



New in Town

What's it like to move to Mt. Shasta, CA?

Greetings, neighbors! I'm Anastasia Sprout, new in town as of October 1st, 2025 though I enjoyed glorious visits to Mt. Shasta many times before that. I'm a retired social worker/psychotherapist (LICSW) from Seattle, WA. In June of 2024, I started a campervan journey across western America, looking for the very best city to settle in (partial) retirement. I still see clients as an addiction recovery coach, and work on passion projects (like this one). For me, the #1 city has turned out to be Mt. Shasta CA! Other contenders included Sedona, AZ and Ashland, OR. Clearly, I've got a thing for beauty, charm, and high energy vortices.

If you live here, I don't have to tell you about beauty! But I will tell you about some of the charm kindly extended to me so far in this mountain town...

My new next-door neighbors baked me a welcome apple pie, and later treated me to get-to-know-you dinner at the current "Mike and Tony's" iteration, Café Fiorucci. To my delight, our family-style smorgasbord of creamy clam chowder, buttery clams, delectable raw oysters and delicate, flavorful fish rivaled any seafood I enjoyed in Seattle! Speaking of fish, did you know you can get fresh fish M-W-F from Ray's Food Place (a most descript store moniker), just caught and delivered straight from the Oregon coast?! Call ahead for clams...503-926-3390. Yum.

Speaking of Rays, not long after arriving in town while walking my dog I noticed a lot of trash in the lovely woods behind the Mt. Shasta Shopping Center. I decided to ask some neighbors on NextDoor to help me clean it up. I popped into the Mt. Shasta Rotary Club meeting (thanks to

Mt Shasta Chief of Police Robert Gibson (Interview, by Anastasia Sprout)

Mt Shasta Police are Winning

Youth Outreach, Prevention, Intelligent Intervention and Care for the Homeless

A good way to get to know a new town is to attend its city council meetings. I encourage everyone to do this – the Mt. Shasta City Council meets at City Park upper lodge on the second and fourth Monday evenings, 5:30pm. Next meetings are February 9th and 23rd. It was at a recent City Council meeting where I asked a question about where local homeless/unhoused people go when temperatures drop below freezing. The social worker in me worries when snow is forecast. This is how I met Chief of Police Robert Gibson.



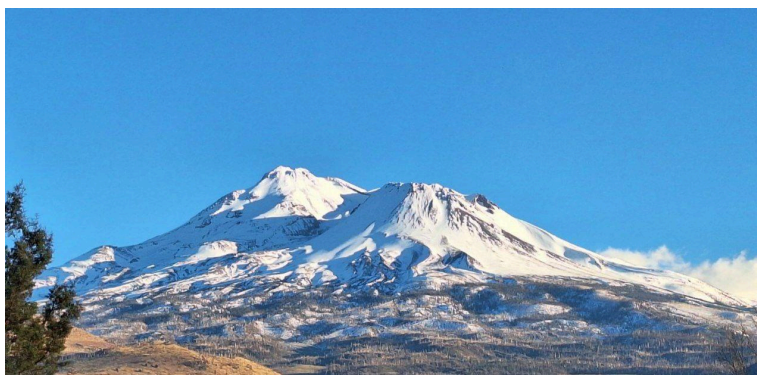
L: Mt. Shasta City Council meeting, December 2025. R: Author and Chief Gibson. A fellow officer used the "fun" setting!

I have spoken about concerns as a citizen before, for example at the Seattle City Council. But I have never had any council member or police officer respond to my questions, approach me afterwards, give me his card, and invite me to meet with him and his staff to discuss my concerns further! That is how this interview took place, and I felt that what Chief Gibson told me was important, encouraging, and interesting enough to be placed as the feature story of this new local newspaper, *The Shasta Be(e)*. His perspective reflected his role as the highest-ranking officer responsible for overseeing all aspects of city law enforcement: his first concern was community safety. Fellow neighbors, I hope you find this information as valuable as I have! Cont. page 2.

a local friend-member) and asked for volunteers. Soon I was connected with Belinda at “Clean and Safe Mt. Shasta,” an organization that has cleaned up many trash-filled spots around the area, who brought us big bags donated by the city and led our efforts to return the woods to their natural state!

Communities thrive when locals contribute in meaningful ways to make things better, and I see this “can-do” spirit in Mt. Shasta in abundance. That is part of why I already love this place.

