The Quality of Mercy
Homelessness In Santa Cruz
1985–1992

by Paul A. Lee

Platonic Academy Press
Box 409
Santa Cruz, California 95061
Other books by Paul Lee

*Florence the Goose* 1992

*Alan Chadwick and the Salvation of Nature* 1992

*The Meaning of Health* by Paul Tillich

Introduction by Paul Lee

*The Quality of Mercy*

*Homelessness In Santa Cruz* 1985-1992

Designed by Robert Page
Electronic Composition Richard Curtis
In Adobe Janson Text
Printed and Bound by Publishers Press, Salt Lake City Utah,
On 70 lb. Husky Vellum Offset

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Printed in the United States of America
To the memory of
Mitch Snyder, the national advocate for the homeless,
and to Jane Imler and Peter Carota, local inspirations
of civic virtue, in their concern for the homeless.
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Preface

by Paul Lee

It is my wish to enter a personal word about helping someone in need. In 1976, I was a visiting lecturer at Emerson College, in Forest Row, England and spending weekends in London. One night, I went to dinner in a suburb of London. After dinner, my hosts dropped me off at a subway station to catch a train back to Kensington. It was terribly cold on the open platform and a strong wind was blowing. I was standing in front of a screen and heard a wracking cough, as though approximating a death rattle. After a few minutes, I could not endure this sound, what struck me as the sound of a man dying. I looked over the screen and there was a man lying on a bench, without covers, at the mercy of the elements, and obviously no where else to go. I glanced down the length of his body as I watched him heave convulsively from his coughing and there saw a large clumsy black shoe—oversized. He was a club foot. This dying cripple struck me with such force I thought I must take him home with me and care for him for the night, lest, leaving him there, he would be dead by morning. The train arrived, I boarded it, and went home alone. I have never forgiven myself for not acting on my response to this man’s plight, although, now, after six years of working for the homeless, I have at least done something to make up for it.
Jesus answered,

Foxes have their holes, the birds their roosts;
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Luke 9: 58
Acknowledgements

I want to thank Page Smith, my faithful friend in all times but especially in times of trouble, for his devotion to the cause of homelessness; Paul Pfotenhauer, for his help and friendship in a time of need that has extended over the years; and Fred Gray, Andrew Morin, Lynne Basehore, Karen Gillette, Shana Ross and Paddy Long, who have stood on the front line.

When looking for the source of the quote used for the title, Adelaide De Menil referred me to the Merchant of Venice; Ted Carpenter found the quote and after reading an early draft offered advice on some changes in the text, for which I am grateful. Congressman Leon Panetta sent a large packet of valuable and useful information on government and public studies on the homeless and available sources of funding. The bibliographies were especially helpful. Peter John provided me with the German reference for Tillich’s article: “The Philosophy of Social Work”, and he sent to me the article by Paul Ricoeur on “The Golden Rule”, which I treasure. Within weeks after receiving the article, Lynne Basehore, the Director of our Homeless Garden Project, won “The Golden Rule” Award, from the J. C. Penny Foundation, for her volunteer work.

Hillevi Wyman proofread the text with a finetooth comb and offered a number of invaluable suggestions; Elizabeth Spafford helped select the photographs; Rose at Lasersmith formatted the text and prepared it for publication; and Fred Gray hooked up my new Mac Scanner and entered the photographs after helping with the text. Omar Liripio obtained an additional hard disc and assisted in technical matters. I am indebted to them for their help.

I used a book I had published with Jack Stauffacher—The Meaning of Health, by Paul Tillich—as my model for the design and Jack lent his expert hand to the final format. I owe the fulfillment of my love of type and paper and text design to Jack Stauffacher and the Greenwood Press, of San Francisco.
Robert Page took over the design of the book at the final stage and with his fine sense of style made it what it is today.

*The Quality of Mercy* was composed on a Mac SE, one of the loves of my life, with an H-P ink-jet printer and a Mac Scanner. It was a thrill to be able to incorporate photos and newspaper articles directly into the book with this terrific tool. It makes desk top text-editing for publishing, a realized dream.

All the others, too many to name here, who have been so helpful and unsparing in their contribution to the homeless crisis in Santa Cruz are known to themselves and carry our thanks and gratitude.
Introduction

Page Smith

In *The Quality Of Mercy*, Paul Lee has combined a simple narrative of the experience of one small American community with the homeless with a larger moral and ethical issue of homelessness in America and, indeed, the world. It is an experience we share. In the stories he tells about our friendships with the homeless he helps us see them as human beings, brothers and sisters, in need of help and, above all, of love.

The rise of the Welfare State encouraged us to think that such issues as poverty and homelessness could be taken care of by the State through a corps of trained experts called social workers. The rest of us could then go about our respective businesses free of any qualms of conscience about the condition of the less fortunate members of our society. They, we were confident, were being adequately provided for through the appropriate agencies, federal, state and local. It is proof of the distinction Tillich draws between true charity and charity by proxy.

