

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

February 15-21, 2019

### PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 7

"NEANDERTHAL BREAKFAST"



I took this photo of Taos, New Mexico (background) with a disposable camera aboard an eastbound Greyhound Bus on Interstate-44 shortly after dawn the week after Thanksgiving 2000. Does the image superimposed in the foreground reveal the ghost of a prehistoric hunter cooking breakfast over a campfire? Or is it a reflection of my own cells in the window pane? A recent DNA test claims I am 57 percent more Neanderthal than most people, who average just 1 or 2 percent. If this is a genuine ghost image, then this must be the first recorded historic photo of a homeless individual. The Greyhound bus driver told me, "Lady, I've seen things on the desert that no one would believe." (Photo is from my forthcoming novel "Validiva—The Diary of an Evolving Soul.")

*Wanda Sue Parrott*

"NEANDERTHAL BREAKFAST"  
( OVERLAY )



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### LESSON ABOUT HOMELESSNESS FROM AN UNKNOWN NEANDERTHAL

By Wanda Sue Parrott

**WAITING** for the results of the 2019 Point in Time Homeless Census & Survey, coupled with conclusions to come from the "Homeless by the Bay" town hall in Seaside on Wednesday, February 13, put me in muse mode.

"Is homelessness new?" I wondered. "Or is it as old as humanity?"

I recalled a conversation with a Greyhound Bus driver on my Thanksgiving 2000 return trip from Pacific Grove, California to Springfield, Missouri. We were heading into New Mexico under a velvet-black sky sprinkled with sugar-crystal stars.

"Have you ever seen anything other-worldly?" I asked.

"Lady, I've seen things on the desert that no one would believe," the driver said.

"Care to elaborate?"

"Nope. You've gotta see for yourself in order to believe."

Shortly after sunrise, as the bus sped at around 80 miles per hour along Interstate I-44, I snapped a photo that proved his words true.

### **The Frame That Didn't Lie**

Just as digital technology was starting to make other forms of photography obsolete, I worked with disposable cameras that could be used once and then discarded.

What you shot was what you got.

My Thanksgiving holiday photos contained a sequence of shots I snapped from the bus window as we passed south of the legendary art colony of Taos, rising in the distance as a snow-topped mountain.

Bare desert, except for brush, filled the foreground of several frames, but a male figure seemed to appear in one frame. Two large eyes and a blunt face emerged.

I squinted; a humanlike, or was it pre-humanlike, being emerged.

He had a ruff of hair almost like a mane on his head, and he seemed to be holding a stick on which some sort of tailless rodent was roasting over what I presumed was a campfire.

He was translucent, superimposed over the terrain like a ghostly hologram at Disneyland.

### **“Neanderthal Breakfast”**

I titled the photo “Neanderthal Breakfast.”

Was this my imagination? Was it an image replaying on the desert after thousands, or even millions, of geographically or topologically undisturbed years?

I printed out a copy of the photo and used it to illustrate this column. By softening your focus and squinting at the center, the image should emerge into the foreground.

Two years ago, after my DNA results reported I am 57 percent more Neanderthal than other human beings, I revisited this photo. Could the inexplicable image be my own reflection in the bus window glass, not as I look on the outside, but as a spiritual revenant of my ancient ancestry?

Did the inexpensive throwaway camera do for human history what the Hubble Telescope was doing for the universe, revealing the past as if it were happening now?

If yes, what is this photo saying?

Answer: Before we settled down and were permanently sheltered, humanity-at-large was homeless! Some of us still are!

So, what relevance might ancient ancestral lifestyles have to today's homelessness?

### **Evolutionary Link**

As a columnist reporting on homelessness for nearly five years, I've become aware of two distinctly different traits exhibited toward homelessness by those who are homeless by chance or choice, and those who serve them as career persons or volunteers.

Those who are observers of homelessness tend to fluctuate between the two polarities.

Regardless of whether such a person is male or female, the individual's attitude reflects whether he/she is macho or nurturing by nature, or in a state of flux between the two.

