

HOMELESS IN PARADISE
September 30- October 6, 2021

LET THE BOONDOGGLE-BUSTING BEGIN! – Part 20



*Sketch of
Granny Annie, right,
cigar-smoking
matriarch of
"The Houseless Hussies"
by Harold E. Grice.
Kelli J. Keane, left,
was the voice of
Granny Annie in the
one-act play's premiere
performance in 2016.*



"THE HOUSELESS HUSSIES" - continued from last week

CONCLUDING "THE HOUSELESS HUSSIES"--BOONDOGGLE BUSTERS LITERARY PLAY
By Wanda Sue Parrott

THIS ONE-ACT PLAY co-authored by Harold E. Grice and me (Wanda Sue Parrott) was part of a gala vaudeville-style fundraising event spearheaded by Bobbie Hall on May 28, 2016, at the Center for Spiritual Living, Monterey. In his introduction, Harold said, "The plight of homeless women is distressing. Many of these women are in this situation through no result of their own action. So, I ask:

Why Are They Treated As Society's Throwaways?"

An error in last week's column claimed beneficiary of the \$1,000 raised was Fund for Homeless Woman. It should have said Gathering for Women which, in partnership with Community Human Services, finally opened the first shelter for women on the Monterey Peninsula in January 2021. Casa de Noche Buena is at 1292 Olympia Ave., Seaside, California 93955. A second shelter is coming to Monterey in 2023.

Play continues below...

(Picking up where the digest-form of the play ended last week, Miss Kim, the social worker, is handing out flyers to the homeless women and one man at their campsite near the resort-area dumpster. If successful, she'll persuade the women to move into the new shelter she is promoting. As Kim speaks, Granny Annie, matriarch, resists.)

(Big Betty leads Sassy Sue, a clean-looking young woman in ankle-length skirt and oversized San Francisco Giants sweatshirt, hair still tidy. Sassy Sue is looking around wide-eyed at everything.)

BIG BETTY – Just came from town, where I met a newbie. Welcome Sassy Sue. She's on the street, just like you. lost her place, with nowhere to go. How that happens, we all know.

(All the women wave and murmur "Hi" to Sassy Sue.)

SASSY SUE – Hello. I'm glad to meet all of you. Read some stories, but little I knew.

BIG BETTY – Most writers write just to make a fuss, but they've never been part of us.

GRANNY ANNIE – Sassy Sue, I'm here for you. Any questions you got, just ask, cause savin' souls is my lifelong task.

BIG BETTY – *(Kiddingly, in good humor)* – Don't believe a word. Annie's no nun. She's a rich bank robber on the run.

GRANNY ANNIE – *(Defensively, with irritation)* – I ain't jokin'. My daddy preached. Helping the poor is what he teached.

SASSY SUE – Well, I'm not poor. My condo burned down...

BIG BETTY – I found Sue wandering in her silk nightgown. Come on, dance. This ain't the end. This is now and that was then. We can all dance until we're done. Shimmy, shake and have some fun.

DOUR DORA – I'll always remember that day he told me he was going away. It's like when he left, he took away all my zest. *(Staggers to a tree and slumps against it.)*

(Granny Annie leaps to Dour Dora's defense, shouting at Miss Kim, who throws her hands up in defense when the women start picking on her.)

GRANNY ANNIE – Just hold up, Miss Kim! No one can hear you in this din. But you know, we meet where we do so we are away from the likes of you.

(Granny Annie points at Miss Kim, then does a sweeping wave to include all the others. Miss Kim holds her hands pointed toward self – like 'Me?')

TRIX – And, 'cause we're seen as a disgrace, you don't want us in your space. We know what you don't say when you look at us, then look away. Don't want us around and have to see just how bad a homeless life can be.

(Miss Kim shakes her head in denial.)

BIG BETTY – And, knowing you don't like what you see, we find these places you won't be, out of the way of your eyes' critique 'cause we know you see us as poor and unique.

GRANNY ANNIE – So, we meet where we do, away from the likes of you!

MISS KIM – Be assured, all help is only for those who ask. We do not force anyone into counseling... regardless of its benefits: Bus passes, job training, housing. *(She finishes handing out flyers.)* You're all invited to visit the facility.

(All of the women confer, then decide to check out the shelter, but Granny Annie stubbornly holds out.)

BIG BETTY – Come on, girls, let's go along. . . get there before all the rooms are gone.

GRANNY ANNIE – Just don 't say you ain't been warned, and I sure hope you don't get harmed, 'cause city's business is like the state—if you don't give, they just take.

(Miss Kim exits. The women follow. Granny Annie starts to trail them, then hesitates, then starts and stops again.)

GRANNY ANNIE – *(to herself aloud)* – 'cause they make the rules, and you got to take it, like it or lump it. *(She stomps to her tent, squats, and waddles inside. The tent surface is disturbed as things are moved about, followed by silence. Then, she wails loudly as if in pain):* BITCHES!

(Later. As dusk settles over the empty encampment, Trix returns. She goes to the dumpster, finds a liquor bottle containing a few dregs and takes a slug, then shrugs and enters Shimmy Shelley's abandoned tent. Sam Sam wanders back into the camp, approaches Granny Annie's tent and taps his guitar as if knocking on a door.)

GRANNY ANNIE – Stop that knockin'. It ain't funny.

SAM SAM – It's just Sam Sam here, Granny Annie. I found no other place for me to stay, not any...

(He goes to the dumpster, sits on the lid, strums a few chords and softly sings with tenderness.)

Lullaby and good night, with roses bedight, with lilies o'er spread across your sweet bed. Lay thee down now and rest, may thy slumber be blessed. Lay thee down now and rest. May thy slumber be blessed.

(Music and song fade out for a count of 1-2-3, then Sam Sam speaks.)

Goodnight, Grannie Annie. May the angels watch over you, you old hussy!

GRANNY ANNIE – *(Pause in silence for count of 1-2-3. Then snores follow, mixed with contented whistles, indicating she is sleeping like a baby.)*

ZZZZZZZZZZzzzzzzzzwheew

ZZZZzzzzzwhew

ZZzzzzwh...

The End

So, what's your take on the moral of this mini-play?

- Authorities can declare war on homelessness by making it illegal at federal, state and local levels.
- Authorities can conduct ongoing sweeps to empty homeless campsites, like Caltrans recently began in Governor Gavin Newson's clean-up-California campaign by removing tons of filth and trash along Highway 1.
- Shelter can be provided for every homeless individual in America.

It seems that, as long as Granny Annie and Sam Sam exist, so will homelessness. Why? It's their choice. And, isn't that what being free is all about? Choice?

Moral? You figure it out, because I boondoggle-busting give up.

At this point in this seven-year sojourn in journalism, it seems my column is incorrectly titled. Instead of "Homeless in Paradise" it would have been more appropriately called "Homeless in Paradox."

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CREDITS:

Likenesses: Sketch of Granny Annie by Harold E. Grice; Kelli J. Keane, courtesy Cynthia Westbrook, D.C.,
New Beginnings Chiropractic Health Care.

Play "The Houseless Hussies" by Harold E. Grice and Wanda Sue Parrott.

Book: *The Boondogger's Bible - How to Fight Like City Hall to Win!!* (\$17 from Wanda Sue Parrott, P. O. Box 1821, Monterey, CA 93942-1821) or from amazon.com. Website property of Great Spirit Publishing. Content copyrighted by Wanda Sue Parrott. For details on making contributions to support maintenance of the website, see Contact section at <https://homeless-in-paradise.yolasite.com/Contact.php>.

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