The fact is that we dare not break the connection between the assumed relatively prosperous (and generally reform-minded) middle class and those in need. As *The Quality of Mercy* makes clear, social service agencies cannot do the job for the rest of us.

The social services, for several generations, have attracted superior men and women with a mission for service to others; they have been absorbed (and often frustrated to the point of despair) in caste welfare bureaucracies where the spirit languishes and often dies under the sheer weight of "cases" and "case loads". Small wonder. Social workers are charged with doing our work for us under the most difficult circumstances. Underpaid and overworked they cannot, provide the human responses, the care and love, without which charity becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

Some years ago, the journalist, Peter Marin, wrote a famous essay entitled: "Helping and Hating the Homeless". In that essay, Marin explored
our ambivalent feelings about the homeless. Among other things, we are constantly trying to make what are often excessively subtle (and irrelevant) distinctions between the “deserving” and the “undeserving” homeless, those who want to work but are down on their luck and just need a helping hand to get back in the “main stream”, and those who are “bums”, beggars and ne’er-do-wells, etc. who should be chased out of town, thrown in jail, systematically harassed by the authorities and in other ways, many of them illegal, persuaded to move on.

I think anyone who has worked for the homeless knows that the reality is usually too complex to yield to such superficial analyses. There are wounded hearts and souls whom we dare not approach in a patronizing or condescending spirit. James Russell Lowell, one of our best (and most neglected) poets, wrote, in the middle of the last century, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, the most famous line of which is “What is so rare as a day in June?” The poem is about Sir Launfal’s quest for the Holy Grail and the salvation of his soul. Attired in his “richest mail”, splendidly mounted, he sets forth from his castle. At the gateway a leper begs for alms, a figure so abject that the knight’s flesh beneath his armor begins to “shrink and crawl”. Years later, when he returns from his arduous and futile search, worn down by time and disappointment, he encounters once more the leper, now revealed as the Christ Figure, the suffering servant, whom he had ridden by so contemptuously at the beginning of his journey.

The homeless, as the poorest of the poor, test our capacity for charity/love, often it must be said, quite severely. Is it measured and conditional, hedged about with cautious reservations or is it generous and wholehearted?

There are practical considerations. There is a vast “welfare bureaucracy” staffed by many able and dedicated individuals, but bound by innumerable rules, designed, we are constantly reminded, “to protect the tax-payer”. To the welfare establishment, we seem merely muddled do-gooders, without the requisite “training” or “degrees”, amateurs, in short. To those amateurs committed to helping the homeless, the professionals often seem a major impediment, forced as the professionals are to deal with cases.
Yet the fact is that we must work together: We each have some essential elements to contribute to, I fear, not a solution to the eternal problem of poverty and homelessness, but to a mitigation of it’s harshest aspects.

Although much, much, remains to be done, here and elsewhere, Santa Cruz has made, with, to be sure, various blunders and errors, a good beginning. This is the story of that beginning. It’s most valuable contribution is that rather than treating the issue of homelessness in Santa Cruz as a “social problem” or as an “economic problem” or as a “political problem”, it will not let us forget that it is, above all, a moral issue that has to do with the most profound values of life itself.
The quality of mercy is not strain'd,—
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest,—
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes...

Portia

*Merchant of Venice IV.1*
Chapter One
Homelessness In Santa Cruz

Homelessness is not easy to think about. In fact, one would rather do something about it than think about it. It is the tradition of the pragmatic American way. The plight of the homeless demands action more than thought. Nevertheless, there is much to think about in assessing the homeless and many questions come to mind after working with the homeless for the last six years. Why has there been a growing population of homeless every year since the late 1970s? What has happened in our country that people lack shelter and have nowhere to go at night when it turns cold and dark?

Isn’t the right to shelter one of the basic human rights not to be denied anyone?

Is a philosophy of homelessness possible to develop and is this a task this book should attempt to fulfill, even though, as Tillich says, in his address on the “Philosophy of Social Work”, appended to the end of this book, beyond anyone’s power to do so?

I can’t say I develop a philosophy of homelessness in this book, but I do raise some philosophical issues and the basic theme of the book—“the quality of mercy”—was given to me as a title before I knew what it meant in terms of the discussion developed here. I came to realize that it was a great phrase for an ethic of abundance, in this case spiritual abundance, where the measure you give is the measure you receive, not in the sense of quid pro quo. No, quite the contrary, more in the sense of a lack of measure, where the phrase—go for broke—comes to mind. We were willing to risk it and we were rewarded by the success of our programs. It has been as simple as that.
We didn’t mind taking on something beyond our power like the cause of homelessness in Santa Cruz because there were so many who were willing to help. We now have a community of people involved in the task of alleviating the misery of homelessness in Santa Cruz.

