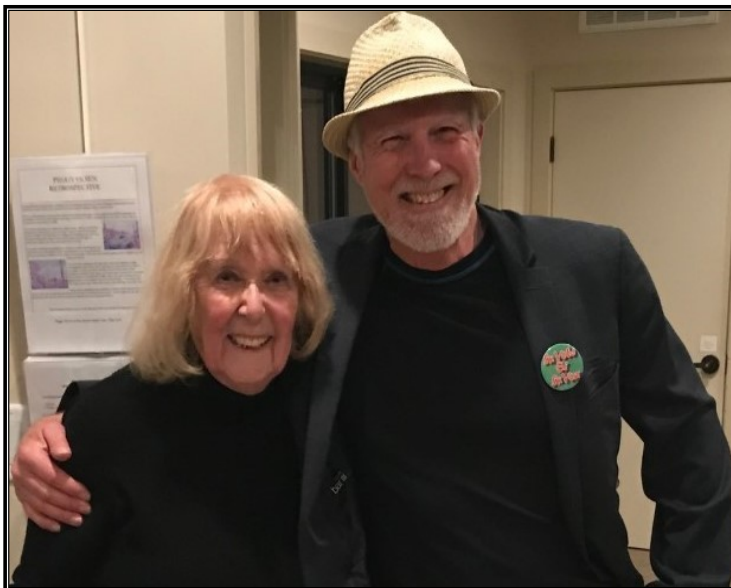


HOMELESS IN PARADISE
October 29 - November 4, 2021

INTRODUCING HOMELESS IN PARADOX—Part 4



*Timothy Barrett
started a revolution
in 2013.*

*His symposium
forced the focus to fall on
hungry homeless folks.
Here in "paradise"
old women slept in their cars,
as they're sleeping still!
Folks rallied to help.
The Fund for Homeless Women
came into being.
This column evolved
when Friends of Homeless Women
tried new ways to help.
After seven years,
It's time for me to move on.
Thank you, Timothy!*

**IS IT TRUE? "HISTORY ALMOST REPEATS ITSELF--
THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME"**

By Wanda Sue Parrott

ENDING this column as it concludes its seventh year of publication is timely.

If my boondoggle-buster's understanding is correct, weather comes in waves and business comes in seven-year cycles. This means covering homelessness is returning me to square one, aka the Start-Stop zone. To embark on a second round is my choice. I decline! Here's why:

My first report about homelessness ran November 14, 2014, in the *Cedar Street Times*. It announced the Second Annual Fundraising Breakfast for the fledgling Friends of Homeless Women's new Fund for Homeless Women at the Elks Lodge in Monterey.

The sellout event was hosted by co-founders Kathy Whilden, Marian Penn, and Rev. Michael Reid, who has since moved out-of-state. I've not met the new co-sponsor, Donna Ferraro, as no meetings of "Friends" have been held since shelter-in-place was instituted more than a year-and-a-half ago. Nor have meetings of Homeless Outreach been held at the Presbyterian Church in Monterey. This coalition of homeless service providers that also evolved from Timothy Barrett's groundbreaking symposium "Hungry and Homeless in Paradise" on May 18, 2013, at Monterey Peninsula College, met monthly until shelter-in-place orders were implemented in spring 2020. I haven't heard from Sandy Larson about whether or not this group will continue.

Naming My Successors

If timing is, indeed, everything, then I'm ready to step aside before I turn 87 on February 12, 2022. While I may be old, I'm still intact, so it's timely to name my younger successors on the Monterey Peninsula. May they bust more boondoggles than I can even imagine might exist! And may they have the resources with which to dig deeper than I did on my \$1,086 monthly social security, a few love offerings, and proceeds from donations for *The Boondoggler's Bible—How to Fight Like City Hall—to Win!!*

During the column's seven-year lifespan, readership has grown to at least 10,000 per week and it is expanding. It's getting too expensive to continue producing with no compensation for expenses. For example, colored ink runs \$60 per average cartridge. Postage is 51-cents per stamp for a three-page printout.

Last February Governor Newsom promised a \$600 California stimulus check. Mine was allocated to snail-mailing hard copies of this column to key lawmakers. The check never came. This is the final copy of this column that will be sent to those lawmakers, with gratitude for their help and kind responses.

