilot Program to start Dec. 1. Fifteen vehicles may now legally park overnight in the county offices lot in City of Marina, despite the fact no peninsula city managers or mayors came forward with safe parking site suggestions.

This could go national! Stay tuned.

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