

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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HUMPTY DUMPTY HOUSING - Part 22



REPRISE THE SEERSUCKER SUIT-SUCKING SMUGGLERS OF THE 1960s?

by Wanda Sue Parrott

DERIDING the United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) lately earned our commander in chief airborne trips from the Brits as an effigy baby blimp wearing diapers.

If it weren't so funny, I'd shudder at the ironic memory of a drug smuggler I met in the late 1960s who tried to sell me a trip.

Therefore, I seek two answers:

First, where can I see this modern diaper-clad dirigible?

Second, what connections are there with homelessness?

Plenty!

Housing is the number one need in this county and country. Not market rate rent, but way, way below it.

Right here in Monterey County, between 1000 and 5000 units that rent for \$300-\$500 per month were needed yesterday!

Housing First Means Housing NOW!

Without low income housing, Hidden Homeless people live in zoolike enclosures, sharing mattresses on floors all across Monterey County, sleeping in shifts, and enduring such cramped cell-like conditions that as many as 12 through 30 people cram into one small house.

Most of them speak little or no English. They're often field workers. Others work in the hospitality industry, cleaning hotels, gardening at resorts, and cooking, waiting and bussing in restaurants. Since tourism is now the peninsula's number one industry, they hold low-paying service jobs.

"They're needed, so we can go out to eat in restaurants where they work," a Pacific Grove resident told me. "We just don't want them to live here."

To which I responded, "Are you familiar with the proclamation made by the General Assembly of the United Nations back in 1948?"

"No. Tell me about it."

"When postwar housing for all was popular and prevalent in America," I said, "the world was given this gift called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Excerpts follow.

The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights

Article 1: *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

Article 4: *No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.*

Article 5: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Think About It!

It seems to me that a political socioeconomic system that allows 500 homeless women to live without adequate shelter on the Monterey Peninsula is a form of degrading treatment or punishment.

If local, county and state authorities, and private industry, can't or won't help, it behooves the federal government to step in.

Mister President, what do you think?

It also seems homeless veterans who roam our streets, unsheltered and often unshod, are slaves to a system that owes them something more than they're getting. So give them what they need!

Mister President, listen up!

It also seems the egregious lack of live-in facilities that provide mental health care and housing for the elderly is a form of degrading treatment to those who need help most. Homelessness can be torture.

Would it be better for the federal government to bring back institutions ranging from orphanages to mental hospitals than leave the defenseless to defend themselves?

Which leads back to the baby blimp analogy: unless housing for all is addressed, will today's youth produce another version of my generation's seersucker suit suckers?

The Seersucker Suit Suckers Of Southern California

After Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD) kicked off the race for inner space in 1965, savvy Southern California smugglers imported a brand of undetectable LSD from Tijuana by dressing in lightweight cotton seersucker suits saturated with cheap liquid Tijuana LSD that dried while they lounged in cantinas.

I was offered a \$5 hit for a single suck on the button of a seersucker suit, \$10 for a double-cuff, or \$20 for a lapel lick and suck.

“How much profit will you make?” I asked.

“Between \$1,000 and \$5,000 for a jacket,” the smuggler said. “Maybe \$20,000 for the whole suit.”

“How much did the suit cost?” I asked.

“Between \$25 and \$50, depending on whether it’s white or blue.”

I whistled.

“Which trip do you want to take?” he asked.

“Sorry,” I said, “Flying makes me airsick.”

Mister President, think red, white, and blue. Are you still airborne?

YESTERYEAR’S ORPHANS

Tijuana toddlers of 1985,
with toys delivered by California Rosicrucians,
you’re now in your forties.

Cómo están ustedes?

Did you cross into the U.S. to attend school?

Or become drug smugglers?

Work in the fields? Are you border guards
overseeing today’s homeless children
torn from asylum-seeking, illegal-alien parents
they might never see again?

Digame, por favor:

Faces of Poverty age, but do they really change?

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Photo and poem by Wanda Sue Parrott

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