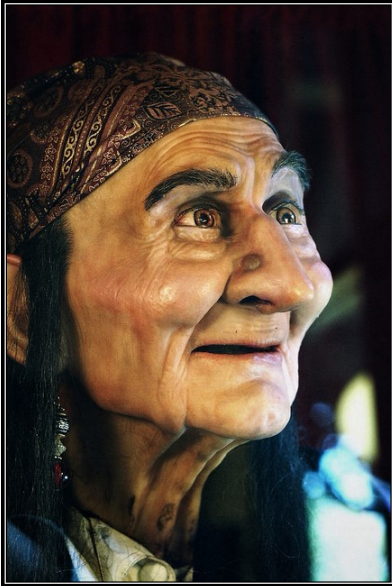


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

February 9, 2018

Column #174

The New Bedou – Part 9



Elderly Fortune Teller
*heed Wisdom's just voice
trusting that it will be right
when all else seems wrong*



Valentine Angel Card
*farewell Lapis Road
Peeper Parrott now signs off
till New Bedou come*

THE DAY LAPIS ROAD WAS ALMOST CLEAN AS A WHISTLE

By Wanda Sue Parrott

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

CHANGING hats is a metaphor for “switching focus.” If you’re like me, this means “farewell until we meet again.”

And so I tip my bowler in farewell to this New Bedou series. Peeper Parrott’s investigative reporter’s ball cap is being replaced by a colorful headscarf symbolizing my inner Gypsy crone.

Farewell to a year of columns about feces on footpaths and loads on Lapis Road.

Hoorah! This fedora flinging celebrates my 83rd birthday, and Valentine’s Day two days later.

Imagine having freedom from rumination about people who live in vehicles because they can’t afford rent in Monterey County or fretting about litterers who like the freedom roadside living affords.

It’s time to respect vehicle-dwellers’ rights to privacy and dignity.

This peeper is moving on.

Why now? Because, last weekend, I checked out Lapis Road and it was, as my Mother would have said, “Almost clean as a whistle.”

On the inland side the ground looked like wavy rows of Etch-a-Sketch freshly tilled soil.

On the ocean side near the Cemex entryway, the ground looked like gold dust. What happened?

Thanks to Google, I found that Monterey Regional Waste Management District and GreenWaste Recovery had hauled away two dumpsters filled with trash, and local volunteers had cleaned up 276 pounds of debris from along the bike path.

And that led to consideration of earth angels, like the one on this old Victorian valentine poet P. J. Roberts salvaged from a dumpster. As Peeper Parrott I perceived many people earning Earth Angel wings. They include:

Earth Angel Valentine Wings

Marge Ann Jameson, editor/publisher of the Cedar Street Times, who published news about homelessness on the Monterey Peninsula year after year, often when no other media did so.

Jane Parker, District 4 Supervisor who spearheaded efforts to raise interest in, and sustained the campaign for, the county's new Safe Parking Program in which vehicle dwellers can now legally park in the County Coastal Offices lot at 2616 First Ave., Marina.

Wendy Root Askew, Jane Parker's assistant, who always gets the word out, or is attending an important meeting. Her communication is always up-to-date.

Elliott Robinson and **Glorietta Rowland**, County of Monterey's earth angels whose wings lifted the Safe Parking Program off the ground and made it fly.

Wes White, freelance videographer, president of the Salinas/Monterey County Homeless Union and organizer/advocate for the Lapis Road Homeowners' Association. See his work at:

<https://www.facebook.com/SalinasMonterey-County-Homeless-Union-1871028776552027/>.

Tia Fechter and **Michael Fechter**, whose Orphan Productions administers the first Safe Parking Program for the county throughout 2018. At present, the only location in their contract is for the county coastal offices lot, where parking is allowed from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., but efforts are under consideration about possible site(s) where qualified Safe Parking Program participants can stay on a 24-hour basis.

Randi Bittner, the Safe Parking Program's social worker who is, I am told by a reliable source, doing a fantastic job. However, if the program is to soar, the quota of 15 vehicles needs to be met.

If you or someone you know lives in a vehicle and has interest in safe parking and/or help finding affordable housing and employment, contact Randi to set up an interview by calling 831-204-0230.

Affordable Housing Coming To Seaside?

Meanwhile, at the Housing 101 forum at Oldemeyer Center last Monday. Seaside's housing efforts and Monterey Bay Economic Partnership's three-project initiative to increase the housing supply was revealed.

It supposedly addresses all income levels across our region on old Fort Ord:

Campus Town: will be mixed housing and retail; 1,400 units including student housing.

Main Gate: located at Lightfighter Drive and Second Ave., mixed housing and multi-use.

Work Force Housing: Old nurses quarters will be replaced with work force housing.

Rental range for all: roughly between \$1000 and \$2500 per month.

Time range: the future.

After the presentation, my inner gypsy gasped: "Oh-oh!"

“What?”

“This won’t work.”

“Why not?”

“The need for affordable housing is now. NOW. Between 1000 and 5000 units ranging from \$300-\$500 per month maximum are desperately needed from Salinas to Seaside. . .”

“I know. The average social security monthly income is \$898.”

Gypsy said, “That’s why there are places like Lapis Road. Remember!”

I recalled my supposedly final visit to Lapis Road. In the far distance was one car, and beside it were an abandoned mattress and a sack of trash.

Gypsy whispered, “You foresaw the future. What’ll you do about it?”

“I’ll save Peeper Parrott’s hat. . .for when New Bedou come.”

Happy Valentine’s Day!

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