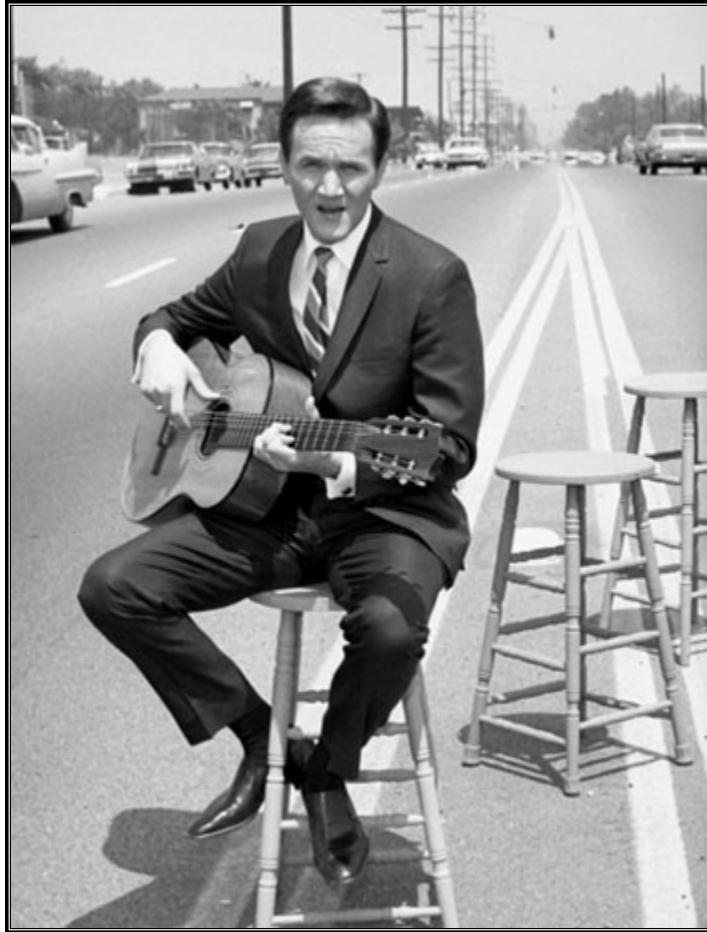


## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

November 15-21, 2019

### IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 5



*Roger Miller*

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AMERICA'S "ROAD ROYALS"?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

*“ . . . Trailer for sale or rent,  
Room to let fifty cents. . .  
I’m a man of means by no means  
‘cause I’m king of the road. . . ”*

*Roger Miller singing “King of the Road” in 1990*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=roger+miller+king-of-the-road+lyrics&mk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roger+miller+king-of-the-road+lyrics&mk)

**ACCORDING** to findings cited by California state controller Betty Yee, morning keynote speaker at the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership’s 5th annual State of the Region Conference on October 25, in California there are no more rooms to let for 50 cents, \$50 or even 500 bucks since skyrocketing rents range from \$1,500 to \$3,500 per month while average monthly social security income is \$1,055.00.

If men like the King of the Road characterized by singer Roger Miller as recently as 1990 no longer exist, where and what are they?

The one-time “road royals” are morphs now known as homeless! And they’re right here in our own back, front and side yards. If you’re one paycheck away from homelessness, you could be one of them!

They're not all men of no means; many work one or more jobs, but income isn't enough to enable them to either buy or rent.

Facts are that the Golden State's exorbitant cost of living has rendered former "kings" to being less than legendary noble "knights of the open road" whose ranks also include women.

An example is professional journalist CeliaSue Hecht, who has cried out "I need housing" for almost five years and is still singing the same song on the eve of her 70th birthday.

What would you call her ilk? Queen of the road? Or, Lady in a Van like the homeless movie character played by Maggie Smith a few years ago?

How much housing is needed right now?

Fact is, estimates among expert vary about just how much housing really is needed to circumvent the crisis in the world's fifth largest economy, California!

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.

A mean average of estimated low-income housing is 130,000 units that's needed NOW.

We add, a perfect below-poverty-level rent would be \$350 (1/3 the average social security check)!

### **Helping Homeless Women, Children And Men**

According to Sandy Larson of Homeless Outreach, while funding for Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) is included in this year's McGives campaign that runs from Nov. 7 through Dec. 31, rumor has it that One Starfish Safe Parking did not qualify, which raises the question:

Without McGives funding, can One Starfish continue offering safe parking at seven locations around the Peninsula for mostly women who sleep in their vehicles?

If no, what will happen to the Safe Parking Program slated to open soon at the Bethel Community Baptist Church in Seaside? Men and women who live in their vehicles and have been parking at the county offices in Marina are planning to move to Seaside.

The resolution authorizing the safe parking plan went into effect at last Thursday's Seaside City Council meeting! One Starfish aka Orphan Productions was announced as operator of the program. Can the church fund it, if necessary?

Sandy reported that as of October, the I-HELP programs for men and women are averaging 11 women per night and 24-26 men who are fed by 30 local houses of worship where they sleep indoors overnight on a rotating basis.

Meanwhile, in Seaside the progress on Olympia Shelter is slow; the project is still on the drawing board despite legal action that slowed but did not quash it.

The shelter, located within the city of Seaside on County of Monterey property, is being managed by the co-partnership of non-profits Gathering for Women and Community Human Services.

The shelter should eventually provide beds for between 35 and 50 people from homeless families.

Funding of the shelter was delayed while a change of management at the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, whose continuum of care includes disbursing HEAP funding, was taking place. New president Jill Allen has replaced interim director Elliott Robinson.

I've heard through the grapevine, meaning it's hearsay, that if Olympia Shelter flops, funding will be funneled to Chinatown in Salinas.

Gathering for Women's former interim executive director Kate Daniels Kurz reported in July that "in the past 12 months, we have helped 490 individual women, providing them with 1,715 case management visits:

16,642 meals; 3,906 clothes closet visits; 2,056 showers.” GFW’s Day Center is located at 147 El Dorado St., Monterey.

For information on Gathering for Women visit [www.gatheringforwomen.org](http://www.gatheringforwomen.org).

### **Meanwhile, Back To The State Of Our Region**

Matt Huerta, MBEP Housing Program Manager, hosted a panel on “Removing Barriers to Workforce Housing” in which Sibley Simon, managing principal, Envision Housing, said:

“. . . Public funding is creating close to 1,000 units of affordable housing a year in California, but that’s nowhere close to keeping up with demand. . . . when we’re looking at needing 180,000 units a year in California to break even with increases in demand and millions of units, we clearly need to do many other things if we’re not going to just keep letting this problem get worse.”

[Click here](#) for a video of Controller Betty Yee’s full keynote presentation

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

Or visit [www.montereybayeconomicpartners.com](http://www.montereybayeconomicpartners.com).

Building community one home at a time is a solution offered by Home Match, Covia’s Bay Area home-sharing program that’s hoping to open an office on the peninsula.

Covia helps people ages 22 to 95 find compatible house mates. They serve 75 percent female clients, average age 66, with 81 percent on extremely low to low income and 10 percent with moderate income. Average rent paid is \$705 per month.

If you have a room in your home to rent, or you’re interested in renting a room in a compatible host home, contact Covia’s Doris Beckman at 831-601-4584.

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Contact Wanda Sue Parrott at 831-899-5887

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