

HOMELESS IN PARADISE
April 3-9, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 25



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CAN YOU MAKE YOUR OWN MASK IF NONE IS AVAILABLE?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

TRYING to keep tabs on the Monterey Peninsula’s homeless scene was almost impossible during President Trump’s mandatory two-week “Stay at Home” order that ended Monday; by then, mainstream America had shut down and started reinventing itself.

If the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) hadn’t infused itself in our affairs by killing many of those infected by it, life might have struggled back to normal.

No such luck! The President extended Social Distancing until at least April 30.

By this column’s deadline time, rumor mill rumblings raced like flash fire through the timber of truth as the Centers for Disease Control debated whether everyone should be required to wear face covers!

In one corner were the true public servants. In the other, the scammers with their flim-flam schemes.

I asked my isolated self, “If it becomes law for everyone to don face covers, what, if any, alternatives to standard masks exist?”

Google revealed that, indeed, they do exist, including those you can make for yourself! I attest to this statement because I’ve just made half a dozen masks for myself and they cost mere pennies. Here’s the scoop.

Imitation Origami For A Good Cause

Searching for “How to make your own facemask” led me to discover fake origami (paper folding) for health.

Enroute to this find, however, I stopped to view various You Tube videos which included how to make my own washable, reusable early-American quilted facemask from machine-sewn yellow flowered cotton. Old fabric can be used, such as remnants from outworn clothing. It must be clean.

Also, hand-stitched Asian-style white cotton masks presented personalized acrylic-painted cheek and jaw logos; chin flowers; and scads of smiley faces, frowning faces and crying faces.

Such a mask can make a fashion statement through color coordination with one's outfit.

Also, facial covering could help the homeless. Instead of waving signs at crossroads, and receiving hand-to-palm cash donations, customized face covering could enable a person to retire as a human billboard and work as a cheek-chin mime by flashing a painted-face power-plea: *Homeless. Hungry. Help.* The panhandler could later count the collection at his or her own risk depending on the decision to scrub with hand sanitizer, wash with soap and water, or risk infection.

The Rise Of Corona-Killer Crafts

The Covid-19 epidemic is giving rise to a new genre of Corona-Killer crafts. Young people could engage in such creative projects for school credit, and prisoners could make masks to fulfill public service requirements their sentences require.

And I predict a new generation of con arts as well as humanitarianism will emerge, starting right here in our own backyards where KSBW-8 featured a televised clip on the Tuesday evening news about local quilters making cotton facemasks to distribute to the community.

To select your own do-it-yourself facemask ideas, simply enter the words "How to make a facemask" in the search line of your browser, then choose the video titles that most appeal to you.

Can you make your own face coverings if there are none to buy? Indeed. Here's an example of online instruction submitted by reader Ron Libert: <https://www.brasscheck.com/video/making-masks/>

Here's how I make mine. Feel free to try it and then personalize as inspired.

How To Make Your Own Imitation Origami Facemask

Creating your own Imitation Origami facemask is as easy as 1-2-3. Once you get the hang of it, you can create a mask a minute for no more than 5 cents per disposable face-covering. Clear a clean, dry tabletop or countertop and arrange your supplies for easy fingertip access. You'll need:

- Stapler with staples
- Pack of rubber bands, 5 to 7 in. circumference preferable
- 1 roll of standard absorbent paper towels (sheets are 7 inches wide x 11 inches long)
- Colored pens (if you plan to decorate the masks)

Instructions:

1. Remove two sheets of toweling from the roll (leave them connected).
2. Fold the sheets so one lies on top of the other.
3. With your fingernail, crease the bottom of the double-thickness to form a ½ inch hem.
4. Staple the hem twice, once 4 in. left of center and once 4 in. right of center.
5. Turn sheet around and repeat steps 3 & 4 so hem is secured.
6. The double sheet rectangle should now be 6 in. wide x 11 in. long.
7. With a marking pen, place a dot in the center of the toweling every inch between the bottom and top of the rectangle, so you wind up with six dots.
8. Using your thumbnail and index finger, pleat the napkin by folding the top inch of toweling toward you. Use your nail to crease the napkin from left to right, then back again.
9. Repeat the pleating process with each inch of the napkin, folding each pleat flat on top of the prior pleat. (This is like you used to make pleated paper fans as a child.)

10. When all the pleats are done, you will be holding a strip of napkin 1 in. wide and 11 in. long. This is the body of your facemask.
11. Select two rubber bands that are equal in length, usually (5–7 inches will be sufficient).
12. Place 1 rubber band at the Right end of the mask, fold ½ inch of the end over the rubber band, and staple in place.
13. Repeat step 12 at the Left end of the mask.
14. Lift the mask and gently pull it apart from the center. As the pleats unfold, use your fist to punch it open.
15. Pull the rubber bands over both ears and adjust the mask to fit snugly across the bridge of your nose and under your chin.

If this doesn't work for you, maybe the President's advice will suffice: **Wear a scarf!**

Oh, there's a bright spot of news. One of the peninsula's favorite homeless persons just reappeared at Target wearing neither a facemask nor military sunglasses. I recognized Sarge by his General Douglas MacArthur hat.

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This column appears weekly in the Cedar Street Times at www.cedarstreetoimes.com

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott, 831-899-5887, amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com

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