

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - November 19 , 2012

Attendance:

Paul Chestnut, Laura Chiu, George Chippendale, Terry Atkinson, Jean Ramaciotti

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

OLD BUSINESS

2. Approval of September minutes

The minutes were approved.

3. Our Congolese Refugees

The family has moved out of the house at 830 Sherman Oaks. They are in four different locations. There was a dispute between the group and the landlady regarding the return of the deposit, which was \$4000. The entire amount was used up by additional rent for not leaving on time, painting, cleaning, fumigation, and repairs.

4. Death Penalty issues - SAFE initiative

The campaign for Proposition 34, the SAFE Initiative, failed to win a majority.

5. Soles4Souls results

Soles4Souls® is a shoe charity that collects gently worn shoes and monies to provide shoes to those in need. A drive to collect shoes took place September 23 and 24. The response to the drive was impressive. We collected 603 pairs of shoes. These were shipped in 48 boxes to Soles4Souls in Los Angeles. \$180 was collected for shipping costs, which did not quite meet the total cost of \$246. The remainder was covered by the parish.

6. November Ballot Issues - League of Women Voters presentation

The League of Women Voters made a presentation on October 9 as part of the Spirituality Tuesday events. The attendees were not enthusiastic about the presentation. The main complaint was that the presenters merely read from notes. They did not appear to have a firm grasp of the issues. Jean suggested that in the next election we try to get Gloria Hom, a local citizen who is active in political circles, and who gives a good presentation of the issues.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Homeless Issues

The Palo Alto City Council recently considered a proposal to ban "human habitation of vehicles" through a Vehicle Habitation Ordinance. The proposal is "a response to unhoused individuals who park their cars in residential areas and sleep in them at nights." Some neighborhood residents have experienced problems with litter and that they feel unsafe sending their kids outside when unknown vehicles are parked in the area.

The City Council held a meeting on November 20 about vehicle habitation. There has been an effort to develop an alternative to an ordinance that would ban people from living in their vehicles. They have contacted local pastors to obtain support for alternatives, and they asked if members of their congregations could attend. Two of our members were present at the meeting: Mary Fong, Jean Ramaciotti.

The City Council is not inclined to pass the proposed ordinance and wants to find other solutions. The council expressed a desire that local church communities help in this endeavor. A meeting of interested individuals will be held on December 5 at St. Thomas House. The HCC wants to continue to be involved in this discussion.

11. What's On Your Mind?

We discussed the request by South Bay Sanctuary to support that group.

12. Volunteer for Faith-sharing/Question of the Week