Sundays in March please join me at the Parker Plaza Sundays around noon for a chat and to pick up the latest edition of the Shasta Be(e).



Where Can Our Homeless Neighbors Find Help?

I met with Chief Gibson on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 in his office at the Mt. Shasta Police Department. He was punctual and eager to talk about local efforts to deal with the issue of unhoused people in Mt. Shasta City.

He handed me an information sheet prepared with resources, which I share for all:

Call for Homeless Outreach Help:
530-841-4864 - Rico Gutierrez, Siskiyou County Behavioral Health

Rico Guitierrez is a field representative that guides citizens in need to help them find temporary housing for no cost to them. This includes those living in vehicles. He will interview them and offer direction and assistance.

Maddelyn Bryan is a Housing Coordinator for the area: 530-841-2748

Application for Housing Assistance can be started at

<https://www.siskiyoucounty.gov/housingresources/webform/housing-assistance-application>

I appreciated knowing what free social services are in place for local housing assistance. When I told Chief Gibson that my concern was partially inspired because I knew and cared about

someone living in his van nearby, he informed me that **camping, including in a vehicle, is not allowed within Shasta city limits.** I didn’t know this, and before moving here, had camped in my car in the city myself!

I asked how the Shasta P.D. responds to finding campers within city limits, and Chief Gibson asked his colleague to join our discussion. This is how I met “Code Enforcement Officer” Dan Giacomaro. His role is to educate and enforce the Mt. Shasta Municipal Code set by the Shasta City Council. I was interested (and glad) to learn that municipal (city) codes supersede state and federal codes.



Dan Giacomaro walks the streets of Mt. Shasta City every work day, on alert for any situations that go against municipal, fire, and building codes, as well as any unlawful behavior. His position is 100% funded (through 2028) from a grant written by Chief Gibson.

“Dan’s presence in the city has made a huge difference,” Gibson said. “Before we had a Code Enforcement Officer, it fell to the police officers to watch everything – who may not have had time because 911 emergencies always take precedence.”

One of the primary areas Dan and other officers have addressed since 2021 are the harmful actions of some unhoused people. Both officers summarized the categories they find that make up this cohort:

- 1) People who choose a transient lifestyle;
- 2) People with substance abuse problems;
- 3) People with mental health problems (e.g., who may be overwhelmed or off stabilizing prescription medications);
- 4) Some combination of the above.

The department approach is to combine education, hands-on help, community collaboration, and, when necessary, legal consequences. A typical approach would be for Code Officer Giacomaro to greet people “sleeping rough” or in a vehicle that seemed to be used for camping, and educate them that camping is not allowed in Mt. Shasta City. They would be given 24 hours to exit/move.

But where can they go?

- 1) Truck Stop in Weed, CA
- 2) KOA in Mt. Shasta City
- 3) Lake Siskiyou Campground
- 4) Forest Service Land above Lake Siskiyou (14 days limit)
- 5) Elsewhere of their choosing, outside city limits

They also spoke of officer efforts to help people whenever possible, for example taking them to the laundromat and helping them dry wet clothes, buying them breakfast at Burger King, or connecting them to Siskiyou County Behavioral Health Services, a mental health support clinic on 1107 Ream Avenue. There is also a Mt. Shasta Community Resource Center on 109 E Lake Street. But some past efforts, for example food vouchers, were misused and discontinued as a result.

If people don’t move outside city limits to camp, they can be handed a “letter of trespass” which requires a trip to a hearing in Yreka. Sadly, some people don’t move on because they seem to want the warm shelter and food found in jail.

Why is Illegal City Camping a Threat to the Community?

I learned it was not so much people sleeping outside or in their cars that concern the police of Mt. Shasta, but the probability of harmful actions

of those who may be doing so. They reviewed their top three concerns about the behavior of unhoused people, based on multiple past problems that have repeatedly occurred:

- 1) **Fire Risk** – Mt. Shasta and surrounding areas have suffered significantly due to fires, so it is no surprise that fire safety is the first priority for the department. They have seen outside campers create campfires and not extinguish them properly, or be otherwise careless.

Cont.
page 3.

They told me a harrowing story of someone who brought a lit woodstove into a plastic dwelling in the woods, a definite fire hazard! It is believed that the 100-acre Spring Hill fire was caused by an unhoused arsonist, though no arrests were made, due to insufficient evidence.