You know the old cliché: Late is better than never! As an optimist who prefers to believe politicians' promises, thank you, Governor Newsom!

Is Homelessness A Business?

Yes and no. Since some folks prefer it as a lifestyle, as long as we live in a permissive democracy, we will have some homelessness. The housing crisis is related to, yet separate from, homelessness. The housing crisis was Public Enemy Number One before the Covid-19 Pandemic struck in January 2020, and will continue to rise to again be a threat to national security and even survival of this democratic society as we know it if it continues unabated. At least that's my prediction, and I'm a poet, not a pundit!

Thanks To The Named And Unnamed

Thanks for all the help I've received in preparing these 365 columns over the last seven years. A few people who helped make this series possible are named in order of their appearance in my life:

Kelli J. Keane, Senior Advocate for Homeless Women without Shelter; Marge Ann Jameson, publisher of the former *Cedar Street Times*; Timothy Barrett, former Monterey City Councilperson; Rudy Fischer, father of the matching-funds seven-cities challenge grant, former Pacific Grove city councilperson; Ken Cuneo, former Pacific Grove city councilperson; and mayors Bill Kampe, Pacific Grove; Clyde Roberson, Monterey; Mary Ann Carbone, Sand City Ralph Rubio and Ian Oglesby, Seaside. Also, city managers Hans Uslar, Monterey, and Craig Malin, Seaside.

Salinas engineer Harold E. Grice contributed his talent by writing a one-act play and Bobbie Hall staged a fundraiser talent show in 2016 at which performance of "The Houseless Hussies" helped raise \$1,000 for homeless women. Volunteer readers included the County of Monterey's Glorietta Rowland and Central Coast Writers members Sue Arlson, David Conneau, Jeanne Olin, and Suzi Stormon. Gretchen Nicholas from the I-HELP for Men program rounded out the cast.

The names of politicians, volunteers, and their nonprofit organizations throughout Monterey County are too numerous to name in this limited space. I hope you know who you are and how grateful I am for all you did and will continue doing as a new cycle of Homeless in Paradox begins. Special thanks to President Joe Biden, Monterey County District 4 Supervisor Wendy Root Askew, and Vice-President Kamala Harris for their encouragement.

So, do you believe the headline to this week's column? It's from Column #47, dated September 4, 2015.

"HISTORY ALMOST REPEATS ITSELF-- THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME"

Stick around to find out. As a clue to help you get started, consider these facts from Column #18 of February 28, 2015, headlined: **"Peninsula Panhandlers' Sales-Pitch Signs Inspire 'Kites Without Tails' writing Contest."**

Three finalists, representing the best of many signs seen along the local roads, could be voted on, with readers getting only one vote each.

1. Sign seen on bicycle with attached cart loaded with tent and blankets:

Travel partner-girlfriend needed

2. Sign held by clean-cut fortysomething sunburned man sitting on a bus bench:

Ex-wife had better day

3. Sign propped on sleeping bag of youth and his black lab mix in front of PetSmart:

Spare a buck

Change our luck.

The winner was the panhandler who used a dog as his prop. Seem familiar?

So, my successors are Sara Rubin, editor of the *Monterey County Weekly*, and staff writer, Pam Marino.

May they be the pundits. I'm going to be a poet!

May the Muse be with you.

Wanda

*Ian Oglesby,
City of Seaside's mayor,
broke the NIMBY mold.
Boondoggle busting
highlighted his second term
as a prime mover
who let homeless folks.
illegally parked in town,
stay at Roberts Lake.
Mayor Oglesby
asked all mayors to join him
as hosts sharing space.
No one accepted.
Seaside's campers moved uphill
near the School of Law.
The campsite shut down
when shelter-in-place expired.
By then, things had changed.
Governor Newsom
vowed homelessness would be solved
and went right to work.
Thank you, brave Mayor,
for caring enough to try
and daring to fail.*



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CREDITS:

Photo: Wanda Sue Parrott with Timothy Barrett (2020) by Rev. Elaine Gehrman.

Photo: Wanda Sue Parrott with Seaside, California's Mayor Ian Oglesby (2021) by Josephine Guerrero.

Haiku Captions by 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.

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