In our work with the homeless, I have been guided by a saying I had already taken to heart as a major statement, even before the homeless issue came up. It was a saying waiting for me to apply it. It provided me with food for thought in terms of a philosophy of social work even though it is a statement that seems to argue that the infinite dignity and worth of a human being is now so eroded that it has to be formulated in an almost crazily exaggerated way just to make the point.

The principle was formulated around 1910, by Josef Popper-Lynkeus, a Viennese social reformer and scientist, who was a figure of great inspiration for many who knew him, such as Einstein and others. Freud revered him and wrote an essay about him, but didn’t want to meet him lest the reality disappoint the image.

Popper-Lynkeus called his statement a basic principle of a moral social philosophy:

“When any individual, of however little account but one who does not deliberately imperil another’s existence, disappears from the world, without or even against his or her will, this is a far more important happening than any political or religious or national occurrence, or the sum total of the scientific and artistic and technical advances made throughout the ages by all the peoples of the world.

Should anybody be inclined to regard this statement as an exaggeration, let them imagine the individual concerned to be themself or their best beloved. Then they will understand and accept it.”

These two paragraphs are deceptively short thanks to their terse pun-
gency. They demand a very close reading in order to grasp their meaning. What is meant, for instance, by “disappearing from the world”? It is a term close to Paul Tillich’s remark about “feeling unnecessary”, a prelude to despair and hopelessness. In his remarkable book: *The Courage To Be*, Tillich mentions how people in the Great Depression thought they had ceased to exist because they were unemployed. Having a job in America means existence itself. Not having a job means disappearing—ceasing to exist. You see it in the photographs of the faces of men sitting on park benches in the Depression, in the depths of despair, where they are absent from themselves. They have disappeared.²

A situation was to occur within a few decades that would exemplify what Popper-Lynkeus meant by ‘disappearance’. He anticipated the ‘disappearance of the Jews’ in the Holocaust of Nazi Germany. The Final Solution, organized by Hitler and Himmler, was for the Jews to disappear. What was meant was extermination. This has to be the criterion, or the reference point, for the meaning of the word—‘disappearance’. At the same time, millions of people ‘disappeared’ in the terror of the Russian purge under Stalin. In more recent history, there are those who ‘disappeared’ in Argentina and in Chile; those who ‘disappeared’ in China, during the Cultural Revolution; those who ‘disappeared’ in the South during the Civil Rights struggle; those who ‘disappear’ every day, somewhere in the world, of however little account, without or even against their will.

Homelessness is just such an issue of “disappearing from the world”. The homeless have disappeared right in front of our face. There they are, lying in a doorway of a store or business, on the sidewalk, in a vacant lot, abandoned and forgotten. Although this is seldom seen in Santa Cruz, where it is a criminal offense to be caught ‘sleeping’ in a public place, it is a common scene in various areas of big cities, such as San Francisco, New York, London, Amsterdam, Lisbon.

What else can “disappearing from the world” mean, in this case, where a human being has become a piece of refuse? Against this, Popper-Lynkeus poses the most exaggerated statement in the history of human
thought, in order to dramatize the juxtaposition: the infinite worth and
dignity of a human person against the whole sum of cultural achieve-
ments by all the peoples of the world. Not even this sum is equal to one
person who has disappeared!

And then he says: if you think this is an exaggeration, (when it is the
greatest exaggeration ever formulated), think of that person as yourself or
your best beloved, to drive the point home, in what is known in philoso-
phy as an argumentum ad hominem.

The idea of the infinite value and worth of a human being has eroded in
this century, a century of world wars and wholesale slaughter of human
lives through genocide. Popper-Lynheus anticipated this in his odd for-
mulation. He had to put the issue on a personal basis: think of yourself
or your best beloved.

What do you value?, he wants to know. He says a person is valued on a
scale from zero to infinity, which seems to imply that the value of a
human being is a mystery. A human being is of incomparable worth.
“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

He takes umbrage with a famous German art historian who had the gall
to say that all of the deaths of Greek slaves were not worth one sculpting
of Phidias. That made Popper-Lynheus mad. He proposed that the art
historian suffer slavery for a few decades and then retire with an apart-
ment at the Louvre where he could look at sculptures and think of what
he said now that he has some personal understanding of it.

What would you do if there was a fire in the Louvre?, he asks. Would
you save the people or the paintings? If an angel of death were to ask for
the lives of two common day laborers to save Michaelangelo or Raphael
or Shakespeare would you give them up for sacrifice? No, of course not.

I had a strange experience in this regard. I was at the Museum of Modern
Art at an exhibition of the late paintings of Cezanne, one of my favorite
artists. I turned from one painting and looked at a young woman who
was a Punk, with pins in her cheeks and garish hair and I had to admit
that she was of greater value than the Cezanne, another order of value. I know the difference between a painting and a person.

