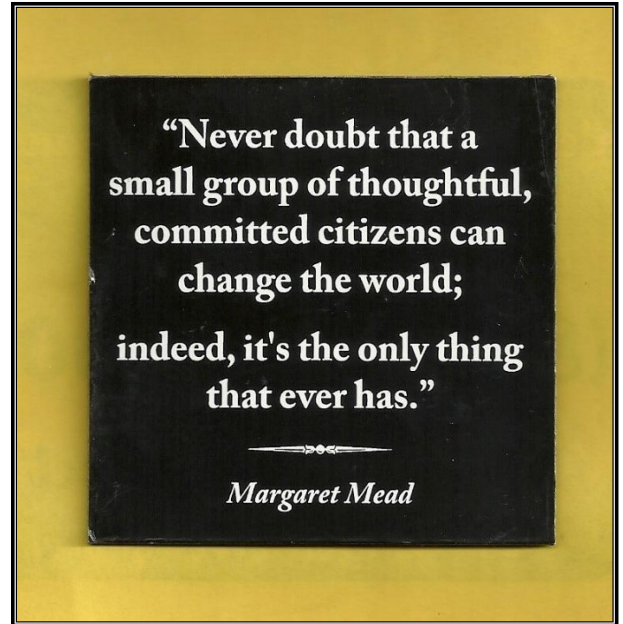
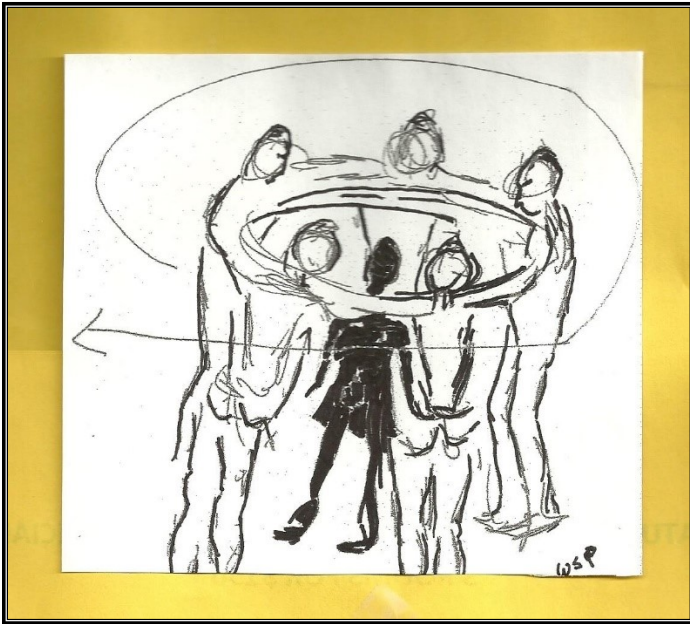


HOMELESS IN PARADISE
April 13-19, 2018

HUMPTY DUMPTY HOUSING - Part 8



MIGHT OSAGE-STYLE STEALTH RESOLVE MONTEREY'S HOUSING CRISIS?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

"**CIRCLING** the housing crisis with stealth like Osage hunters trapping prey" was my take on COPA'S April 5 House Meeting at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Seaside.

If you aren't familiar with COPA, it's an acronym for "Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action."

Tim McManus, Lead Organizer, opened with, "Housing is a very local issue. Our purpose is to come up with a COPA plan for Monterey County. The issue hits a broad spectrum of the community. A lot of it has to do with policy decisions that humans make that create the situation we are in."

Jan Lindenthal-Cox of Unity Church in Monterey was leader of COPA's House Meeting.

My nutshell version of COPA's website description is:

COPA is a 15-year-old regional nonprofit organization spanning Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. Instead of being a coalition of individual persons, its members are organizations that serve or benefit the public. Based in Watsonville, COPA's membership is made up of churches, synagogues, public schools, labor organizations and nonprofits that represent thousands of persons from the congregations and/or communities represented.

COPA's power lies in its trained leaders like Jan who learn to engage Democracy through COPA's 6-step Cycle of Organizing that resembles Native American tribal approach to hunting and trapping: they set their sights on a goal and then go for it as a unified body.

Cycle Of Organizing In Brief

Step 1: Relational Meetings. People share real stories and concerns, and leaders begin forming public relationships with one another to identify a topic of concern, such as the housing issue in Monterey County.

Step 2: House Meetings. Leaders dig deeper into their institutions in small meetings in which attendees share personal stories, new leaders emerge, and potential for actionable issues unfold.

Step 3: Research Actions. As issues arise, leaders build their expertise and develop a course of action to take about an issue by talking with key political, academic, business, non-profit, educational, and civic figures.

Step 4: Civic Academies. Classes are held within leaders' respective organizations to teach others about the issue at hand, while also hearing new stories and concerns; mobilizing others into action begins.

Step 5: Public Action. COPA leaders meet with political, business, or other officials to find allies among those who will work with them on the agenda that has been developed through the preceding steps.

Step 6: Reflection and Evaluation. These are primary tools by which leadership is developed, COPA leaders fine-tune their skills for public life, and make their voices more effective.

The house meeting I attended was Step 2 in the Cycle of Organizing. Highlights follow.

A Sneak Peek Into The House Meeting

Jan Lindenthal-Cox led the circle of about 20 people in introducing themselves. The majority were women from churches; one man represented a union; I represented Cedar Street Times.

We formed two circles and individuals gave personal testimonials of struggles to stay sheltered. I abstained from reporting their stories to protect their privacy and COPA's plans.

However, freelance writer/editor CeliaSue Hecht's story typifies housing hardships in Monterey.

She is visiting the Monterey Peninsula, after an absence of 18 months, and granted permission to publish portions of e-mail shared the day of the House Meeting.

Celiasue Needs An Old Chaise Lounge

"Although I have been working now for 18 months. . . am sleeping in car again.

. . . legs are all swollen again from sleeping upright. . .am looking for a chaise lounge/ sofa / recliner to put in van so that I can at least sleep and elevate my legs. . . was diagnosed with congestive heart failure a few months ago. . . sleeping in car is not good for me.

". . .wish they would focus on housing, housing, housing here. . . but no one, no one, no one seems interested in housing. . ."

No one, that is, until COPA came along and is getting ready to doing something about it! A few doable actions came from the House Meeting. To find out more, or get involved, contact:

Jan Lindenthal-Cox at janmlinco@comcast.net

Website : <http://copa-iaf.org/contact/>

Phone: 831-728-3210

E-mail: info@copa-iaf.org/who-we-are/

If you have a chaise lounge or long lawn chair for Celia Sue Hecht, try these contacts:

Phone: 702-225-8206

E-mail: cshechtwriter@gmail.com

Website : <http://cshechtwriter.journoportfolio.com>

My True Osage Dream

This sketch was made in Springfield, Mo. in 2005 after I dreamed of five Native Americans whirling me to a spot nearby, then sinking into the earth.

Next day I went to the site and found evidence I needed to win a legal matter and save my life. The grounds turned out to be an old Osage hunting ground and burial site.

COPA possesses the same kind of power to get things done.

Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead could have been talking about COPA when she said:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

###

Copyright 2018 by Wanda Sue Parrott

Contact amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com or call 831-899-5887