

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 4



IS WHITE- OR BLUE-COLLAR CORPORATE HOUSING COMING TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

BREAKING down the hypothetical wall between utter homelessness and hope for affordable housing in California, the crisis now waving like an SOS flag attracted Apple to publicly pledge on Monday \$2.5 billion for Affordable Housing; thus, Apple joined other Silicon Valley high techs pushing to keep employees in their own hypothetical backyards.

If I am correct, this means \$50 million of Apple's pledge will go toward reducing the homeless crisis-in-general, while the bulk is earmarked for provision of affordable corporate housing similar to that which farmers a half-century ago provided for their seasonal labor forces in the Salinas Valley, or coal mining companies back east provided for their miners, in order to let them live near their work.

Thus, a cultural wall, not unlike the one the president is struggling to build at the border, will rise as corporate housing re-rears its head in principle. It's an invisible wall that crosses the socio-economic and even racial divide between white and blue class categories at a time White Supremacy and White Privilege are under seemingly fatal fire.

Is A New Class War (Whites Vs. Blues) Fomenting?

The "company store" idea in which employers provide, beside housing, goods and services needed by employees, who pay for them, isn't new.

Such payback, or call it dependency on Big Daddy, was immortalized in 1955 by country western singer Tennessee Ernie Ford in "Sixteen Tons," a folk song in which a miner owes so much money to the corporation that he can't afford to die because, as he says, "I owe my soul to the company store."

Tennessee Ernie Ford sang “Sixteen Tons” in 1955

*. . . You load sixteen tons and what do you get?
Another day older and deeper in debt.
Saint Peter, don't you call me 'cause I can't go.
I owe my soul to the company store.*

Click here or paste in search bar to hear Tennessee Ernie's legendary hit song.

[Tennessee Ernie Ford Sings 16 Tons - YouTube](#)

The difference between then and now is that yesteryear's blue-collar homeless are today's high-paid white-collar techies, many of whom work in Silicon Valley but live on the Monterey Peninsula.

Why? It's as cheap for them as it's too expensive for other workers. That's why!

Einstein called it $E=mc^2$, aka Relativity.

Who Would Benefit, And How?

Locally, who would benefit the most from affordable corporate housing? For instance: would white-collar rent-strapped educators continue to live here if the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District had affordable housing for its employees? As things stand, teachers are forced to resign because they can't afford local rent.

What about blue-collar employees who keep the tourist industry alive by providing housekeeping, food, beverages, gardening and other hospitality-industry services? Would the low-paid server who now travels from Gonzales to Pebble Beach every day actually be able to live near the place he or she works if reasonable rent were available?

Long before Apple's announcement about its \$2.5 billion commitment, workforce housing was a leading topic on the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership's drawing board.

MBEP's State Of The Region Conference

According to Betty Yee, state controller and morning keynote speaker at the MBEP's 5th annual State of the Region Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on October 25, California—as the fifth largest economy in the world—is closely watched, not just “with respect to how we are continuing to grow and prosper economically, but also with respect to how we're going to deal with some of our challenges.”

Challenges include what is the highest effective rate of poverty in the country, due largely to the state's affordability crisis which will continue to be an economic drag “as long as workers are hard-pressed to find affordable housing in proximity to well-paying jobs and good schools,” Yee said.

The Red, White And Blue Facts

According to the state's nonpartisan legislative analyst's office, California needs 100,000 to 140,000 more housing units per year than it's currently building to catch up with the demand for affordable housing.

The governor's budget includes more than \$1 billion to address homelessness, including \$650 million in emergency aid for cities and counties and regional homelessness prevention agencies, \$250 million to help cities and counties plan for new housing, \$500 million for developer loans to build affordable housing, and \$500 million to expand the state's low-income housing tax credit.

"We know that we've got to keep this engine of innovation going in California, including in the Monterey Bay region," said Yee, "and so addressing the state's housing needs is very much a part of how we are going to be sure that continues to be possible."

Click here for a video of Controller Betty Yee's full keynote presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zittzA8MVDM> .

Meanwhile, In Our Own Backyard

Thirty local houses of worship have been providing food and shelter to homeless men and woman for more than 25 collective years through Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Programs (I-HELP) for both men and women.

Until and/or unless affordable housing is available to everyone, the churches will continue to offer lifesaving comfort, not corporate, housing.

OREá Liberté, I-HELP guest, says:

Without the shelter of the churches of I-HELP, we women who are homeless would be hauled away and abducted and raped. Indeed, this has already happened to me, and to others whom I have met at the Gathering for Women and I-HELP programs. You save our lives and spirits every day, and for this we will always be grateful, and for this the Mother of God will always bless you.

For I-HELP information contact www.ihelpmontereybay.org and ihelpmontereybay@gmail.com.

For information on Gathering for Women visit www.gatheringforwomen.org .

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Photo of Tennessee Ernie Ford courtesy of Google Free Images

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