

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #169

The New Bedou – Part 4



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

TO PEEP OR NOT TO PEEP? THAT IS THE QUESTION!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

CONTINUING this column in 2018 raised questions: “If I decide to extend coverage of homelessness, should I change anything?”

Conscience cried, “Re-examine your covert action.”

“What covert action?”

“Masquerading as Peeper Parrott.”

“She’s social justice’s private eye.”

“Not just a nosy snoop?”

I huffed, “A private eye goes undercover.”

“Why?”

“2017 was depressing. I hope to help raise humanity back to. . .”

“To what?”

“As a start, understanding how multitudes from south of the border survive adaptation to a strange new place where they’re not always welcome, the culture is foreign, and they don’t know the language. . .”

“You mean those who migrate from one house to another under cover of darkness, often with a child in one arm and overnight bag in the other? You presume they rent cars or vans at the Seaside Auto Center and park on residential streets each night, then leave early in the morning just as the people on Lapis Road do?”

“Yes. They are often called Mexicans, but that’s not always accurate.”

“What business is it of yours?”

“I see their lifestyle as a segment of the New Bedou movement. And karmic justice. White people took California from the indigenous people in the mid-1800s and now the natives are repopulating the state by becoming immigrants. Their metaphorical oases are homes in a sort-of underground-railroad community where as many as 25 people are reputed to sleep in one small house designed to hold four or five people, or apartments that are even smaller.”

“Have you witnessed 25 people to a house?”

“No.”

“How about the plywood shed you saw by spying through the knothole of a back-alley fence?”
“It’s ramshackle, covered with tarpaper and chicken wire, and probably not up to code.”

“Is anyone living in it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Then why bother spying?”

“I’ll think about it.”

Back To Real-Time Reality

Turning from speculative philosophy, I toured Lapis Road at noon on New Year’s Eve.

Traffic was light, the sun was bright, and the 1-mile stretch of county highway was so deserted I spotted only 4 vehicles along the shoulder paralleling the walking trail and rusty railroad tracks.

Midway through Lapis Road, on the ocean side, is the entry road leading to the Cemex plant.

The sign was surrounded with the same trash that’s been lying there during my recent visits, raising the question: Who’ll clean it up, and when?

Across Del Monte Boulevard, the entry to another deserted roadway was flanked by the elegant sign announcing, “Monterey Regional Environmental Park,” covertly called “the dump.”

In the parking lot at the north end of Lapis Road were 11 vehicles, probably occupied by applicants for Tia and Michael Fechtters’ Orphan Productions safe parking program.

Two weeks ago, Tia e-mailed me. She said, “Several interviews were conducted last week, and our case manager is exhausted.”

After the holidays, I hope to talk further with Tia.

According to the 2010 census, Monterey County had a population of 415,057 persons in its 3,281 square miles of land.

The 2017 Point-in-Time Homeless Census and Survey reveal 2,837 individuals experiencing homelessness in Monterey County. “This represents an increase of 23 percent from 2015 and the largest number recorded in the past 10 years.”

Details from Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, (831)883-3080, www.chspmontereycounty.org

As of January 1, 2018, 15 vehicles with one or two homeless occupants each will participate in the 1-year pilot Safe Parking Program begun on Lapis Road. That’s 30 out of thousands.

What happens to all the other of the New Bedou movement?

The Overt Operations

Meanwhile, on New Year's Day, Sunny Fawcett, homeless advocate, saw me at a movie and divulged news of an elderly homeless woman's death in her wheelchair near Del Monte Center. I am investigating. Overtly.

Only my family and close friends knew of my identity as Peeper Parrott until my argument with Conscience appeared here.

“How about just keeping up your overt operations and let go the covert side of life?”

After soul-searching angst, I concluded:

“Covert ops are where the heart—the soul—is. The covert oases are where love keeps hope alive. The covert—the occult wellspring of tears—is where life itself springs forth again and again and again and shares the pain of hurting humanity.”

“So?”

“Without the esoteric, the Great Spiritual Unknown, 2018 might be even worse than 2017 and I am not sure I—or others--could survive it.”

Then, I realized I can't quit. “Peeper Parrott is who I AM!”

The quality of peeping now becomes the issue, for as the Unknown Philosopher said: “Small minds make small talk.”

May we all do better than that.

Happy New Year!

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