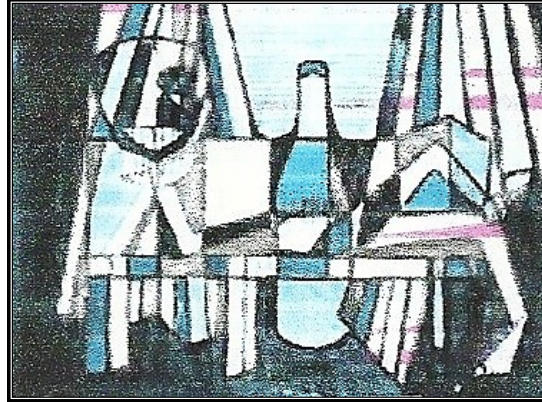


HOMELESS IN PARADISE COLUMN
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PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE - Part 4



“ARE WE READY FOR WHAT’S TO COME IN THE WORLD OF WORK?”

By Wanda Sue Parrott

*it's a fact of life
human social animals
all need to be loved
like birds need a nest
every human needs a space
where the heart's at home
grown-ups need to work
hopeless homeless job seekers
lose to booze and drugs*

Painting and triple haiku by Wanda Sue Parrott

HAVING no money to pay rent is the top reason homeless individuals claim they're unsheltered.

If the 2019 Point-in-Time Census & Survey figures are accurate, there are 2,422 homeless persons in Monterey County and 76 percent (1,830) are unsheltered.

I personally think the figures are far too low!

Statistics claim 72 percent of Monterey County's homeless are 25 and older, and of these adults only 18 percent were employed when interviews were given last spring; of them, 32 percent claimed they were unable to work, while another 20 percent said they weren't looking for work.

That left 48 percent, or roughly half the adult employable homeless community members, looking for, but not able to find, employment, among them PHDs and other professionals.

All over America people facing homelessness are asking:

Where Have All The Good Jobs Gone?

Technology took countless traditional jobs away!

So, where do the now-homeless stay all across the U.S.? Here's where they stay in Monterey County.

Twenty-two percent said they sleep outdoors, on streets or in parks.

Nineteen percent, in vehicles, including cars, vans and trucks.

Eighteen percent, in tents, 12 percent, in emergency shelters, 12 percent in transitional housing and 7 percent in hotel or motel rooms.

With rents continuing to rise and jobs vanishing, the entire nation is asking:

What Does The Future Of Work In America Look Like?

Bob Sadler, photographer whose beautiful “Inherent Worth & Dignity” portrait exhibition of homeless men and women is prominent across the American West, delivered this worship reflection at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula on Sunday, Sept. 22. It’s reprinted with his permission.

The Future of Work

by Bob Sadler

“The most startling employment figure to me is that 80 percent of the jobs filled in America in the past ten years are contract jobs...not employment...and that percentage is growing.

The second most startling statistic is that, according to Singularity University, in the next five years, about 50 percent of the jobs that exist in America today will be obsolete. Singularity knows because they track the progress of technology development and predict the impact of that technology on employment. And, what’s worse is that only about half the jobs lost will be replaced.

Information technology will automate any job that requires no creativity, emotional human interaction or physical presence.

Robotization will replace most jobs that involve hard labor.

And, hard labor that can’t be replaced will be done in the nation with the cheapest labor.

So, if I was graduating today, I’d try to develop a contractor business that involves constant creativity and complex human interaction...like stand-up comedy or emergency room staff or maybe minister of a church. Those are territories where the smartest computers and robots can’t compete . . . yet!

We are in for a fast, dramatic, and challenging transformation. We are not well equipped to handle the changes.

Ideas such as universal health insurance, free college, even universal income are floating around but the absolute need for these programs is here right now.

I worked for a year to help the people of National Power in England as they shut down 24 coal fired electricity power plants. These small plants were built in World War II, spread out all over

the countryside... to make it difficult for the Nazis to bomb. But, by 2003, they were too expensive to operate, and British coal was the dirtiest coal on earth.

These plants were the generators of electricity but also the generators of income for 24 small towns and thousands of workers electric generation workers...not to mention hundreds of thousands of coal miners.

I sat with large groups of people as they came to terms with the situation. They should have seen this coming...but it was too frightening to consider because they had lived in these communities for three generations. There was nothing to do there other than burn coal...or serve the people who burned coal. Many thought they had no other skills or capabilities.

Some people never recovered from the shock. They became depressed and went on the dole. Others, quickly began evaluating the situation, signed up for training in another career, and moved on to a new life in a new place.

I asked, often, what made some of them resilient enough to recover. They lost everything, they said, except for what they valued...their families, their integrity, and their need for a purpose. That couldn't be taken away. Those values were an internal gyroscope that kept them upright and motivated as they adjusted to a fast-changing world.

In a similar way, America doesn't see what's coming. Half the country wants to go back to the good old days.

There is no going back and millions of people will be shocked. Are we ready for what's to come in the world of work? Are our values strong enough to hold us upright through the transformation?"

Bob Sadler also delivered these facts from historian Yuval Noah Harari from his book "21 Lessons for the 21st Century":

"We have no idea what the job market will look like in 2050. It is generally agreed that machine learning and robotics will change almost every line of work. . . Some believe that within a mere decade or two, billions of people will become economically redundant. Others maintain that even in the long run automation will keep generating new jobs and prosperity for all. . . Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, for every job lost to a machine at least one new job was created, and the average standard of living has increased dramatically.

"Yet there are good reasons to think that this time is different..."

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula welcomes all persons interested in social justice. It is located at 490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel. Sunday services are at 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. www.uucmp.org 831-624-7404.

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Contact Wanda Sue Parrott; 831-899-5887 amykitchenerfdm@hotmail.com

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