Which description fits you?

## **Macho**

In this respect, “Macho” means the individual, like hunter-gatherer forbears, is defensive, self-centered and will fight, often with determined belligerence and unrelenting aggressiveness; this kind of person is a “get and keep” personality who might be labeled a “me first, you last” character.

If living on the streets, this person’s survival is first and foremost; will he/she lie or cheat? Probably. Can this person be trusted? Try it to find out!

If macho persons are employed by or volunteer with nonprofits or other organizations that help the homeless, and they find the group they represent has been cheated, prosecution to the full extent of the law will be the preferred means of resolving the matter.

As law-keepers, they do things by the books and believe rules are to be followed, not broken or bent, even if they write the rules!

## **Nurturing**

On the contrary, nurturing persons are tolerant, caring, protective, generous and concerned with others who may be viewed as helpless, less competent or in need of guidance or guardianship. This person, whether male or female, is a “you first” or “we share” help-oriented character.

If living on the streets, this individual’s survival includes makeshift family or friends, even if only with a dog. Will he/she lie or cheat? Maybe, if it is a last resort to achieving a successful outcome.

Can this person be trusted? Yes, if you accept the fact he/she might “borrow from Peter to pay Paul, and then hope to repay Peter” in matters where assets needed elsewhere are not currently being used. Others’ welfare usually comes first.

Was the figure in the Neanderthal Breakfast photo macho or nurturing? Or a combination of both?

We’ll probably never find out, but it is worth thinking about next time we’re faced with casting judgment or reacting to a breaking scandal in the news, like the one last week at Gathering for Women in Monterey.

According to Monterey County Weekly’s Mary Duan, when news broke about accusations of embezzlement of \$106,000 by GFW’s executive director, Jennifer Dalton, from an organization for which she worked before she came to GFW, Jennifer resigned in order to spare GFW harm such a scandal could bring to the nonprofit on which Monterey’s 500 or more homeless women rely.

The money Jennifer allegedly embezzled was repaid.

The lesson the Neanderthal taught me is this: Dare to trust—and judge—others at your own risk, and they’ll probably do the same for you.

## **Sidebar Update on, and Apology to, CeliaSue Hecht**

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

During the past three weeks, homeless senior, CeliaSue Hecht, 69, underwent angioplasty at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and was released. She continues living in her van with her aged dog Cici, mainly because they have no alternative currently. Several people called me about CeliaSue and/or to report their own personal experiences with homelessness and homeless people to whom they reached out. Most were positive calls, but one woman reported a bad experience with a woman and her dog who stayed with her mother and allegedly scammed her. The outcome of the wakeup call from the complainant was two “Homeless in Paradise” columns advising readers that results of any contacts they follow through from information in the column are strictly at their own risk. Any resemblance to CeliaSue Hecht or other homeless women whom I have interviewed was coincidental and I apologize for wrong impressions or mistaken identity issues I may

have caused. CeliaSue has helped me by preparing an in-depth report for the Seaside City Council's "Homeless by the Bay" town hall which addressed local homelessness on Wednesday, February 13, at the Oldemeyer Center, and I thank her for this excellent presentation. Resemblance of unnamed individual(s) in my column to any persons living or dead is strictly coincidental. I apologize for any mistaken identity that may have resulted from such publication. CeliaSue reports that Cici, 12, has been passing blood this week. She does not want either of them to die in their van. CeliaSue returned to CHOMP on Wednesday. I do not know where Cici is and am closing this case at this time. Please, do not contact me, as time is of the essence, and I am untimely. Feel free to contact CeliaSue directly at [cshechtwriter@gmail.com](mailto:cshechtwriter@gmail.com); 702-225-8206.

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CREDIT: "Neanderthal Breakfast" - This enlarged image emerged like a hologram on a photo taken of the New Mexico desert south of Taos in 2000. Soften your focus and wait for the fuzzy face and form to appear.

Photo courtesy of Wanda Sue Parrott. Contact Wanda Sue Parrott, 831-899-5887,  
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