

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

April 10-16, 2020

### IN OUR OWN BACKYARD – Part 26



*Wanda Sue Parrott models  
“We Love Campus Towne” tee shirt worn  
by Seaside4Seaside at March 5, 2020,  
Seaside City Council meeting.*

*Photo courtesy of Dominique Davis.*

## WHERE TO GO WHEN THERE’S NOWHERE TO GO?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

**HOUSING** the homeless set our Nextdoor social network abuzz with Passover/Easter Week questions after Governor Gavin Newsom announced 100 trailers to shelter homeless residents are being deployed to the Monterey County Fairgrounds.

If true, when will they arrive?

Who gets top priority? Homeless veterans? Men only? Single women? Mothers with children?

Which age group for both males and females gets top trailer dibs? Old and infirm? Young and healthy? All ages out of money and/or work? Illegal or strictly legal immigrants?

Nextdoor neighbors also wonder if the trailers will be isolation units to keep those infected with the virus away from others, or will they keep occupants distanced from exposure to carriers?

### Are You A Crime Against Humanity?

Contrarian CeliaSue Hecht, 70-year-old formerly homeless writer now housed in Marina, launched a gritty newsletter salted with news about homelessness and peppered with vitriol against authority. Her gutsy critiques cover the gamut, from nationally elected figures to usually respected local non-profits, and even retired reporters like me who can’t seem to quit.

Hecht declares Governor Newsom’s 100-trailer allocation falls short of the Monterey Peninsula’s need for housing because an estimated “1000+ homeless women” live here.

I don’t share Hecht’s harsh views, but applaud her gutsy stance against systems that create threats to neighbors in backyards everywhere.

Am I such a threat? Are you?

On Monday I saw an unknown homeless woman of around 40 trying to sleep at noon beside her shopping cart and bags in the Monterey Post Office lobby. Not knowing what to say or do, I pretended not to see her, a fact about which I wept when back in the safety of my car with the unanswered question of where she will sleep at night, especially if it rains.

If you are gutsy enough to gaze into a potential mirror reflecting yourself, check out Hecht's "Crimes-Against-Humanity" at <https://celiasue.substack.com/p/crimes-against-humanity>.

### **Where To Go When There's Nowhere To Go?**

Also during the week, news broadcasts announced closure of Santa Cruz parks and beaches through April 15, while a representative of Monterey Parks and Recreation called me to announce closure of public facilities has been extended through May 15.

Not only do community centers and libraries serve as social and safety zones for both housed and unsheltered people, they're equal to exercise gyms for hundreds of ballroom, line and social dancers. My group, the Tap Bananas, has no performances scheduled, since Pacific Grove's Good Old Days parade has been cancelled for this month and Seaside's Mother's Day extravaganza, featuring annual lunch, entertainment and roses has been cancelled in May.

### **Is Anyone Still Out There?**

Meanwhile, keeping a healthy mind during coronavirus social distancing inspired Thomas Spence of Del Monte Grove Laguna Grande to recently post on Nextdoor:

"If anyone is still out there, I'm alive but struggling. Food is running low. Down to only 459 days' worth.

"My hands are super-sanitized and my tush is super clean. Down to 1,599 rounds of ammo (dropped 1 round down the heat vent while doing daily inventory).

"Power still on, but for how long?

"Missing human inter-action, but I have my dogs for now. I'm soaking their food in BBQ sauce in an attempt to marinate them from the inside in case I have to eat them.

"I fear dark days ahead. News is all bad. Neighbors have attempted to leap from windows to their death, (or near death... most have single story homes so they are badly bruised).

"Blew through most Netflix series, so may have to re-watch some again.

"Basic Survival is a definite challenge. I vow to persevere to the end. I am a survivor! Please, if there is life out there, communicate with me to help preserve my sanity."

Tom Spence wraps up his post with: "Just some humor for you. Hope everyone is safe!"

### **Campus Town Is Good News**

Not all news is bad. Campus Town's approval by the Seaside City Council, following its irreverently reverent public hearing on Thursday, March 5, marked the biggest history-changing moment the Monterey Peninsula might ever experience.

Why? Because the shining city that's going to be built on the old Fort Ord hill will be the legacy left by many Seaside's who are descendants of grandcestors who came here aboard slave ships.

They helped design Seaside's portion of Old Fort Ord on which derelict barracks stood until this spring and where affordable and low-income housing will be built so families who call Seaside home can stay here.

Council's 5-0 approval of Campus Town constituted a symbolic victory for Rev. Martin Luther King, whose "we shall overcome" mantra manifested his "I have a dream" speech in which he said he had "been to the mountaintop" and had "seen the Promised Land" to which he never got because his life was cut short by assassination on April 4, 1968.

News about Campus Town's approval was cut short by the Covid-19 epidemic on March 6, 2020, as talk of social distancing and Stay-at-Home protocols started stealing the local publicity spotlight. By the next Seaside City Council meeting on March 19, the second round of 5-0 ayes rang out through makeshift chambers at the Oldemeyer Center as empty as a tomb.

My good news is that I appear to be the only local reporter supporting the Campus Town movement which, according to leader Rosalyn Green, will reactivate when the movement again gets under way. Ms. Green is Monterey Peninsula College Governing Board Trustee, Area 1: Seaside/Sand City. She emailed: "I am more than happy to give you a few t-shirts to offer readers. They are free! Once movement resumes, they will be available at local churches and CSUMB bookstore again at no cost... Please stay healthy, stay safe, and stay home!"

For details, read next week's in-depth coverage of Campus Town in our own backyards.

Have faith that - as did the Angel of Death - this, too, shall pass and life as we resurrect it will continue.

Happy Passover/Easter.

---

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott, 831-899-5887

Copyright 2020 by Wanda Sue Parrott