

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

July 22, 2016

Column #93



ASK GRANNY ANNIE

Is she today's homeless woman's answer to Ann Landers?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

FIELDING questions from lovelorn women made Ann Landers a powerful, popular, 20th century newspaper columnist. If she received this question today, how would she react?

Dear Ann: I am a 66-year-old reporter. I am homeless. I have a possible relapse of breast cancer, but surgery can't be performed if I have no home before, during or after the operation. My legs are swollen from sleeping upright in my car. I need a job. Any advice?

~ CSH, Monterey Peninsula, CA

CSH's plea would probably have landed in Ann Landers' unanswerable-mail slush pile.

That was then. This is now.

A 21st-century Ann--Granny Annie--welcomes questions from homeless women. She tries to answer them all. She's the eldest character in Harold E. Grice's one-act play "The Houseless Hussies." It's about homeless women sharing an encampment near a dumpster.

Granny Annie's Answer

I asked Harold how Granny Annie would answer CSH; he conjured up his crusty character, who said CSH should start with her own resources: *"Use your skills to write articles about homelessness, blog about it, publish letters about it, and ask others to help you."*

I added: As a freelancer with a computer, write eulogies for funeral homes, testimonials for retiring co-workers, and personal biographical sketches for non-writers; also, market your proofreading/editing skills.

Kelli J. Keane, 83, played Granny Annie in the play's premiere. Kelli lived for three years in her car. She suggested homeless women like CSH protect themselves by not posting photos in public but urged them to speak up to city officials.

I suggested CSH share her story through this Granny Annie column. She did, including her full name, in these excerpts from her guest blog in Wear Your Voice of June 30, 2016, which appears in full at:

<http://wearyourvoicemag.com/more/social-justice/senior-women-homeless>

**The Crisis Within The Crisis:
More Senior Women Are Homeless, And Their Needs Are Ignored
By CeliaSue Hecht**

Growing up in middle-class America is one of those things I took for granted. Today I'm homeless.

Now, I am still a human being. Like you, to survive, I eat, sleep, drink water, breathe, use the restroom and take a shower.

I also make mistakes, feel pain and hurt, sadness, depression, grief, anger, fear, happiness, love and hope.

Growing up in New York, I saw bag ladies pushing shopping carts in the city. I was warned that if I did not finish school, get married, or work a good job, I could end up like them.

Flash forward: Being aged, female and without a home now makes my life impossible. Last year, I needed surgery for breast cancer, and I had no home before, during and after the procedure.

Facing My Own Mortality At The Age Of 66 Has Been Devastating

Despite the problems, creative solutions are the answer. Building cost-effective women's tiny home villages, apartments, RV parks and/or hotels must be part of the solution.

Dying without a home because you lost your home should not happen to anyone—especially not to senior women.

CeliaSue Hecht is a journalist and dog travel expert who writes and edits on topics ranging from angels to zen, dogs and travel. You can find more of her writing on her blog at:

<https://homesweetinyhome.wordpress.com/>

Can Granny Annie Help?

Harold wrote "The Houseless Hussies" to help homeless women. The play debuted May 28 in the Variety Show produced by Bobbie Hall that raised more than \$1,200 for Gathering for Women.

Granny Annie, who wears a man's suit ala Goodwill and smokes discarded cigar butts, never lets a homeless woman's question go unacknowledged.

Harold and I are team-testing an "Ask Granny Annie" service for homeless women over 50 on the Monterey Peninsula by providing answers to cut through bureaucratic red tape. If successful, we'll periodically publish items in this column.

Send snail mail to Granny Annie, P. O. Box 1821, Monterey, CA 93942. Include your name, contact information, the nature of your problem (or possible solution to someone else's problem) and a #10 self-addressed

stamped envelope or e-mail address so we can get back to you. Homeless women's questions will appear under initials only unless permission is granted to use full names.

Dying without a home because you lost your home should not happen to anyone, especially not to senior women. If you can help now. forget snail mail. Granny Annie can wait; CeliaSue can't. Contact me at the address below and I'll deliver your message.

Or, if you would like to hire her to write or edit a project for you, check out her published works, and give her a call at 702-225-8206 or email her at prmatchmaker@yahoo.com.

###

Photos provided by author or as shown; used for educational/illustrative purposes only; no copyright infringement intended.

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott at amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com or leave a message with The Yodel Poet at 831-899-5887.