I think of Wittgenstein when I think of this saying of Popper-Lynkeus. He lost his sense of human decency in the trenches of the First World War and never again wore a tie lest it be thought he could resume his place in the company of decent men. It was a symbolic moment for this century’s great philosopher when the value and worth of a human being is lost along with the sense of human decency.

Paul Tillich, as a chaplain at the front, in the same war, heard the screams of his men calling on “Lieber Gott”; their screams went unanswered.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, in the trenches of Verdun, thought of the breakdown of Western culture and sketched out in his mind his great work: *Out of Revolution*, where he quotes Lefebvre: “Shall dogs and horses scent a thunderstorm and man and woman not sense the breakdown of a social order that has lasted a thousand years?.”

With this breakdown in Western culture came the decline of the value and meaning of humanity itself. Human beings were cannon fodder, pawns in the great wars of hostile nation states, bent upon self-destruction. And then came Hitler to fill the void.

No wonder that Popper-Lynkeus had to define the value and worth of a person negatively, when seen against the sum total of cultural achievements; one person is worth more than the sum of it all, when that person is allowed to disappear; the value re-appears in the most absurdly exaggerated formulation of that value.

Does this account for the impact the homeless make on us as we go our way in our effort to ignore them, denying the moment, in the course of our lives, when we are called upon to meet the plight of a human being in need? What we deny, in our refusal to help them, we deny in ourselves: a sense of human decency.

It may be that we have reversed the Popper-Lynkeus equation: the home-
less have no worth at all because we have so little sense of the value of ourselves and our best beloved. "So what?", we say, almost one hundred years later: "I'm not worth much, my best beloved is only worth a little more, to me, and therefore the homeless are nothing!"

The sense of the infinite worth of human beings, as such, ourselves included, is no longer generally recognized or affirmed. Life is cheap and easily expendable. We have lost our sense of human decency which depends on such a valuation of infinite worth. Then Tillich's "law of listening love", no longer applies, because it cannot be summoned or counted on.

But this is not true.

Against all measures of scepticism and cynicism, people step forward to respond spontaneously to the depth of human need and something happens. It is almost impossible to plan and difficult to predict. It happens. And when it does, one gets a sense of "the means of grace", still operating in our midst and the original meaning of the words: caritas and agape. Where it comes from is to be trusted.

This has been our experience in working with the homeless. We went into the effort without a plan, with little experience, in response to an emergency need. We found countless others who were willing to help, often without even calling on them to help—they appeared: with blankets, with food, with appliances, with clothing, with money, whatever was needed. There were vast untapped resources of care and concern in the Santa Cruz community that rallied to the cause to refute the prevailing notion that the homeless were unwelcome and should leave, especially if they wanted to escape a beating at the hands of the police.

One of the motives for writing this book is to thank all of you who have contributed to alleviating the plight of the homeless and who have helped make Santa Cruz a place where the quality of mercy is not strained but abundantly evident in the generosity of those who have contributed to the cause.
Shakespeare was right when he wrote that “the quality of mercy is not strained”, because he knew of an ethic of abundance, where, according to the measure you give, more will be given to you, heaped up, spilling over. The lack of measure is the good measure:

“...give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” Luke 6:38.

The Apostle Paul touches this theme, in his inimitably paradoxical language when he speaks about how Jesus as the Christ, who was rich, was made poor for us that we might be rich.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

He goes on to address the riddle of inequality expressing the theme of abundance even when there doesn’t seem to be enough.

And in this matter I give my advice: it is best for you now to complete what a year ago you began not only to do but to desire, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what be has not. I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply your want, that there may be equality. As it is, written, “He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”

When I read this personal word of Paul to the Church at Corinth, I was perplexed by the quote, where Paul refers to Exodus 16:18. I looked it up
and lo and behold it was like learning a secret, the code word for which was "manna".

"And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground. When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an omer apiece, according to the number of the persons whom each of you has in his tent.'"

And the people of Israel did so; they gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; each gathered according to what he could eat."

A recipe of sorts for manna is even given. It tastes like coriander seed pounded into flour mixed with honey and baked. I thought of making manna cakes and distributing them at the Free Meal some afternoon. The homeless would say: "what is it?"

This is the theme of the book—this abundance the homeless reveal. It is what I have learned over the last six years. It is the moral of my story.

We have been guided by another saying, attributed to Simone Weil, the famous French philosopher who died of self-imposed starvation in her despair over the suffering of the Second World War:

8
"Learn how to give as if you were begging."

Derelict, from the Latin: *derelictus*

*forsaken, abandoned, deserted, without a guardian*  
guilty of dereliction of duty; delinquent, failure,  
cessation, fainting  
a vessel abandoned at sea  
reprehensible abandonment or neglect

The word "derelict" cuts both ways—the population of bums and vagrants who are the derelicts, and our being derelict in our duty to them. We turned the word over and over in our minds according to these two meanings. We thought of being derelict in our duty to derelicts. How about that for coming to the end of your rope? We figured it meant changing a community attitude on the homeless: from "troll-busters" to supporters of a human conservation society.

