

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

January 24-30, 2020

### IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 14



*Monterey County District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker  
retiring but not gone yet!*

### ARE HOMELESS WOMEN LIKE DOGGIES THAT HAVE BEEN MUZZLED TOO LONG?

**By Wanda Sue Parrott**

**KICKSTARTING** volunteerism, topic the Fund for Homeless Women will discuss at Homeless Outreach's meeting next Monday, reminds me of unmuzzling doggies that have been silenced too long; here's why: If Governor Gavin Newsom's recent Declaration of Housing for the Homeless truly has sharp teeth, there's going to emerge new-style hypothetical barking and biting, as opposed to outmoded whimpering, tail-tucking and even boot-licking political tactics.

The only thing lacking will be 4th District Supervisor Jane Parker. After serving for decades as an advocate for justice and liberty for all—including the homeless—Jane is retiring.

Will a generation of volunteers go with her? Let's hope not.

### NEEDED: VOICES FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

Vocal homeless women can create think tanks that spawn previously unimagined corps of volunteers. Eloquent homeless women can become increasingly visible as speakers on panels and forums for the community in which they're currently more out of sight than in it.

For instance, a 73-year-old peninsula native who shares a van with two service poodles will attend her first Friends of Homeless Women meeting on Monday.

Will she reveal dilemmas she's encountered from volunteers who fail to meet needs of guests in safe parking and emergency lodging programs? Come to the meeting to find out.

Will emerging activist-advocates soon encourage homeless men and women to volunteer on, or even start up, committees in the image of Seaside's Homeless Commission that's been meeting for more than two years now. Keep your eye on Gov. Newsom to find out.

## **GRUMBLES AND GROWLS**

I've heard recent grumbings about a local organization dedicated to serving homeless women whose all-volunteer team peaked at close to 200; they're now an incorporated non-profit with 8 paid staff members and an aging, diminishing corps of volunteers.

Can the governor's war on homelessness rekindle the spirit of volunteerism, despite rumors the quality and quantity of food are declining like this gathering's volunteers are reputed to be doing? Don't miss the Homeless Outreach meeting on Monday to learn what's going on.

Also, I expect to hear a few growls about local houseless women's reactions to new arrivals from other states who appear to get preferential treatment as recipients of gas and other vouchers.

## **REVIVAL OF MATCHING FUNDS**

Will renewed interest arise in supporting revival of the matching funds challenge grant? Started by Pacific Grove city councilperson Rudy Fischer six years ago, a few peninsula communities contributed \$1 per city resident to fund assistance to non-profits that served the homeless all across the Monterey Peninsula. A similar coalition could succeed if the governor initiates it and homeless people join city representatives as voluntary committee activists.

## **IS TINY HOUSING FINALLY WITHIN REACH?**

Governor Newsom's announcement last week of his plan to distribute \$1 billion toward creating housing creates a window of opportunity for a new approach to making tiny houses possible: public-private joint ventures. For instance, Gary's Tiny Homes is a new private fund-seeking enterprise here on the Monterey Peninsula in which certified pop-out homes on wheels for seniors and the handicapped can be manufactured for as little as \$15,000 for a one-room unit to \$40,000 for five rooms.

The affordable, easily installed units can be delivered to private backyards or public land, such as proposed space for senior housing currently under exploration by Seaside and other peninsula cities. Landlords can rent the pre-built units out as low-cost housing that can be hooked up to existing utilities. For details, call Gary at 831-682-0049.

## **VOTE FOR THE RIGHT DISTRICT 4 SUPERVISOR**

Crucial for insuring success of the governor's housing plan is a County of Monterey Board of Supervisors that supports ending, not hindering efforts to ameliorate, homelessness.

Retiring District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker hosted the One Starfish Safe Parking Program's overnight parking on her county office lot for two years until pressure from a profit-oriented developer, who hopes to build high-cost housing in the area, lobbied the Board of Supervisors to remove the homeless before he builds in the vicinity. Money talked and those who lived in vehicles in Jane's lot are moving to Seaside.

Wendy Root Askew, social justice activist, friend of the homeless, and Jane's top aide for the past 10 years, is one of four 4th District Candidates vying for Jane's seat in the Primary election on March 3. Check her out at one or more volunteer-staffed Candidate Forums:

Sat., Jan. 25, 10 a.m., Marina City Hall, 211 Hillcrest Ave., Marina

Sat., Jan. 25, 1 p.m., Lincoln Park at East Garrison, Marina

Wed., Jan 29, 6 p.m., Oldemeyer Center, 986 Hilby Ave., Seaside

Sun., Feb. 16, 3 p.m., Martin Luther King Elementary School, 1713 Broadway Ave., Seaside

I saw Jane at the Martin Luther King Day celebration in Seaside on Monday and asked, “Are you going to be a volunteer after you retire?”

Jane pondered the question, so I asked, “If Wendy offers you a position as her aide after she’s elected, would you take the job she once gave to you?”

Jane’s eyes lit up, her face brightened, and her smile reminded me of a puppy so full of unconditional love that she glowed.

I thought: “Move over, Gov. Newsom. Jane might be retiring, but she isn’t gone yet!”

Interested in volunteering? Attend the Homeless Outreach meeting on Mon., Jan. 27, 1 p. m., First Presbyterian Church, 501 Eldorado St., Monterey. For details, contact Kathy Whilden at [wildini@aol.com](mailto:wildini@aol.com).

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Photo: Jane Parker, retiring County of Monterey Supervisor, 4th District

This column appears weekly in the Cedar Street Times at [www.cedarstreettimes.com](http://www.cedarstreettimes.com).

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