Unhoused individuals have, in the past, moved into vacant local houses and caused property damage, including starting fires. Chief Gibson stated that this problem has been improved by enforcing laws holding home and property owners accountable for taking care of their properties – since neglected, unkempt dwellings may attract vandals and other unwanted guests.

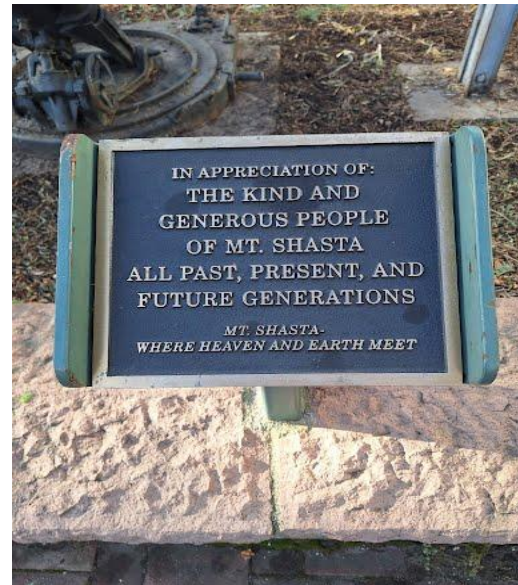
- 2) **Health and Safety for the Community** – Campers within the city limits can be tidy, but sometimes they are the opposite. Leaving deposits of trash, maggot-infested rotten food, needles, and other garbage means someone else has to clean it up. On Fire Access Road, the department has brought in dump trucks to remove large quantities of refuse left behind from big camps, at times working alongside Mt. Shasta Clean and Safe – a local citizen volunteer action group. City campers may also use local waterways to relieve themselves, creating a concern about hazardous waste in the water system.

Another safety concern has involved known child molesters camping across from schools, though thankfully not recently.

- 3) **Public Inebriation/Drunkenness + Criminal Behavior** - I was impressed by

the wisdom of Chief Gibson when he shared how the MSPD dealt with a past pattern of more than twenty local individuals who were guilty of repeat crimes while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including burglary and DUIs. He realized that it is illegal for retail stores to sell alcohol to someone who commits crimes repeatedly while habitually under the influence. So, the department printed a “no sell list” with flyers detailing the names, images and crimes of these individuals, promising to hold retail shops accountable if they ignored the prohibition. Apparently overnight, about half of these individuals left town, unable to buy liquor! Now there are approximately eight individuals one might see around town who might qualify as repeat offenders of public inebriation, though many don’t make messes or cause problems.

staff. Chief Robert Gibson has a funny side too – see our “fun” image with halos - and next time you see him, ask him how he handled that tough call from a concerned Mt. Shasta resident whose cow was not letting a calf drink from the trough. I’d say his approach was “trough love.” ☺



Posted outside the Mt. Shasta City Hall

Future stories planned for coming editions of the *Mt. Shasta Be(e)*:

- *What is the Y.E.A.H. movement and why does it matter to Mt. Shasta (and surrounding communities)?*
- *Who are the homeless individuals who make Mt. Shasta City their home – what are their stories?*

What’s Interesting in Town?

STORY IDEAS? Meet me at Parker Plaza (400 N. Mt. Shasta Blvd) around noon any Sunday in March – I’ll be the one with the ukulele and an extra chair - let’s talk!

“One reason we want to know where the unhoused residents of Mt. Shasta City are,” says Gibson, “is in case of fire. It will be our responsibility to get them out.”

Youth Outreach and Crime Prevention

I enjoyed hearing Chief Robert Gibson talk about more efforts to prevent crime, starting with youth. He labored to bring back the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, designed to equip elementary, middle, and high school students with skills to resist peer pressure to experiment with tobacco, alcohol, drugs and violence, with the Boys and Girls Club. He wrote a grant to fund this program, and helped get a full-time student support position at Mt. Shasta High School. An afterschool program called “The Den” offers counseling first, to deal with small student transgressions in the school system, preventing kids from entering the criminal justice system.

He recently offered a high school “How to Become a Law Enforcement Officer” lecture, which was well-received. He ensures his officers have a presence at school basketball and football games, and offers safety trainings to teachers and