When we started, we had nothing in hand, just our concern. We had no money, outside of what was in our pockets; we had no resources, beyond ourselves and our friends; we had no experience with working with the homeless, although Page Smith and I had worked with the jobless, in the William James Work Company, a nonprofit community service corporation we started in the 1970s, after our departure from the university. But then the situation was not so desperate. The word 'homeless' was never used. People were simply looking for some employment, short-term, part-time. Pick-up work. Before we closed down the Work Company we had found thirty thousand part-time jobs for people, not a bad record for a couple of loafers.

Now that we are six years into the homeless work, we have to deal with budgets amounting to millions of dollars in the five programs we are associated with. Given these figures, I started to think about the homeless as a new field for the entrepreneur. I even coined a term as a pun—"entropy nerds"—to characterize the new economic type involved with homelessness.
Entropy:
1. a thermodynamic measure of the amount of energy unavailable for useful work in a system undergoing change,

2. a measure of the degree of disorder in a system: entropy always increases and available energy diminishes in a closed system, as the universe,

3. in information theory, a measure of the information content of a message evaluated as to its uncertainty.

The first definition expresses the general view of the homeless—they are a drain. They represent energy unavailable for useful work. Therefore, they represent a degree of disorder, according to the second definition. It is our view that this so-called disorder, this chaos, can be turned to advantage, when the energy is put to work.

Then the third meaning comes into play—the uncertainty in the information becomes a new message with new meaning, as when a chronic alcoholic, who is homeless, goes on the wagon and becomes an important member of the staff of the Homeless Garden Project.

Nerd:
a person regarded as contemptibly dull, unsophisticated, ineffective.

From entropyners to entrepreneurs has become our goal and battle cry, with every homeless person regarded as a fund of untapped potential. All it takes is a change of perspective, a gestalt switch, where the victim is transformed into a resource, and becomes a valuable member of a project, rather than a liability and a waste. After all, the homeless are bearers of dignity and worth, just like you and me. The victim can become a victor through a quirk of fate, an intervening opportunity, where untapped potential is given a chance to disclose itself.

The homeless, it turns out, are just as enterprising as anyone else in our
society. All you have to do is turn this prospect, this possibility, to advantage. Where there is no ostensible hope, hope can be summoned. Hope can even take you by surprise, when you least expect it.

What seemed like a drain on energy and an impossible task was just the opposite—a new challenge to develop opportunities for people to escape from desperation and hopelessness. In fact, so many opportunities are possible, if the conditions are right and the imagination is there to propose new projects; and, according to our experience, the conditions are easy to establish. All you need is a little bluff, the outstanding quality of American pragmatism, where the proof is in the pudding.

We saw just that in the effort to organize the Cedar Street Shelter. The talent and ability were there, within the group, in the shelter. The homeless, themselves, had the ability to organize and run the place. All we had to do was call upon it, blow on it like a spark and it would ignite into a meaningful program and a community unto itself with its own sense of comraderie and morale. This was our experience in deferring to the homeless in the operation of the Cedar Street Shelter.

We had the same experience with the Interfaith Satellite Shelter. The homeless run it themselves in terms of our monitor program—they keep order and see to it that things run smoothly and peacefully. The best example of this spontaneous ability to run a project, where the talent simply surfaces, is the Free Meal Program, under Karen Gillette, where the homeless, themselves, run the show, providing a free meal for up to 150 people a night, seven days a week.

This is the story of our work with the homeless since the opening of the Cedar Street Shelter in 1985. It is a progress report to the people of Santa Cruz, who have been an enormous help, in a time of trouble and need, with financial and moral support. Although this is a progress report, it is written as a memoir. I have narrated what I have experienced and what I have learned as a result of getting involved in the homeless issue in 1985. My views are not necessarily shared by anyone else. I chose to tell the story from my point of view, even though I had help from Page Smith, Paul Pfotenhauer, Fred Gray, Andrew Morin, Karen Gillette,
Lynne Basehore, Bill Tracey and Judy Schwartz. But they are not responsible for the way I have told it. This is what has been accomplished; it is our interest to give you an accounting of it; and it is our chance to say thank you for your support and encouragement.

"I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big success. And I am for those tiny invisible loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if given time, will rend the hardest monuments of human pride."

William James
Chapter Two
The Imler Fast and the Cedar Street Shelter

In the winter of 1985, Jane Imler, a resident of Santa Cruz, inspired by the example of Mitch Snyder, the national advocate for the homeless, working in Washington, D.C., made famous for his fasting in behalf of the homeless, announced that she was going to fast to the death unless someone opened a public shelter for the homeless in Santa Cruz. There was little interest in the threat. The response of the City Council, at the time, was, well, die then. I took it to heart and was bothered by it. I could not tolerate the notion that I had to take onto my conscience the death of a woman in my town who was making an appeal for the homeless no one was willing to act upon. A spontaneous response was demanded, if that is not a contradiction in terms.

