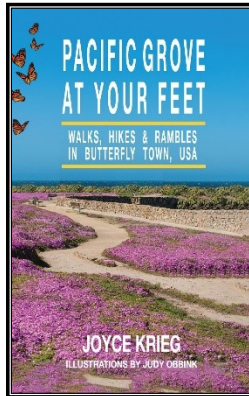


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

February 7-13, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 16



CAN WALKING SAVE AMERICA FROM THE PIED PIPER OF PATRIOTISM?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

TRIPPING over politics this week? If you’ve fallen into recent campaign-trail potholes, do you agree with Florida writer Ron Libert, whose email came just before Tuesday’s State of the Union Address? He says: “*We need to keep in mind that the two-party system is killing America and no one wants to believe it.*”

He also says: “*Patriotism is a Pied Piper who convinces people to abandon their morals (such as Thou Shalt Not Kill) in favor of giving their allegiance to government instead of the Creator.*”

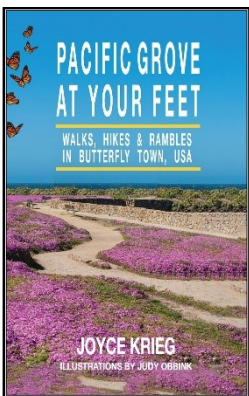
On the opposite side of the opinion aisle, Pacific Grove author Joyce Krieg shares this advice about how she quiets her mind and transcends negative thoughts through walking meditation.

Take A Hike?

In her new paperback guidebook “Pacific Grove at Your Feet—Walks, Hikes & Rambles in Butterfly Town, USA—with Illustrations by Judy Obbink” (Pacific Grove Books, an imprint of Park Place Publications), Joyce says:

“So, if you see me on the trail and say hello and I don’t respond, I’m not intentionally being rude. I’m just far, far away, lost in my own world.”

Although Joyce’s book is a do-it-yourself tour guide of 14 Pacific Grove walks, basic principles can be applied to walking wherever you happen to be. What type of hiker are you?



- Fitness walker. Gets in 10,000 daily steps, burning calories in our clean air.
- Social walker. Teams up for lively chatter while soaking up surrounding beauty.
- Studious walker. Nose is buried in guidebook or on phone; searches for landmarks and reads every plaque and sign.
- Nature walker. Revels in identifying flora and fauna, tracing flight of pelicans and breaching of whales.
- Meditative walker. Uses combination of movement and outdoor setting to quiet the mind and transcend the cares in the world.

In political parlance, some of us are marchers like Joyce (at right in photo) and I become when we participate in Monterey's annual 4th of July parades. Others, like candidates and their supporters, are stumpers on the campaign trail. Generally, most people who travel on foot are walkers, hikers, strollers, ramblers and runners.



Rules Of The Road

Whatever is your preferred mode of locomotion, Joyce suggests exercising moderate caution. In her 25-year history as a walker in Pacific Grove, mud-soaked shoes were the worst thing that happened to her.

To be safe, however, she advises:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Stay on the trail.
- Check yourself for ticks after walking in wooded areas.
- Don't hike alone; if you do, tell someone your destination and expected time of return.
- Avoid heavily forested areas during times of high winds.
- It's best not to walk after dark unless in a lighted area.

If hiking around Pacific Grove at night, Joyce says it's okay to walk through the downtown district or the Asilomar Conference Center grounds, but you never know who or what you'll meet. *"Lighting is iffy to non-existent on the trails. Raccoons have been known to attack walkers of small dogs, Mountain lion sightings at dawn or dusk are not unheard of."*

"And, sadly, late night attacks, humans preying on other humans, have occurred on the Rec Trail. Only on rare instances, but still, better to play it safe."

For details about Joyce Krieg's book, visit www.pacificgrovebooks.com.

Safer By Day

Ron Libert comments on safety in general. *"The chances of a killing disease or two, plus the possibility of a pole shift, may end the election process before it even begins. I believe all religions will be shut down in the near future. . ."*

If you decide to transcend fearful thoughts and hike along any of the trails in Pacific Grove, or elsewhere on the Monterey Peninsula during daylight hours, you'll encounter a wider variety of people and pets than you would at night: locals and tourists of all backgrounds and ages; dog walkers; bicyclists; school children on field trips; and, at this season, politicians. You'll recognize them by tees and sandwich boards they're wearing, flyers they're handing out, and hands they hold out in friendly fellowship.

Long, Tall Wendy

Then there's Wendy Root Askew, an upbeat young woman who stands out whether she's stumping or not. She's what my dad would have called *"a long, tall drink of refreshingly pure water."*

At 42, Wendy is a head taller than me, half my age, twice as energetic and as deeply committed to social justice issues (affordable housing, immigration, healthcare and helping the homeless) as is her boss, Jane Parker, retiring District 4 Supervisor for whose seat Wendy and three other candidates are running. . . not merely strolling, hiking, rambling, or walking. . .



Running as friendly competitors!

Wherever I've gone to cover social justice events, Wendy has beaten me there, whether at meetings to cover rights of homeless women, handing out flyers about the upcoming California Primary Election on March 3 as happened on Martin Luther King Day, or at a town hall meeting.

Satan, Begone!

During his State of the Union message on Tuesday, when the President mentioned the word "*homeless*" just once and criticized California for being a sanctuary state, then exhorted Congress to pass his act allowing victims to sue sanctuary cities, Ron Libert's email shouted this wake-up reminder: "*We are in a real spiritual war. . .*"

He added his belief that Satan is winning. "*Time to start hoarding non-perishable food and water and natural anti-biotics!*"

I reacted with a saying my Baptist father might have uttered: "*Aw, get thee, Satan, behind me!*"

Then I took a short Buddhist-style meditative walk inside my house to clear my mental pathway of impeachment-week potholes. *Namaste! The light within me recognizes the light within you.*

If you also need a spiritual lift, why not take a meditative stroll on the local path of your choice, then join me on the grassroots campaign trail by attending COPA's Monterey County District 4 Board of Supervisors Candidates' Forum, Sun., Feb. 16, 3 p.m. at Martin Luther King Elementary School, 1713 Broadway, Seaside. Meet Wendy Root Askew and her fellow contenders for Jane Parker's seat: Wini Chambliss, Steve McShane and Alex Miller.

Then vote for one of these beautiful lights of the world on March 3.

As the president himself said, "*May God bless America*" and the Rosicrucian God of My Heart adds "*so mote it be.*"

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This column appears in truncated form in the weekly Cedar Street Times at www.cedarstreettimes.com .

Photos: Wanda Sue Parrott and author Joyce Krieg - Marchers in Monterey's 4th of July Parade (photo courtesy of Clarissa K. Conn); Wendy Root Askew—Stumper on Monterey County's 2020 campaign trail (photo courtesy of Wendy Root Askew); *Pacific Grove At Your Feet*, Available at Bookworks in Pacific Grove and online at www.pacificgrovebookso.com.

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