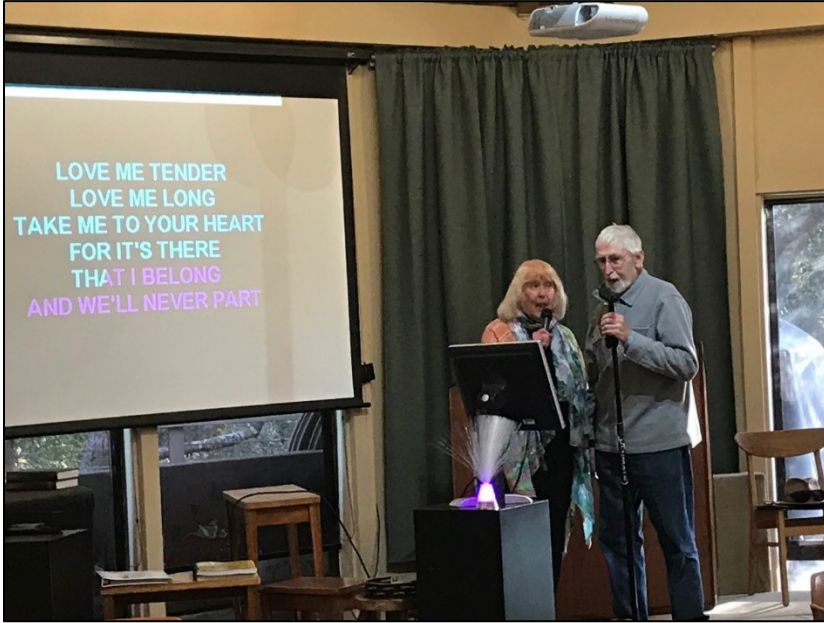


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

Feb. 5-11, 2021

MONTEREY PENINSULA MAKEOVERS – Part 6



*is this covid's way
to raise funds and have some fun
while staying alive
fundraising last year
wanda sue and friend harold
performed this duet
you're invited now
to sing karaoke songs
safe on zoom from home*

IF YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED KARAOKE, NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

THROWING a karaoke-style birthday party online combines fun-raising and fundraising. If the idea appeals to you, my true experience should help you get started.

First, choose the best time and date for your event.

Second, select a worthy cause you'd like to support and decide whose birthday will be honored, yours or someone else's.

Third, start preparing for how you'll send invitations. E-mail, Twitter, Facebook and Nextdoor are four suggestions for fast, inexpensive invitations to go all over the world. Send them 2 weeks ahead of the event.

Fourth, and of major importance: coordinate with the producers of the event with which you'd like to celebrate, so they know you'll attend and might be bringing guests. If they can't accommodate an overflow, two or more parties might have to be slated.

My first birthday fundraiser was in February 2020 when friends and loved ones shared my 85th birthday cake in person at the annual in-person Karaoke Party fundraiser for the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula in its hillside headquarters on Carmel Hill.

Choose Your Beneficiary As If It's Your Heir

I selected the church itself as my beloved beneficiary. You can choose your worthy cause by tying in with a food-and-clothing drive, children's holiday gift-collection, or any charitable event that helps the needy and touches your heart.

I chose the UUCMP as my event's beneficiary because it's my spiritual think tank with a heart like I'm working on developing: welcoming all races, religions, sexual orientations and political parties.

Once you've settled on your beneficiary, ask for permission to recognize your birthday honoree during its forthcoming fundraising event. Then start inviting guests.

Since we're now in pandemic mode, your party will be online and hugs will be holistic.

Happy Birthday Singalong

In my 85th birthday case, three weeks before the pandemic was declared, real chocolate cake was served. At your online party, guests will provide their own libations.

After we pigged out on pizza, we slurped chocolate cake while the hostess led us in singing Happy Birthday in rounds.

I then sang Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender" as a duet with my friend Harold E. Grice. My ears still resonate from applause from our live audience. Your guests' clapping might be muted.

My invitations asked guests not to give me gifts or cards but, instead, contribute to the event itself by giving UUCMP \$10 (or more, if so moved and able) or an individual contribution or \$15 or more for the whole family.

Give A Short Sales Pitch

Your own invitation should include a short sales pitch about why invitees should support your worthy cause. Mine included these facts:

UUCMP benefits the Monterey Peninsula community-at-large with its monthly shared plate in which 1/2 of unspecified donations go to a specific local non-profit. Average amounts are more than \$1,000 each month. Such UUCMP beneficiaries include, but aren't limited to:

The Gathering for Women, (GFW), day shelter in Monterey that provides food, clothing, counseling and a place to shower and relax from Mon.-Fri., www.gatheringforwomen.org;

Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP), a program begun in 1992 that provides meals and overnight shelter to homeless men and women in local mostly religious institutions, <https://ihelpmontereybay.org/>;

Orphan Productions, Inc. (One Starfish Safe Parking & Support Services), non-profit providing safe parking for women in vehicles at local churches, and overnight parking for guests who live temporarily in vehicles, www.onestarfish.org;

Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action (COPA), www.copaiaf.com;

Whites for Racial Equity, <https://whitesforracialequity.org/>.

What A Live Event Our Party Was!

By 6 p.m., the sanctuary-turned-theater was abuzz with colorful people sipping soda, wine and even champagne. Guests from around age 8 to nearly 100 wore everything from purple-Afro wigs and pastel butterfly wings to sedate business suits and ties, above-the-knee flapper dresses festooned with feather boas, bangles, and beads, and lots of jeans.

Prevailing with aplomb and articulate artianship was the legendary king-queen of Karaoke from the Bay Area, Dana Morrigan, whose diaphanous dress was accented by body tattoos, size 12 sandals and even bigger smiles.

Dana kicked off the singing while songbooks containing more than 15,000 lyrics were distributed and people signed up to perform. Once the singing started, the event flowed like a river of non-stop LGBTQ+Straight joy.

An 88-year old friend confided, “That’s the best birthday party I ever attended!”

If you haven’t yet experienced the magic of karaoke, now’s your chance!

Karaoke In A Nutshell

Karaoke is a form of entertainment that originated in Japan and spread worldwide. It’s pronounced “Carry-Oh-Key” and involves a machine on which music is played while a screen flashes the lyrics to the song. The performer reads the screen like a politician reads a teleprompter to deliver his speech, but instead of spoken words coming out, the lyrics that fit the music are projected with sharps, flats and love in every key.

The first local Zoom Karaoke Party with professional Karaoke deejay Dana Morrigan will benefit the UUCMP on Sat., Feb. 13, 2021, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

I’ll be attending to celebrate my 86th birthday, to which party you’re cordially invited now that we can meet from all over the world online. Sorry, but you’ll have to bring your own cake!

No gifts to me and no cards, please. Donations to UUCMP of \$10 per person or \$15 per family are welcome. For details on this family fun for all ages, please check the Events section of the UUCMP website for the concert link. Then log in and join the fun!

<https://uucmp.org/congregation-news/events/>

Or send your check, with “Karaoke” in the memo space, to: UUCMP, 490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel, CA 93923. If I live long enough, we’ll do this again next year!

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CREDITS:

Photo of Wanda Sue Parrott and Harold E. Grice by Rev. Elaine Gallagher Gehrman, UUCMP.

Triple haiku by Wanda Sue Parrott.

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“Homeless in Paradise” is a free public service self-funded and produced by independent journalist Wanda Sue Parrott. It appears in Facebook, Nextdoor, and *The Cedar Street Times* at www.cedarstreettimes.com and on private email lists. If interested in being added to the list, submit your request to 831-899-5887, amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com. Copyright 2021 by Wanda Sue Parrott.