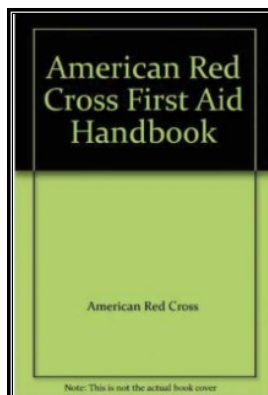


## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

November 20, 2015

Column #58



### EL NIÑO WEATHER WATCH

#### Part 3: Where To Turn If Downpours Drench Pacific Grove

By Wanda Sue Parrott

**WEATHER** forecasts predict the Monterey Peninsula will be hard hit by El Niño conditions this winter, with potential flooding and frigid temperatures that could be deadly for unsheltered persons. What is being done to provide shelter and service if dire predictions materialize? This series explores foul-weather aid for everyone.

Last week I e-mailed questionnaires to authorities in every community but didn't allow time to receive answers before writing the column for the 11-13-15 edition of Cedar Street Times. Therefore, I am revising the order of these columns to give the mayors fair time for response.



Mayor Bill Kampe's e-mail popped into my inbox last Saturday, making Pacific Grove first Peninsula community to respond to my El Niño questionnaire. As I scanned his "Cedar St. Times 'Homeless in Paradise' Column Questionnaire," as I entitled it, one line evoked childhood memories:

*The full service shelters are administered by The American Red Cross.*

The "First Aid" logo of the American Red Cross was everywhere during World War Two--in the post office, on bulletin boards at local markets, and at the library. Small window patches denoting Red Cross stations or trained volunteers were seen in store fronts and residential doors and windows.



Lately, however, I couldn't recall even a club-mobile auto sticker with the Red Cross symbol. Thus, I thought, "Is the Red Cross still around? If yes, why does it seem so conspicuously absent?"

A Google search revealed the American Red Cross is, indeed, still active on the Monterey Peninsula, and its mission statement explains why it is low key most of the time:

*Mission Statement: The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.*

It played a prominent role in my life during World War Two from 1941 and 1945 when I was between ages 6 and 10.

## **Do-It-Yourself Doctoring (Aka First Aid)**

Knowing the Red Cross was nearby was comforting when most fathers, brothers and uncles were fighting on foreign fronts. Our mothers, aunts and big sisters were Red Cross volunteers here at home.

Mother's 1945-edition of "The American Red Cross First Aid Handbook" was my secret playtime text. It taught me to make a splint from a popsicle stick for a bird with an injured wing.

I treated the infection my kitten got from fighting a tomcat by using Dad's razor (without his knowledge) as a scalpel to lance the abscess. Both Dad and the cat survived my first surgical procedure.

The digest-sized book showed me how to make a tourniquet to stop bleeding when my bike hit a Helms Bakery truck head on, and I slivered my chin. I tightly tied a lace-edged handkerchief around my throat to stop the bleeding. I lived. The bike expired from a broken wheel.

Mother learned to do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in the Red Cross training course at the PTA by breathing into my Betsy Wetsy doll's mouth and pressing its chest. I tried her technique on a dying pet goldfish I found floating on its side by placing it in my right palm and squeezing with my left thumb and ring finger while blowing into its mouth. Goldie survived but turned me toward a new avocation. I started writing a newspaper column more than 70 years ago.

## **Help For All Who Need It**

The American Red Cross doesn't discriminate between homeless and homeowner in its vision statement.

*Vision Statement: "The American Red Cross, through its strong network of volunteers, donors and partners, is always there in times of need. We aspire to turn compassion into action so that all people affected by disaster across the country and around the world receive care, shelter and hope; our communities are ready and prepared for disasters; everyone in our country has access to safe, lifesaving blood and blood products; all members of our armed services and their families find support and comfort whenever needed; and, in an emergency, there are always trained individuals nearby, ready to use their Red Cross skills to save lives."*

So even though Pacific Grove is the first Peninsula community to list Red Cross as a key component to emergency services if El Niño causes disasters, it won't be the only one.

## **How To Contact The Red Cross**

This information is from the website for The American Red Cross of the Central Coast, 2060 Soquel Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062, <http://www.redcross.org/local/central-coast>, which helps individuals and families recover from, prepare for, and prevent disasters supporting individuals and families who live in Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties: "We are an independent, nonprofit organization that depends upon the generosity of our local community for our financial support. We do not receive funds from the American National Red Cross. All funds donated to your local Chapter remain here to support the local Red Cross programs."

Phone (831) 462-2881. E-mail [redcrosscentralcoast@redcrosscc](mailto:redcrosscentralcoast@redcrosscc).

The Monterey Red Cross office is at 550 Lighthouse Ave., New Monterey, phone 831-375-5730.



## Emergency Shelter Spotlight: Pacific Grove

Here are Pacific Grove's responses to the questionnaire:

*Q. Do you have a contingency plan for sheltering houseless persons in PG who may be severely affected by El Nino?*

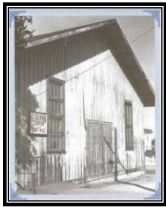
A. Yes. We can provide shelter at the Community Center and Chautauqua Hall. In addition, we can call on the following sheltering agencies: wehelpihelp.org (for men), Shelter Outreach Plus (for women), and The Salvation Army.

*Q. Does this plan also cover non-houseless (homeowners and renters) persons who may be temporarily displaced because of effects of El Nino?*

A. Yes; fully.

*Q. If yes, please describe the amount of money, if any, that is set aside for such disaster relief.*

A. Adequate funds are available; they are maintained in Reserves and are not set aside until the scope of the emergency is fully known.



*Q. Name of facility that will serve as a shelter or other gathering place for members of the community. If more than one, please list them all by name, address, description of service to be provided, contact info.*

A. Pacific Grove Community Center: 515 Junipero Ave. Facility can be utilized as a TAC (temporary assistance center) or a full-service shelter;

- Chautauqua Hall: 16th Street and Central Ave.;
- Forest Grove Elementary School: 1065 Congress Ave.;
- Pacific Grove High School: 615 Sunset Dr.
- Additional schools can be utilized as full-service shelters. POD (point of distribution) sites for FEMA distribution of supplies, can be set up, as needed.

*Q. Who will administer services at the locations?*

A. The TAC will be staffed by city employees and volunteers; the full-service shelters are administered by The American Red Cross.

*Q. What will be provided?*

A. Coffee, snacks, water, blankets.

*Q. Length of time such shelter or service will be available.*

A. Dependent upon the situation.

*Q. Who is in charge of your city's emergency shelter plans?*

A. The City Manager (currently Tom Frutchey), as Emergency Director (831- 648-3106).

Mayor Kampe transmitted his questionnaire answers with this cover e-note: "Good questions, Wanda."

My reply? "Great answers, Mister Mayor. Thanks!"

Contact Mayor Bill Kampe at 831- 648-3106, [bkampe@cityofpacificgrove.org](mailto:bkampe@cityofpacificgrove.org).

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