

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

August 23-29, 2019

PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 34



“WHAT IF THE LORD BLINKED HIS EYE AND EVERYONE WAS SUDDENLY HOMELESS?”

By Wanda Sue Parrott

*please don't vote for me
my announcement post was fun
just a backfired joke
your next president
must declare that homelessness
will not be ignored
housing must be fixed
that announcement's not fake news
plan to vote wisely*

POSTINGS on Next Door hook me, especially ones about lost pets, scammers, voyeurs, and poseurs; freebies like plums you must pick, used packing boxes, flowerpots, and leftover paint; homeless people; and friendly advice.

If controversial, a social media town-hall evolves, as happened with this excellent post about homeless trash pickers by a newcomer to Next Door. Press time came before I could get permission to use her name and location in the greater Monterey area:

Keep The Door Latched And The Eyes Open

By KN, Nextdoor

Some of you may have noticed in the last week or so there is an uptick in the number of homeless folks wandering around in our neighborhood, looking into trashcans and recycle bins.

My brown trash can was "stolen" on Monday, but found on Tuesday, a block up Park Ave from my house.

Our recycle guy says that is happening more and more.

Wednesday night, returning from a ball game in San Francisco, I AGAIN found both bins taken from their usual places and put out on the street (!).

Yesterday, my visiting son-in-law told me that as he worked painting the cottage, he had observed a trio of homeless people methodically going down the street rummaging at every address, and quite a number of 'sketch people' roaming around just checking things out.

So, I put a chain across the walk going to my back door and a NO TRESPASSING sign on it.

Used to be if you did that and someone came on the property, you were justified in ejecting them, no excuses.

Last night, the sound of someone rolling a trash can in the new driveway next door at 3:45 a.m. woke me right up (it is just a few feet from my bedroom window).

No- it was NOT a raccoon. I hear raccoons every night, and they do NOT roll trashcans.

So, I got up and called the police. They sent a car to cruise around, and once I saw it I went back to bed.

Minutes later I heard someone walking up my back stairs!

Yikes!

They just stood there for a minute or two, then walked back down again.

I called the police AGAIN, and this time they came out and took a report. (I was pretty sure the officer thought I was just some old lady imagining it all. Hah! Wish that were true!)

Been here going on 27 years, and only had an issue once over 20 years ago when someone slashed my backdoor screen and took my olive oil can full of loose change (!).

But, times have changed, so heads up! neighbors - keep the door latched and the eyes open.

(Editor's Note: Thanks, Kathy. Keep your Nextdoor posts coming and let all our neighbors know your full name and location.)

Social Media And Sometimes-Fake News

As we all know, besides opinions, a lot of fake news circulates on social media--good, bad, and iffy--meaning you scratch your head, as I did after placing a joke post on Facebook last week.

It was inspired by my personal disappointment in both major political parties' failure to face up to homelessness as National Enemy No. 1, leaving me as neither a Democrat nor Republican.

So, I posted this joke along with my 4th of July photo astride the Monterey bear at Colton Hall:

“Guess I’ll re-register as an American Independent and run for President in 2020.”

When the first supporter responded “I’ll vote for you,” my fingernail dug in and I scratched a small hank of hair from my amazed noggin.

The Lord Versus The Landlord

Beware of spreading or believing fake news, but rejoice that honest news is still being made, as proven by Seaside at its August 15 city council meeting.

There, Jesus prevailed over money in the Public Hearing involving Seaside Municipal Code 8.23 Safe Parking (first reading). In issue was the question: to write or not write an ordinance allowing safe parking in Seaside? This means overnight parking in designated areas where people who live in their vehicles can sleep.

Site of the first designated Safe Parking lot is the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church lot across from the cracked, weed-infested lot of the old, shuttered Seaside Market near Elm St. and Del Monte Blvd.

The site has long been a prime target for potential development as a homeless-shelter location, but owners of the defunct venue weren’t budging, although a man cited them as a reason council should decline to okay the ordinance.

Here’s a short peek at the Public Hearing that kicked off with this speaker: “Why is everything dumped in Seaside?” Others followed.

“If a church doesn’t help, then who helps?”

“The store owner would like to improve its store. . . it (safe parking) should not be imposed on those who are willing to invest in a community. . .”

“I’m 40 years old. Seaside Market closed 40 years ago,” Rev. Harold Lusk said, then with upraised arms, declared. “What if the Lord all of a sudden blinked His eye and everyone was homeless?”

For a stunning moment the council chamber was utterly silent.

Council voted 5-0 in favor of an ordinance allowing people to sleep in their vehicles in a private place.

Could this happen in your backyard? More details next week!

Pasta With The Pastors

Meanwhile, Pasta with the Pastors, annual fundraising feast benefitting the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP), is at San Carlos Parish, Monterey, Thurs., August 29, 4:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Tickets are available at the door or from 831-251-8663 .

And remember: vote wisely. Don’t vote for me!

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Photo and triple haiku from Wanda Sue Parrott

This column appears in the weekly Cedar Street Times, Central California’s hometown newspaper for Pacific Grove & the Monterey Peninsula, online at www.cedarstreettimes.com .

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