

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

December 15, 2017

Column #166

The New Bedou—Part I - continued



*caravansary  
resting spot for caravans  
small houses on wheels*

### A FEW WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS ALONG LAPIS ROAD

By Wanda Sue Parrott

*new bedou search here  
for oases without palms  
where their body rests*

**WRITING** a column about homelessness varies from reporting facts about houselessness in one major way: If I use the first-person noun in my column, it's okay; however, as a reporter who cut her eye teeth on Hearst Corporation standards, the use of "I" was a professional reporter's no-no.

Well, I'm now retired and the reward of many years of objectivity is the privilege of saying "I" if I feel so moved. I feel moved now to correct last week's misleading column entitled "A Few Weeks before Christmas along Lapis Road."

Under the presumption that at least 15 members of the Lapis Road Homeowners Association had vacated Lapis Road as of November 30 and relocated to District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker's parking lot at 2616 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Marina, I reported on my attempt to count the cars in Jane's lot before they left at 7 a.m.

Because I got lost trying to find the Monterey Coastal Offices, I reached the lot at 7:15 a.m., only to find it empty except for a few vehicles with California Exempt licenses.

I was surprised to find the tree-shrouded site smack dab in the middle of blocks of derelict barracks with broken windows and graffiti-adorned walls. In the near-distant area was also a corner of the CSUMB campus and, nearby, the county area on which Lapis Road is situated.

After my initial tour of the parking lot, I visited Lapis Road, wrote detailed reports about tires, couches, chairs and other debris people had left before moving on, and wrote this line with the erroneous understanding the vehicles now on Lapis Road were newcomers:

"How are the first wave of New Bedou campers faring? I don't know. Stay tuned."

Well, the news is that the first wave of New Bedou campers never made it off of Lapis Road!

### **Still Stuck On Lapis Road**

In preparation for this week's column, I used Google to search for Lapis Road news and discovered an item posted in the Monterey County Herald on Nov. 30. Somehow this news had missed me entirely.

“Marina. . . a Marina safe parking pilot program for people living in their vehicles has been postponed indefinitely due to community concerns, including a threat of litigation, and last-minute contractual details with the program provider.

“County Department of Social Services Director Elliott Robinson confirmed the county would delay starting up the safe parking program at Supervisor Jane Parker's District 4 office parking lot at 2616 First Ave. in Marina, which was set to open Thursday.

“Robinson said county staff was still working through details with the program operator Orphan Productions including insurance coverage, which he said should be resolved soon. And he said the Board of Supervisors is also set to discuss an even longer delay in Tuesday's closed session, due to the potential for litigation on the matter, in response to requests from CSU Monterey Bay, Marina city and Marina Community Partners representatives for time to find an alternative site for the program.”

According to the post, the prohibition by Monterey County of RVs and other vehicles parking along Lapis Road will not go into effect until the safe parking program is open, which vindicates me partially for jumping to the conclusion last week that the Lapis Road Homeowners Association had moved.

They apparently only appeared to have moved on.

### **A Landmark New Bedou Case**

The Lapis Road matter is a \$150,000 pilot safe parking program which I predict will set a precedent as migration in bodies among those who travel by, and live in, vehicles increases and communities fight back with the Not-In-My-Own-Backyard (NIMBY) defense.

The search goes on for a 24-hour camping site that will accommodate campers wishing for an end to the rule that states they may sleep at a site overnight but must move their large vehicles during the day.

Immediately upon discovery of my mistake, I contacted Jane Parker's office and received this gracious reply from her aide, Wendy Root Askew on Tues., Dec. 12:

“Wanda, this is such a complex project with a lot of moving parts. I am so sorry that you were not informed about the changes.

### **A Quick Update:**

“The overnight program on Lapis Road continues until the new Safe Parking Program opens. Elliott Robinson has indicated that the new Safe Parking Program will open this Friday. Individuals who are registered for the Lapis program will be contacted with details about the new program.

“I hope that this information is helpful. Wendy.”

Thanks, Wendy. It is, indeed, helpful. Friday is today!

Stay tuned.

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