So I asked my colleague and Co-Director of the William James Association, Page Smith, to consider opening a shelter as a new project of the Association. We had been doing community work since leaving the university in 1972 and we had turned to other concerns over the years and needed a new project to continue our work together.

We had been inspired by the example of Peter Carota, who had opened the first public food program for the homeless—St. Francis Kitchen—so we invited Peter to attend our next Board of Directors’ meeting and advise us on opening a shelter. After that meeting we began looking for a prospective site. It struck us that the auditorium at the welfare building (Human Resources Agency) on Emeline Street, empty at night, was a decently warm and neutral space to provide a place for the homeless to lie down and sleep. There was an adjoining cafeteria. And, after all, it was the very agency that was supposed to help people in need like the homeless. We would organize it and run it.
We made the proposal to the Director of Human Resources. It was enough to make her squirm; she somewhat politely told us it was impossible. We asked why. She gave us a list of reasons, all of them skimpy, as far as we were concerned. She didn't seem to understand that we were going to open a shelter for the homeless. One of the reasons for refusing our request had to do with adding a door for security, not an insurmountable obstacle. We were even willing to pay for the door. We asked our friend, Roy Rydell, an architect, and a member of the Board of the William James Association, to investigate the matter and advise accordingly. He made it obvious it was no big deal and drew up the plan. We easily dealt with the other reasons for not letting us do it.

The Director suggested we find a place in downtown Santa Cruz and the County would pay the rent, just as long as it was some miles from the welfare complex. We decided it would be easier. We found an empty former family sauna, on Cedar Street, in downtown Santa Cruz, with nice little cells for sleeping (the women we would serve could have those, we figured, affording them some privacy) and a nice accommodatingly large room with a rug on the floor for the men. There were showers. We rented it. We were in the homeless business. We were called "shelter providers". We called it: "The Cedar Street Shelter".

The City had a fit. We had circumvented the permit process, something we didn't know about in the first place. The County could open a shelter without a permit from the City and that's what happened. We had to open a shelter and we had to do it fast to get Jane Imler off her fast. The County CAO—George Newall—took the heat. City Council members distinguished themselves by making stupid comments about our situation. They were going to deny us the $5,000 they had voted to give us thinking we would be going into the Emeline County Welfare Auditorium and therefore out of their area. It was the first indication that they were not nice guys and that any interest in the homeless was idle talk. So much for the liberalism of that ilk. They even had the gall to call themselves "Progressives".

Jane Imler, already in the hospital, ended her fast on the first day our doors were opened. She showed up on the first night to enjoy her first
bowl of soup. Soon it was Christmas. Everyone got a pair of socks and we sang Christmas carols and had cookies and punch. It was terrific!

Then came the horrendous winter storms in a season of storms that wreaked havoc that year. Mud slides. The San Lorenzo River ready to overflow its banks. We huddled in and hunkered down to provide a space for everyone who came to the door. There were regulations, of course, and limitations in terms of occupancy based on fire laws. We got angry letters from “the authorities”, complaining bitterly about exceeding our limit, which was erroneously figured at 25, a misreading of our space and the fire regulations. We thought: “let them come down during a storm and stand at the door and turn the homeless away”. Attitudes like that earn you a bad reputation with the people in charge, who, we came to believe the hard way, were paid to hinder our efforts and anyone else, like ourselves, outside of the system, intent on helping the homeless. We were regarded as amateurish meddlers who had no business interfering in the professional realm of social work.

Page Smith determined the management plan. He thought he was organizing Cowell College all over again, only this time it was downtown with the homeless. No one of our homeless clients struck us as any crazier or further out there than some of the students we had to deal with in the mid-60s at UCSC, so it was a kind of homeless college in nuce. Page wanted someone to sleep there every night to act as a steadying influence, the beginning of our monitor system. I had a nice spare pecanwood bed I brought down to use for our monitors. We either rotated between Page and myself, or recruited someone from the community. We were delighted when the Mayor—Mike Rotkin—slept there one night. After all, he was an avowed Marxist and therefore sympathetic with the lumpen-proletariat.

I couldn’t stand sleeping there at night. The snoring and the coughing and the farting kept me awake all night long. Page thought he was back in the army and slept like a Major. I had a hard time with a woman who had fits all night long. She would turn in a circle and cry out in a plaintive whine: “oh help me, oh help me”. Her shuffle had a certain design to it. The thought passed my mind that she was acting. She was doing this
godawful ritual just to keep me awake and to awaken others. I got up and went out to tell her she had to stop or leave. She was keeping everyone awake. O.K., if that wasn’t true, she might wake someone up besides me. She left. She got dressed and got on her bicycle and went out into the night. It happened to be storming. I went back to bed. I thought: “I went to Harvard Divinity School to drive that poor woman out into the stormy night?”

