

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

March 26 - April 1, 2021

MONTEREY PENINSULA MAKEOVERS - Part 13



*coffinlike wood box
warms up single homeless folks
lets them sleep alone*

*Micro-Tiny Home as reported by KION
<http://www.microtinyhome.com/index.html>*

DO YOU BELIEVE HOMELESSNESS SHOULD BE ILLEGAL?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SURVIVING my second dose of Pfizer vaccine last week wasn't expected to hurl me into a social justice crisis, but it did. If six words describe the vaccine's effect, they'd be "*it acted like a truth serum.*" Ouch!

I don't know who was more shocked: the online Zoom conference at which I rudely interjected comments that ripped past outstanding leaders at local, county, and state levels on ways to ameliorate the homeless crisis. Or me, as my spiel spat forth while I waited for my vaccinated left arm to start throbbing with needle-prick pain.

My voice exhorted like a preacher thumping the Good book:

"Grandmother's generation feared ending up in an institution loosely known as the 'Poor Farm.' In that institution, they were protected from the elements and were given food and shelter, but they weren't free to camp on public land. Homelessness must be declared illegal at the federal level. Until or unless homelessness is made illegal by law, and institutions mandated by the federal government are restored, financed with federal funds administered at state level, homelessness will not and cannot be cured. It is the greatest social injustice and environmental illness threatening our civilization today. It will outlast the pandemic and the federal government must take control if there is a chance for America to be saved."

I might have ended with an Amen except I was cut off, so I signed out. The place the needle plunged into my arm never did hurt, but it started itching beyond my ability to scratch it because, over last weekend, images began to appear on all media that revealed inhumane conditions at the southern border as 12,000+ immigrants started flooding into the U.S.

Early evidence of my tongue's dire declaration demonstrated that truth can hurt but it can also heal. So, with apologies for my outspoken intrusion in last week's Zoom session, I join forces with the hosts, Monterey

and San Benito County Continuum of Care (CoC) that are undertaking a process to rewrite the “Lead Me Home: Regional 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness,” in asking:

Where Do You Propose To Go From Here?

To support the development of the new Plan, the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers (CHSP) has engaged a consulting firm, Focus Strategies, to gather and analyze information and facilitate a strategic planning process. For the next step in the planning process, Focus Strategies will be facilitating a virtual community session to hear from community ideas and input around what should be a priority in the plan.

Publicity from CHSP says: “*The session is open to everyone in the community and we welcome input on how the community is or can better respond to homelessness.*” Mark your calendar: Homelessness Response in Monterey and San Benito Counties; Wed., March 31, 6:30 p.m. at Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89928001505> Meeting ID: 899 2800 1505

Details at: www.chsp.org/plan-rewrite.

A word of advice: be more constructive than I was so as not to discourage hardworking advocates for the homeless community like Wes White, without whose leadership the Homeless Union might not have been formed. If diplomacy appeals to you, bring positive suggestions to help curb the crisis that’s already here.



*amah mutsun homes
tentlike warm safe-shelter huts
could house families*

*Courtesy of
Google Free Images*

Consult The Experts Instead Of Acting Like One

If I attend the online meeting, I’ll diplomatically suggest asking the experts, the homeless themselves, things like: “Where would you prefer to sleep in a homeless compound or community away from public places?” Give at least three options. For instance:

Blue dome tent—For anywhere from \$25 for a single size to \$300 or more for a tent that will sleep four to six people, blue-dome tents dominate homeless encampments in which people sleep in bedrolls, sleeping bags or blankets. They’re everywhere, so no photo is needed.

Single-size “coffinlike” bed box—For \$500, a secure wooden box known as a micro tiny home on wheels that’s insulated and locks from within allows portability coupled with security for a single homeless occupant. <http://www.microtinyhome.com/index.html>

Indigenous village home—Native Americans like the Amah Mutsun tribal band of central coast Ohlone Costanoans lived in warm huts before Europeans forced them to adapt to Christianity. A village of huts comfortably and safely housed entire families.

Experts in coexistence and survival with nature, as stewards of Mother Earth, the wisdom of Native Americans is needed now to help stave off homelessness and save America.

For details about the Amah Mutsun people and to sign a petition to help them stop development of a gravel mine on Juristac,(their traditional sacred ground west of Gilroy), visit <http://protectjuristac.org>. Details about Amah Mutsun at <https://amahmutsun.org/culture>.

For information about the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, advocate of both environmental and social justice, visit www.uucmp.org.

Before my vaccination site stops itching, I ask: *What would happen in your community if your mayor, city council, city manager, police, fire and other personnel became so discouraged by the homelessness on their public lands that they quit?*

Then consider this proposition: *Martin versus Boise*, the federal law that currently allows the homeless to sleep on public lands if their communities cannot provide them with shelter, should be reversed, rescinded, or revised.

Homelessness – not homeless people themselves – should be illegal. Restore institutions to uphold that law.

There. My itch is gone. Is yours?

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CREDITS:

Photo of box courtesy of KION. Photo of hut courtesy of Google Free Images. Haiku poems 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.