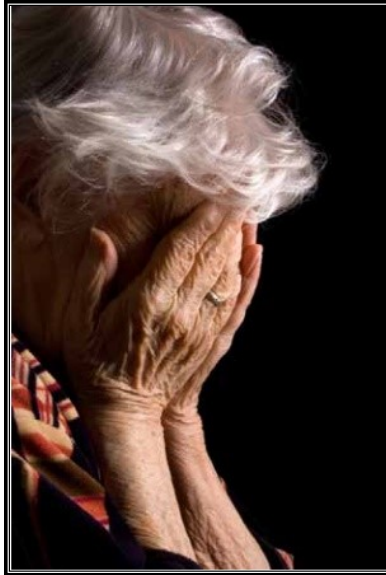


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

October 9, 2019

Column #52



Part 2: WINTER IS COMING *How do the newly homeless eat and sleep?* **By Wanda Sue Parrott**

(**THIS SERIES** is based on Pacific Grove City Councilmember Rudy Fischer’s question with winter coming, are homeless persons eligible for Section 8 housing and if you were suddenly homeless, what would you do? We followed the Boy Scout motto “Be prepared” by letting experienced homeless lead the newcomers—or about to be first-timers—through basic homelessness.)

First, don’t let homelessness overwhelm you with shame and embarrassment. Homelessness can happen to anyone.

Second, these steps summarize last week’s longer composite advice to the newly homeless.

Survival Steps In Brief

Step 1: Change your address. Acquire a post office box or use U.S. Postal Service’s free “General Delivery” mail pick up to establish your new address.

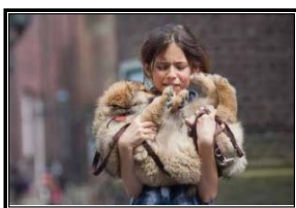
Step 2: Advise others you have moved. Use free Change of Address forms from the U. S. Postal Service post offices or online.

Step 3: Protect your valuables. Store personal items, documents and cash, in a safe deposit box at your bank, or in other secure places. It is risky to carry valuables around. If you stay in your car, lock them in the trunk.

Step 4: Seek help immediately. Contact the main source of all Monterey County social service listings at <http://www.mcdss.co.monterey.ca.us> to activate your case.

Remember, the first night of homelessness is the hardest, and most newly homeless teens and adults are in some degree of shock, so copying this list while clear-minded is a smart move. You will already have the numbers if/when you need them. This is crucial if you have kids and pets dependent on you.

Homelessness Is Survivable



When you have laid the four-step foundation for your change-of-living status, you're ready to proceed with the next step, individualizing your strategy by researching how to help yourself meet your own unique needs.

Read the list at the end of this column and select categories that best fit you. As many as three hours might be required to initiate contacts that stick, so practice due diligence mixed with patience. Be persistent.

Frequently ask, "Is there anyone else you suggest I contact who might help?"

Be on the alert for boondogglers who seem determined to defeat you, starting with local city halls and agencies, then expanding to county, state and federal governments.

Homelessness isn't easy; however, it is survivable if you outlast the boondoggles you'll encounter during your quest for survival.

Meeting And Beating The Boondogglers

Boondoggery is a common act of life. We all commit boondoggles and are victims of boondoggles. Boondoggling starts in toddlerhood with passing the buck or blaming others; it leads back to square one. By adulthood, boondoggery is the unofficial game of life.

The Boondogglers Bible—How to Fight Like City Hall to Win! explores boondoggery to win your own case. A Books for Beds publication, its proceeds benefit I-Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) and other social service agencies serving the homeless in Monterey. Read an excerpt at www.amykitchenerfdn.org.

In boondoggery, stall-and-delay tactics evade involvement in unwanted issues, prevent making commitments or payment, or avoid confronting and/or resolving legal, ethical, financial or relationship problems, like those involving landlord/tenant conflicts that often lead to homelessness.

Such conflicts are common causes of tenants who find themselves on the street.

Help, Anyone!!

A potential eviction now threatens a Monterey senior I call Jody, and her two service dogs she says were medically prescribed. Jody says her landlord since 2005 has consistently failed to provide receipts for rent and other agreed-upon conditions, including allowance of the dogs. "I earn \$30 a month too much to qualify for Section 8 housing rental assistance. I need guidance," she said.

The landlord is raising her rent from \$1,050 to \$1,500 per month unless she now gets rid of the poodles she calls "the kids" which he allowed for several years. Time is running out for Jody. She is scared.

Pay Rent, Eat Or Be On The Street?



After being unduly boondoggled by lawyers and elder advocates who don't return her calls, Jody sought my help as a columnist. She asks, "It's a choice I must make between being sheltered or eating. What should I do?"

I say, "I cannot give legal advice. However, as a victim of boondoggery, who fought city hall and won my case out of court when I was almost broke and homeless, I'll share advice."

If you are a victim of boondoggery, don't quit. Shout your problem to the world.

If one agency won't do anything, contact another.

Attend groups like Friends of Homeless Women contact the press, write a blog, and report the problem to your local city council.

Seek help and help will find you!

Readers interested in talking with Jody may contact me. I will inform her how to reach you. Passing the buck stops here!

Steps 5, 6 And 7

Step 5: If you are a newly homeless teen (or youth younger than 25) on the Monterey Peninsula, contact Community Human Services (CHS), PO Box 3076, Monterey, CA 93942: 831-658-3811; <http://www.chservices.org>.

All others should contact County of Monterey Department of Social Services, which administers seventy programs for an estimated 100,000 Monterey County residents at <http://www.mcdss.co.monterey.ca.us> to get your case filed with the proper agency. A list of all Monterey County Services is online at:

<http://www.monterey.ca.us/pages/services.asp>

One or more phone numbers from this shortened wallet-size list can also help you start. Keep asking for referrals until you get the right contact for you! Area Agency on Aging (AAA): 831-755-3403 Child support services: 1- 866-901-3212 Food stamps (Monterey County): 1-877-410-8823 Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing: 831-755-8492 Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI): 1-877-600- 2857 Military and veterans affairs: 831-647-7610 Mental Health Dept.: 831-796-1700 Protective Services (adult): 831-755-3403.

Step 6 and 7: You must eat and sleep. If you can afford to rent a room and buy food, eat at least one well-balanced, nutritious meal a day rather than junk food. For teens/youth (under age 25), the Safe Place Program at 590 Pearl St., Monterey offers housing and case management. Youth Fellowship on Thurs. night shares food and friendship. Contact www.chservices.org, 831- 373-4421.



Adults who cannot afford food or rent may contact the Salvation Army's Good Samaritan Center, 800 Scott St., Sand City, 831-899-4988. It offers free daily breakfast; lunch and limited late-plate lunches (1 p.m. – 4 p.m.); food boxes on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. (2 p.m.– 4 p.m.). Seniors only: for individuals who have permanent cooking facilities, food on 3rd Thurs. 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.

It also offers counseling about housing, showers, lockers, case management, some limited shelter and spiritual counseling. It's not an end. It's a start.

(Coming next week: Introduction to the homeless community's mental illness maze.)

Feedback

Wanda:

In the Carolinas and many parts of the East Coast, the homeless, including many veterans, are being forced into FEMA camps. Once there, they cannot leave unless they can show an appointment for possible employment OR guaranteed passage to another state.

Keep up the good work. I don't know of any other media that is giving this growing problem any coverage.

*Ron Libert, Kershaw, SC,
New Works Literary Agency
ron@newworksagency.com*

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott at amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com or at The Yodel Lady, 831-899-5887 for info on how to order "The Boondogger's Bible" (\$20 incl. price, postage & handling).