I decided to befriend her. She became my favorite homeless person. I learned her name. I gave her my wife’s bicycle when her bicycle was stolen. It was a very nice Raleigh. I gave her my daughter’s bicycle when she told me the Raleigh was stolen. She kept her stuff in my parent’s garage next door to me. She collected stuff—a piano, a loom, a windsurfer outfit, complete with sails, jewelry, and bags and bags of stuff. She called one night and said she was going to San Jose. She was going to move there. She asked if I could bring her stuff—this was when there were only about a dozen big duffle bags—down to the bus depot. I did. The next night she called and said she wasn’t going to San Jose after all. Would I come down and get her stuff and put it back in the garage? I did. The next night she called and said she was going after all and would I.... I did. The next night when she called, I said: “O.K., Jean, now I’m not going to do this again.”

I visited her in the hospital when she had a leg infection. I took her to the hospital when she needed medication. She was a great example of someone you think can’t make it for a day and years later, there she is on the phone: “Oh, Dr. Lee, I’m so glad to talk to you.” She sounded like Mr. Bill on the old “Saturday Night Live” shows. We developed a continuing friendship. I thought I could make one unconditional commitment to one homeless person, so that no matter what transpired I would take it in stride. I was always glad to see her and she was always glad to see me. We had a kind of pact.

There were a number of examples like that, unique friendships that grew out of the shelter. We figured if we could trust them they would trust us and so we left it up to them to manage their own affairs.
The management of the shelter, in the hands of the homeless, demonstrated to us what we had hoped—they could organize themselves better than we could and the less we imposed any outside authority or discipline the better. It was the William James Work Company all over again. There were no incidents of any major significance in the months we were in operation. The manager in charge might get drunk one night and disqualify himself, appointing his successor, but that was the extent of it.

One night, one guy acted up and became aggressive and rather wild and threatening. Miraculously, as though he manifested himself just to deal with it, Paddy Long appeared on the sidewalk, a lay brother in a Roman Catholic order, with a history of experience with the homeless. He knew exactly what to do, just as we had reached the end of our rope and were about to call the cops. The guy calmed down as Paddy and I drove him over to the mental ward at Dominican and checked him in and that was that. Paddy was to continue to work with us through all of our efforts and proved to be an invaluable friend and advisor always on the ready to contribute whatever was needed.

I remember the little punk mick kid with his pet rats on either shoulder the day we opened. We all acted as if we couldn’t see the rats. At least I did. It was more than I could cope with. Dogs, maybe. Cats, maybe. But rats!? I acted like I didn’t see them. They would invariably hiss in a rasping rat-like gasp whenever I went near the kid. Sometimes he would hold them up in my face as I passed him and they would hiss: “can’t see us, huh?” There were always little rat turds to clean up in the morning when I swept the room. I didn’t care. I felt like Luther’s maid with the broom sweeping to the glory of God. One day he rolled over on one of the rats when asleep, or it fell off his shoulder and broke it’s neck. Anyhow, one of them was dead. He spent the day weeping over his dead rat. The dead one, I was happy to note, I could see.

Page Smith’s favorite was Shiloh Superfly. Page has this bohemian side to him, typical of some academics. He was fond of the “Oily Scarf Wino Band”, he and his wife, Eloise, discovered on the streets of Los Angeles. They used to bring them up to Santa Cruz to play at parties. The band would get loaded and sleep on the lawn. I thought, “what a party favor”!
If there was anything that prepared me for working with the homeless, it was getting to know the "Oily Scarf Wino Band".

I shared Page’s affinity for the down and out. Shiloh, of course, was a biblical expert and knew the precise passages from scriptures that made the homeless the most spiritually advanced people in the history of the world, or Western culture, or at least Santa Cruz. Page would shake his head in a kind of bewildered appreciation that we had a prophet in our midst who could recite or write out the sayings of Jeremiah or Ezekiel and bring one to tears. It made up for the rats.

Shiloh was featured in our documentary television account of the shelter—"Voices of the Homeless"—opening with a beautiful prayer. We edited out the part that came at the end—he was praying for later hours in the shelter on Friday so he could watch "Friday Night Video" and rock and roll.

One guy—Fred Fetter—who looked like his name, a roly poly fellow with an alcoholic blear, who had been one of the shelter staff, decided he was going to hitch-hike down to San Diego and re-join the Merchant Marines. Page and I were at the Catalyst, a local restaurant and rock and roll showplace, on a sandwich break one night when Fred came over and asked if he could buy us a pitcher of beer. We said, "sure". He sat down saying that it was like sitting down with Clark Gable (Page) and Ernest Hemingway (me). You can’t beat that for openers. We said, "What’s your story, Fred? Tell us something about yourself." "Well", he said, "I was a mercenary soldier in Zimbabwe". "No kidding!" "Yep". "Tell us something about that". "Well. when we were supposed to be paid after our tour of duty they only had money for half of us, so they rented a plane, put half of the guys in it and when it was high in the sky blew it up."

