

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

December 1, 2017

Column #164

In Their Own Words - Part 5



*Ringle bells, dingle bells, jingling every day
Signal season's greetings call for money's give-away!*

AVOID GOING INTO HOCK WHILE FILLING SANTA'S CHRISTMAS SOCK!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SHOPPING's not really the Great American Pastime promoted by purveyors of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, is it?

If you're like me, living on inadequate Social Security, we might share a proverbial champagne appetite for giving but beer budget for spending.

So, with the Season of mail order calendar/card/catalog cash seekers and street-corner Santas sweeping down like off-course vulture-sleighs, how do you survive?

Simple. Try balancing personal and impersonal gift giving by implementing Share-a-Plate to cut cash waste.

In essence, instead of handing out pocket change to every panhandler, jingle jangler or unemployed elf waving a Help Me sign, pick one financial gift recipient and stick with it.

Share-A-Plate Makes It Easy

Share-a-plate is basically an easy 6-step process:

Step 1: Affirm your decision by vowing: "I won't go in hock to fill anyone's Christmas sock."

Write it down, post it on your mirror, and affirm it daily.

Step 2: Invite people to collaborate by giving one gift to a person, place, or group of your mutual choice.

Step 3: Huddle to choose the recipient. Go to lunch, phone each other or use social media to exchange ideas as to who deserves your largesse, whether \$10 or \$1000.

Step 4: If in doubt about who should get your gift, do "interviews" by inviting the potential giftee to speak to your group. Afterward, vote in private to accept or reject the recipient.

Step 5: Once your receiver is named, raise money. While putting your heads together, decide who will actually collect and disburse the gift money and whether it will be by check, Pay Pal cash transfer, or cash?

Step 6: On deadline day, deliver the gift.

Unitarian Universalist Church Role Model Program

I learned about Share-a-Plate from Reverend Elaine Gehrmann, co-minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Monterey Peninsula with her husband, Reverend Axel Gehrmann. The local UU Share-a-Plate collections will start its third season in January.

Visitors are welcome to observe how the program works at 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. on Sundays at 490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel.

As Rev. Elaine explains, “Half the collection, aside from pledges and designated specific funds, is split with the non-profit of the month.”

Twelve recipients are chosen a year in advance by the UU Social Justice committee from recommendations of congregants.

The recipient’s representative introduces his or her local non-profit organization on the first Sunday of the month.

For example, beneficiary for November 2017 was Marina-based The Coalition of Homeless Service Providers. An excerpt of the address given on Sun., Nov. 5 by Katherine Thoeni, executive officer, included:

Lives Will Be Reclaimed And Hopes Reborn By Katherine Thoeni

“... In the early 1990’s, the closure of the Fort Ord military base presented a unique opportunity because first priority for a percentage of property through a base closure were local homeless programs through what is known as the McKinney-Vento Act.

“Then local Congressman Leon Panetta recommended multi-agency collaboration as key to successfully taking advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity... The Coalition of Homeless Services Providers was born as a vehicle to formally bring homeless service nonprofits together to work collaboratively.

“The Coalition... focused on Fort Ord land transfers and program implementations... was recognized as a national model for the volume and value of real estate transferred to local homeless programs. . . the work of the Coalition broadened and expanded into all of Monterey County and added San Benito County in 2011. Some expansion was due to regulations and mandates from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ...

“Someone in the community had to coordinate mandated homeless census activities, so the Coalition took on that role... our newest mandated initiative is the Coordinated Assessment and Referral System or CARS... a community-wide process designed to identify the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families and prioritize them for participation in one of our 26 participating programs...

“Solving issues related to homelessness is not easy... But step by step, inch by inch, lives will be reclaimed and hopes reborn.”

For details, visit CHSP at 220 12th St., Marina and www.chspmontereycounty.org or call 831-883-3080.

Today marks the start of the 1-year pilot safe parking program for 15 vehicles of the former Lapis Road Homeowners Association members who’ll camp from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. in the parking lot of the Monterey County Coastal Offices, 2616 1st Ave., Marina.

Stay tuned as we introduce our next series, “The New Bedou.”

Meanwhile, be a money-savvy Santa by sharing a plate. It works!

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