

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

July 24-30, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 39



Mayor Ralph Rubio

EULOGIZING MAYOR RUBIO WHOSE KICK-THE-CAN BOONDOGGLE WORKED!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

HONORING all three political giants who died over the past two weeks isn't possible in this limited space, so I'll focus on the one I actually knew, Mayor Ralph Rubio of Seaside, who succumbed to cancer on July 19 at age 69.

If I'm right, Mayor Rubio didn't especially like me after my Homeless in Paradise column Number 22 appeared in *Cedar Street Times* on March 27, 2015. Its headline was: "Kick the Can Politics: Homelessness versus diplomacy on Seaside City Council."

Kick-The-Can Politics

A year earlier, all seven cities of the Monterey Peninsula had been invited by Pacific Grove city councilman Rudy Fischer to join a matching-fund grant challenge to help combat homelessness. PG offered to contribute \$1 per resident if other cities would do the same.

Carmel was first to join, followed by Monterey and Sand City.

Marina, Del Rey Oaks and Seaside held off.

Since spring 2014, I'd advocated at meetings for city councils to vote yes. My closing words were: "*You wouldn't want your city to be known as a boondogglers, would you? Please join the PG Matching Funds Challenge.*" I then handed the city clerk a signed copy of my paperback, *The Boondogglers' Bible—How to Fight Like City Hall to Win!!*

Seaside would have pledged \$35,000 under such a plan, but the process stalled because of Mayor Rubio's objections. He was stubborn, digging in and holding his grounds of resistance.

Excerpt From Column 22

Part of the column said: *"When new Seaside City Councilman Jason Alexander moved the city contribute \$16,500 to Pacific Grove's matching challenge fund, an issue that had dragged on for nine months and was expected to be resolved that night, Mayor Ralph Rubio countered Campbell's action by stating no motion or vote could take place because the issue was listed in the agenda as a business item, not a consent calendar item."*

Tension was taut.

Emotion was hot.

Column 22 continued: *"Councilman Dave Pacheco, who served as Council's homeless liaison for more than a year, reacted with such heartfelt passion his voice shook. 'We've been kicking the can down this same road for the last eighteen months.'*

"... He said he hoped the issue could be settled 'sooner than later.' (PG's council member Rudy Fischer first invited Seaside to participate in the challenge grant on June 19, 2014 and, after numerous deferrals, a response to the invitation was expected to be made at the March 19, 2015 meeting.)

"After lengthy discussion, the issue was again tabled, this time for 90 days pending receipt of the 2015 Homeless Census from the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers. Deferral until June enables Seaside City Council to further study how best to allocate funds to be used toward its burgeoning problem of homelessness.

"By the time June arrives, a year will have passed without Seaside answering 'yes' or 'no' to PG's invitation. For that reason, I nominate Seaside as recipient of the hypothetical 2015 Boondogglers of the Year Award..."

As defined in *The Boondogglers' Bible*, the 1st Rule of Boondoggling is: *"Thou shouldst defer until the future that which could have been accomplished today or yesterday."*

Translation: "Procrastinate. When questioned about what's taking so long, do not give a direct answer. In fact, if you can possibly avoid being held responsible, do not answer at all."

Mayor Rubio's Brilliant Boondoggle

Seaside never joined the PG Challenge except by councilmember Pacheco's presence at their meetings although Seaside never contributed money.

Mayor Rubio seemed to have used advice from page 7 of my little red book:

Boondogglers' Creed

I will master the craft of boondoggery

by learning the rules

and using my own

stall-confuse-avoid-and-delay devices

to win.

So shall it be!

The native Seaside, who loved his hometown, eventually convinced city council to contribute funding for the Veterans Transition Center where formerly homeless veterans from Seaside streets are now sheltered. He did it by keeping Seaside's money where he felt it belonged, in Seaside.

A brilliant boondoggle!

Former Mayor Ralph Rubio was to Seaside what Mayor Joe Gunter was to Salinas, and what Congressman John Lewis (D-Georgia) was to the civil rights movement, a gentleman and a giant.

May they all rest in peace as the legacies they leave raise questions like these:

What Happens Next?

Q. Who'll replace the public servants we've lost?

A. *Everyone boondoggles, so vote for good boondogglers like Mayor Ralph Rubio, whom the book describes: "A master boondogglers can manipulate multitudes. If motivated by love, light, and life, great religions have been born.*

Q. Any good candidates to suggest?

A. *Steve McShane might exchange his run for County of Monterey Supervisor, District 4 for a bid for Mayor of Salinas, which win would fill Mayor Gunther's seat while leaving Wendy Root Askew to fill Jane Parker's supervisorial seat, thus putting two excellent candidates in office.*

Q. Seaside is now called the Boondoggle Busters. Why?

A. *Seaside is 2020's version of 2014's Pacific Grove, the sender of invitations to cities on the Monterey Peninsula to join in helping solve the homeless problem. In this case, it would be by hosting homeless vehicle dwellers by letting them camp overnight one night a week, as Seaside is now doing. Thus far, as this column number 299 goes to press, no responses have come, which raises a new question:*

Who's boondoggling whom?

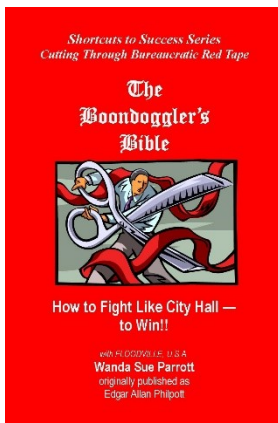
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The Boondogglers Bible—How to Fight Like City Hall--to Win!!

by Wanda Sue Parrott

(\$14)

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