

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

November 13-19, 2020

IN OUR OWN BACKYARD - Part 55



My father,
William Raymond Childress,
(1907-1989),
exchanged his
Arkansas farmer's overalls
for knickers
following the Spanish flu pandemic
of 1918,
and suits and ties
during the Great Depression,
to become a "Fed" for life
as an accountant
with the
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

POLITICS, POETRY AND DRIVE-THRU TURKEY WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS

By Wanda Sue Parrott

FEASTING at the Monterey County Fairgrounds—often a highlight of the year for local homeless persons--is off the menu this year, but turkey is still on the table for everyone in the community interested in, and able to participate in, the annual Thanksgiving feast, according to co-sponsors Monterey Recreation, the Kiwanis Club of Monterey and the Food Bank for Monterey County.

If you're interested, exact details are outlined at the end of this column.

For the moment, let's return to the question left dangling in last week's column.

I asked Vinz Koller of Carmel, Elector for the California 20th Congressional District, if it's possible a split ticket could be voted by the College of Electors into office for the next four years and he said it was possible.

If that were to happen, Joe Biden (Democrat) and Mike Pence (Republican) would be inaugurated on January 20, 2021; or, Donald J. Trump (Republican) and Kamala Harris (Democrat) would take office.

Well, it won't happen when the electors vote on Dec. 14!

Why?

Because last Saturday the major news organizations all called the election, based on returns from the popular vote in all but four states that are still being counted, for the Biden-Harris Democratic ticket.

The president-elect and vice-president-elect took the stage that night and accepted the news as mostly peaceful jubilation erupted like fiery whistle cones all over the la—well, the land puts it too mildly--all over the world.

Traditionally, the sitting president phones his successor and delivers a congratulatory, if not conciliatory, message in which he concedes, following which the next two-and-a-half months are spent in preparing for the transition of power.

Not so in this case.

As of Wed., Nov.11, President Donald J. Trump has still not conceded that he lost and continues filing lawsuits to, mostly frivolously, hang onto his claim that he won.

And thus, an age-old battle between poetics and politics was rekindled.

Folks, if you think what's going on now is unique to this age, read on.

Turn Back The Hands Of Time

My father, William Raymond Childress, was seven when World War I broke out; he was raised on a former plantation in Arkansas. It was a hard-scrabble life for a kid who walked miles to school and whose education was interrupted by the Spanish flu that decimated the population.

When Dad graduated from high school at age 20, the world was suffering from post-war depression from which emerged an amended version of the beautiful pre-World War I poem "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer.

President Herbert Hoover (1929-1933), a millionaire, was blamed for failing the country because his head was up his you-know-what. The poetic metaphor referring to his presidency was so powerful an influence on my father that he repeated it endlessly during his final stage of Alzheimer's sixty years after he first memorized it.

*"I think that I shall never see,
A horse's head where his tail should be."*

During Hoover's term, Dad got a scholarship to Chillicothe Business College in Chillicothe, Mo. He exchanged his overalls for a set of knickers, followed by suits and ties, and was a proud lifelong fed--working as an accountant with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, first in Kansas City, Mo. and later Los Angeles, Ca.

The social programs instituted by Franklin D. Roosevelt, president from 1933-1945, helped the nation make it through the Great Depression. Will similar programs that help America survive turn the nation toward Socialism? Biden himself says the nation must be healed.

A Haibun For Today

Meanwhile, retired army sergeant M.J. Becco, author of "Collection: A Poetical Autobiography" just posted this new haibun, reprinted here with her permission:

*joy, flowing warm melts
the center, frozen solid--
leaves a hollow shell
senyru, november, 2020*

*Trump and 'trumpism' rooted in the nature of us, is one of the many aspects of our dual natures.
'Trumpism' is the bully we never completely quash, the selfish little child we seek to overcome
all our lives. We have not succeeded in mending our derisive nature by reaching for a star for a
moment. It will return unless we remain vigilant in our government.*

*we reached, catching
the tail of a star—hang on
to our better selves
senyru—november, 2020*

Nervous constituents who fear the Biden-Harris ticket will plunge America into socialism were assured by historian Jon Meacham on NBC that “I’ve got Springer Spaniels who are more radical than Joe Biden. . . .”

And president-elect Joe Biden said in his acceptance speech:

It’s time for our better angels to prevail.

Thanksgiving Gobble Gobble

Highlights from the flyer about this year’s annual community Thanksgiving Dinner, which folks must pick up and take elsewhere to consume, include:

“Everyone in our community should be able to enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving Dinner. The Kiwanis Club of Monterey, Food Bank for Monterey County and City of Monterey Recreation Division are working together to offer a drive thru and walk up Community Thanksgiving Dinner on Wed., Nov. 25. Masks are required.

“Each individually prepared meal will have all the traditional Thanksgiving fixings including turkey, yams, stuffing mashed, potatoes and gravy, corn and green beans, salad and pie.”

Reservations are required, as are face masks for everyone picking up Thanksgiving meals.

Date: Wednesday, Nov 25.

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (by appointment/reservation only--every half hour)

Location: Dennis the Menace parking lot, 777 Pearl St., Monterey

Details and reservations: montereyrecreation@monterey.org or 831-646-3866.

Thank you to the generous sponsors of this annual event.

May the muse be with you and all your gobbling be good.

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About this Column: “Homeless in Paradise” is a free public service self-funded and produced by the author. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this column appears regularly on the last week of each month in the Cedar Street Times at www.cedarstreettimes.com (and as periodic FLASH columns).

It also appears on Facebook, in Nextdoor and on private email lists. If interested in being added to the list, submit your request to the contact info below.)

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