

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

December 24, 2020

Last week was our last Early Bird meeting of 2020 and we spent it with Patrick Evans of Turtle Dove Shelters.

After the Navy during the Vietnam conflict, he completed graduate work in healthcare management then worked twenty years in healthcare before changing careers to wireless communication.

Outside of his "day job" Patrick has always had a interest in addressing issues of social inequity and justice with particular interest in concrete actions that can impact people in their daily lives.

Turtle Dove is a group in McMinnville that recognized a need to do something for the homeless that we could do locally, with not a lot of money, and a little time. "To provide shelter for homeless individuals through the design, construction, and donation of portable and semi-permanent shelters."

Patrick is not deluded. He knows that the state of homelessness is sometimes self inflicted. But he is not qualified to deal with those issues and isn't trying to fix people.

The idea for basic shelter for the un-housed arose. "I know we'd all like to solve the larger issue of homelessness but we started with just trying to keep people dry and warm. And accept them as they are, where they are, and how they are, without putting constraints on them for what we are doing."

The Turtle Dove shelter is designed using Coroplast®, the stuff of campaign signs, making this the "highest and best use of political signs one could come up with [good natured sarcasm]."

Describing what's seen in the photo below:

- The sidewalls have 3/4" insulation and the floor has 2" insulation getting its occupant up off the wet ground and better equipped to survive a NW winter.
- The back end opens out and up for full access to as small storage space.
- There's an access/entry door on the side, also insulated.
- There are fold-up feet at the front to stabilize the shelter when stationary.
- Skylight bubble to see light and dark, wet and dry, with no windows.
- There is enough space inside for a companion animal, if that's their thing.
- The shelter weighs about 70# empty, has 10# tongue, and support 300#.
- The donated shelter includes bicycle hitch and fitment.
- Cost per unit is \$700 (actual material cost \$500-700).

The first shelter was donated July 3, 2020 with a couple dozen donated since.

Patrick and his neighbor, who's only 83 years old, build these in Patrick's garage.

They have no employees and are completely reliant on donations to supply materials.

According to [YCAP](#) there are 277 unsheltered persons in Yamhill County comprised of 44 couples, 106 households with children, 23 veterans, and 161 "chronically unsheltered" persons (*the math is off because some persons cross multiple descriptors*).



Of the 1,400 homeless in our county, this is the target group for Turtle Dove, those who are at the complete mercy of the elements. Homeless is not the same as unsheltered meaning they have access to some manner of shelter from a friend, relative, or well meaning person or group.

The Turtle Dove shelter was inspired by the one you see above cobbled together by "one of our local homeless guys, and is now on our board of directors," with a friend.

He met with Patrick and friends earlier this year, commenting how this rolling plywood shelter had changed his life after sleeping on the ground in a wet and moldy tent.

"That's a good idea. I wonder what we can do to improve on that," to make it lighter and more water-tight.

One of the motivating ideas is that this shelter can be a stepping stone out of homelessness by providing a warm, safe, dry and portable space when other dwelling's are unavailable.

We are now in the process of expanding beyond McMinnville to Newberg and neighboring counties.

Turtle Dove is pushing itself interstate with the idea of training others and offering for sale (fund raiser) plans for building and maintaining these shelters locally.

How to help:

For [\\$29.95 purchase the plans](#) which includes photos, step-by-steps, and CAD drawings.

Of course, if you're more a giver than a doer, you can always [simply donate money](#).

Mention Turtle Dove to an unsheltered person. Speak up to establish homeless park spaces. Help de-stigmatize.

Or volunteer to help build.

"We all do what we can do."

