

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

March 22-28, 2019

PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 12



FROM AUCTIONS TO ZUMBA, HOMELESS WOMEN'S FUNDRAISERS ARRIVE WITH SPRING

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SHAKING one's bootie to help women in need isn't exactly like attending a sorority party or spring cotillion back in my coming-of-age days during the Eisenhower administration.

If we white linen-gloved girls in violet and pink nosegays had foreseen ourselves six+ decades later, would we have even survived the shock?

That probably depends on our parents' viewpoints.

Since Dad came from a teetotaling Southern Baptist family from the Ozarks, he might not understand how I, an occasional wine drinking Unitarian Universalist, can support the Monterey Peninsula's 501(c)(3) Community Human Services, whose website describes its Mission Statement as:

Addiction, mental illness and homelessness destroy lives and weaken families, therefore Community Human Services (CHS) provides people of all ages with the tools and support to overcome these challenges and create lasting change in their lives.

As reported in this column last week, Community Human Services is set to partner with the Gathering for Women to administer a shelter for women and children in Seaside if the Seaside application for HEAP funding is completed and approved in time for submission.

The property in issue is a mobile unit owned by County of Monterey and located at 1292 Broadway Ave., Seaside.

If legalities are intact and the project is approved, the rehabilitated healthcare facility will contain beds for 35-50 homeless women and children.

We should know by April 1 if the project application is a go.

The 13th Annual All Women's Ball

If Dad had seen us joyfully shaking our butts, busts, and brains to music so loud the rafters of the Monterey Elks Lodge were doing the hula, he'd have muttered: "What happened to decency?"

As a conservative accountant from Arkansas, he'd have been aghast at my doing the Zumba in stocking feet among women whose skin tones ranged from peachy pink to ebony, and whose body builds resembled everything from willowy praying mantises to muscle moms.

Costumes Encouraged But Not Mandatory

So, there I was last year, an octogenarian disguised as an alien, at the All-Women's Ball.

I am a woman as old as Dad's own mother had once been. There the similarity ends.

As the family grapevine told it, folks of my grandparents' generation believed dancing was akin to upright sex and, therefore, forbidden.

Grandmother was Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star, the feminine half of the Freemasons, where the lodge was located in territory where Ku Klux Klan members were my father's neighbors and "coloreds" and whites did not mix.

Now here I was in wonderful, openhearted California, freely bouncing, jiggling, bumping and grinding my way across the dance floor as loud Zumba music and a lively instructor kicked off the annual fundraiser hosted by Community Human Services.

The only thing missing were men of all shapes, ages, sizes and colors.

So, Dad, even if you had been there, you couldn't have witnessed your eldest daughter enjoying the party of the year in Monterey because you were the wrong gender!



It's time again for the Annual All Women's Ball, proceeds from which will benefit Community Human Services. If you qualify as Peninsula Pulchritude and want to go, the date is now!

Date and Time: Friday, March 22, 7:30 p.m.

The cost: \$30 per person.

The place: The Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Dr., Monterey.

Featured besides great dancing to a disc jockey will be auction items to make perfect future birthday or Christmas gifts, and appetizers guaranteed to broaden your hips if you don't burn off the calories by dancing!

It really is the party of the year!

If you don't have a costume, come as you are.

I might even dance with you!

Sorry, boys. This one's for us girls only!

Details at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/13th-annual-all-womens-ball-tickets-56071483316>

Or check the website at <https://chservices.org/>

Gala Night Life At Montrio Bistro

Sorry if you missed this one. It was good!

Men were welcome at "Who's Got Their Back" annual live auction/wine & appetizers fundraiser at the elegant Montrio Bistro in Monterey last week, and they shared their generosity and support by helping the Fund for Homeless Women raise approximately \$33,000.

According to co-founders of the fund, Rev. Michael Reid, Marian Penn and Kathy Whilden:

There is no federal funding available for programs supporting unaccompanied homeless women. Private funding is the only means of support for unaccompanied women.

Our Mission: To inspire the community through education, innovation and the development of resources to end homelessness for women on the Monterey Peninsula.

Our vision: We envision a future in which every woman has access to safe affordable housing.

Donors of auction items included: Areias, Pat; Balestreri, Antonio; Bernardus Lodge & Spa; Cannery Row Company; Cupcakes by the Sea; Farr, Sam and Shary; Ferraro, Donna and Stan; Jeffrey's Grill; Laurie and Lisa Designs; Montrio Bistro; Revival; So Cute Photo.

The Fund for Homeless Women is the first and only means of program support dedicated to meeting the growing needs of this vulnerable population on the Monterey Peninsula.

Last year, the oldest woman served was 88. Fund for Homeless Women has provided funding to create and sustain five new community programs: One Starfish Safe Parking, I-HELP for Women, Women in Transition, Fremont Street Mission and Gathering for Women.

For information, and/or to make a donation, visit www.fundforhomelesswomen.org.

Gala Breakfast To Be Served

To help the homeless by supporting the Gathering for Women, slated to co-partner in administration of the forthcoming shelter for women and children in Seaside with Community Human Services, attend their second annual Community Breakfast on Thursday, April 4, 2019, 7:30 a.m.– 9:00 a.m., Ferrantes Bayview Ballroom at the Monterey Marriott Hotel, 350 Calle Principal, Monterey.

The event is sponsored by Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. Tickets are \$40. Reservations are required. Get your ticket early!

Details at www.gatheringforwomen.org, 831-241-6154.

Back To My Coming Of Age

Mother loved to dance, but Dad's square dancing ended with, as she said, "two left feet, both of which were long and flat." But that was then and there, and this is now and here!

Shall we dance?

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CREDIT: Photo: Alien and Partner - "Shall we dance?" Photo courtesy of Wanda Sue Parrott

Photo: Promo for All Women's Ball.

This column appears in the weekly Cedar Street Times, www.cedarstreettimes.com.

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott, 831-899-5887, amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com

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