

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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LIKE A FRIENDLY POKER GAME...

Monterey's Challenge-Funds ante has yet to be matched

By Wanda Sue Parrott

FOLLOWING its city council meeting of Dec. 15, 2015, Monterey voted to contribute \$28,252 to homeless issues and reprise the Matching-Funds Challenge initiated in 2014 by Pacific Grove if other peninsula cities accept the invitation.

Since government is notable for moving slowly, winter might evolve well into spring before the outcome of Monterey's challenge is known.

Such governmental procedures remind me of friendly Friday-night poker games my parents and their friends engaged in when I was in elementary school during World War Two. Our house was Block Warden headquarters. Cards were played behind black velvet drapes.

Like Penny-Pot Poker During World War II

The poker hands were dealer's choice, but before any cards could be dealt there had to be enough players at the table to justify even cutting the deck.

When there were not enough adults present, my parents sneaked me in. I did everything but smoke Lucky Strikes and drink beer. I learned to ante, raise, fold, bluff and call while also learning arithmetic by playing five-card stud, draw poker and blackjack, games in which jokers and deuces were wild, and boxcars were as lucky as treys were bad luck.

The best poker player, like great politicians of World War Two, mastered artifice by wearing a poker face that showed no emotion. Such con artists were known as sharks. I retired from poker long before attaining that title and became a journalist, but memories arise in election years when political games are prominent.

High Stakes For A Good Cause

Instead of playing for matchsticks or pennies, the pot is greater in this current challenge initiated by Monterey City Council, to which Mayor Clyde Roberson has invited key players (other peninsula cities' mayors) to help fight homelessness by pledging \$1 per resident.

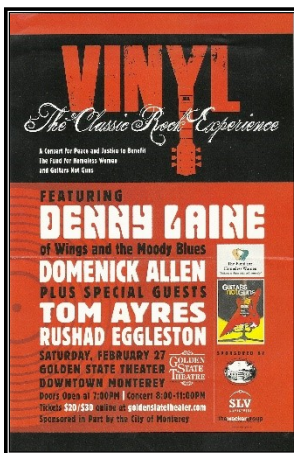
Stakes include: Monterey will double its initial ante to \$56,507 to help address homeless issues, but only if other cities join the coalition in which all invitees know the stakes--but no one yet knows whether jokers will, like homeless men and women, remain wild or whether winners will simply be those who get the luck of the draw.

Pacific Grove was first city to accept the invitation sent out by Monterey's Mayor Clyde by pledging (rounded figure) \$15,000.

If all peninsula cities join the coalition, a mininum \$1-per-person challenge fund (based on latest U. S. Census figures I found on the internet) could raise the pot to \$104,686 or higher.

U.S. Census Population Estimate (2014-2016)	
Carmel:	3,876
Del Rey Oaks:	1,624
Marina:	20,817
Monterey:	28,252
Pacific Grove:	15,601
Sand City:	334
Seaside:	<u>34,182</u>
	104,686

For instance, when Pacific Grove set forth the first local Matching-FundsChallenge, the city of Marina did not join by pledging \$1 per resident, but Marina Watersports did make a contribution.



Meanwhile, There's A Big Benefit Brewing. . .

A concert partially sponsored by the City of Monterey, for peace and justice to benefit The Fund for Homeless Women and Guitars Not Guns, is coming up on Sat., Feb. 27 at the Golden State Theater in Downtown Monterey.

VINYL, The Classic Rock Experience, will feature three hours of music starring Denny Laine of Wings and the Moody Blues, with Domenick Allen and special guests Tom Ayres and Rushad Eggleston.

The event handled by SLV Management, part of the Wecker Group advertising and promotion, will take place from 8 p.m. through 11 p.m., with doors opening at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 and \$30, onsale online at goldenstatetheater.com.

100 Women Live In Cars

Currently 100 homeless women live in cars on the Monterey Peninsula. One by one, the Fund for Homeless Women is helping them attain shelter through support of legal non-Profit organizations such as One Starfish Safe Parking, Gathering for Women and Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-Help) for Women..

These 501-C-3 organizations were supported by funding from the 2014 Pacific Grove Matching-Funds Challenge and are expected to again be beneficiaries of the 2016 Monterey Matching-Funds Challenge. Motto of The Fund for Homeless Women is "Dedicated to shelter, safety and community." See www.cfmco.org/fhw. Its

outreach arm is Friends of Homeless Women which meets the fourth Wed. each month, 10 a.m., St.Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church, Pacific Grove.

Also, the Gathering for Women reports "1 of 2 homeless women we serve are over age 50." Details at www.gatheringforwomen.org.

If I were a political pundit rather than retired pre-teen poker shark, I would predict the odds for this challenge game is excellent.

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Joker playing card photo from Bicycle Playing Cards images on Google images; Denny Laine poster image source unknown; all images used for educational/illustrative purposes only; no copyright infringement intended.

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