We wished him good luck and said goodbye to Fred Fetter.

One of the nicest aspects was the turn-around in the business community surrounding the shelter. Because there was no fuss, no muss, no untoward incident to cause a ruckus, they quickly became partisans of the
cause, rather than detractors, and we welcomed their support. The neighbor bagel baker gave us left-over bagels. It undermined the notion that one is in favor of a shelter for the homeless as long as it isn’t in one’s neighborhood. After all, the homeless had to leave at 8:00 am and could not come back until 5:00 pm; as it was dark during those hours, in the wintertime, they were practically invisible.

Then came the discovery of the demonic. I had learned the concept from my teacher, Paul Tillich. He actually claimed to have rediscovered it for modern theology, in the 1930s, in Germany. He had a great way of formulating its meaning: “a structure of destruction”. The demonic hit and it was tough. It drove us apart, those of us who were working together; gossip and back-biting is a great symptomatic symbol of it. Friends fall out with friends and colleagues with colleagues. A disruptive atmosphere appeared and tempers flared. I was amazed that what I had learned in the dry books of theology was now being played out in front of my face. The demonic, fortunately, was kept at bay and after a few attacks we recovered and seemed to be immune, although I maintained a sense of it from then on. When people are down and out they seem to be at the mercy of the demonic more than others, although it may only be more visible or evident. It reminded me of the meaning of the wrath of God, where one’s vitality is directed against oneself in a syndrome of self-destruction.

We appealed to the community for financial support and donations came in. We never had to worry about money. Blankets, mats, food, all of it was had for the asking. I snooped around and found the county warehouse where supplies are stored. I found a cache of blankets—hundreds of all-wool blankets stored in cases on the top of a shelf. “Hey, can I have some of those?” They gave me a hundred. A blanket to a homeless person is as good as gold. You don’t want to turn it in every day, especially if you are caught out at night after the shelter has closed and it’s cold outside and raining. There were times when a pitiful soul would knock at the door after midnight in a torrential rainstorm and because we had absolutely no room would be denied admittance. “Can you at least spare a blanket?”, he would ask. I asked for another hundred. Well, this time they had to check. Request denied. Why? “These blankets are part of the emergency preparedness program specified by the Federal and State
Governments for every County." "What does that mean?" "They must be kept on hand in the event of a nuclear attack." I didn’t even ask if they were kidding. I knew they weren’t kidding.

Trying to get anything out of the bureaucracy was a revolving door. This only had to happen a few times—you go in here and you come out there, with nothing—the energy to undergo the process, after so many disappointments, is dissipated in advance.

We were told by the welfare representative that everyone in the shelter was potentially eligible for $120 a month, and, moreover, we could charge $180 a month rent and get that in addition. It turned out that because we were a "temporary shelter" we did not qualify as a permanent residence and therefore, unless an exception was made by the head bureaucrat, in each instance, our guests were not eligible.

One evening a homeless guy blew into the shelter with a letter from his lawyer boasting that he was the first person in the county without a permanent residence to beat the system and get a general assistance check. He had to sue to do it. His address was a local tree.

A word needs to be said about the homeless male and homeless female. There is welfare money immediately available for families and for women with children. But not for single people. I would not learn this lesson until I pursued the policies of the welfare system and that would take me five years. "Ve get so soon old und yet so late schmart", was a saying they had on the wall in Herbel's Meat Market across the street from where I lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was a piece of wisdom I picked up in my youth—it takes a long time to figure something out as complicated as the homeless problem and the welfare bureaucracy.

The homeless male constitutes the overwhelming majority in our programs. They were the ones who had no advocate when we began. A substantial group within that population was the homeless Vietnam veteran. No one even wanted to go near them. They were the victims of the Vietnam War. They would rather live in the woods than be the recipients of the charity of the local welfare system. Wouldn’t you? It was a
measure of their self-respect, as shattered as it was by what they had wit-
nessed in Vietnam: they didn't want to be managed cases of the welfare
system.

Beyond the Vietnam vets were all the other single adult males who had
nowhere to go, nowhere to sleep, nowhere to eat, and nothing to do. They
were unnecessary. They had disappeared. They were no accounts.

Peter Marin has written on the plight of the single adult male in The
Nation:

“Often this goes unadmitted. Even when in deep trouble
men understand, sometimes unconsciously, that they are
not to complain or ask for help. I remember several men
I knew in the local hobo jungle. Most of them were vets.
They had constructed a tiny village of half-caves and
shelters among the trees and brush, and when stove
smoke filled the clearing and they stood bare to the waist,
knives at their hips, you would swear you were in an
army jungle camp. They drank throughout the day, and
at dusk there always came a moment when they wan-
dered off individually to sit staring out at the moun-
tains or sea. And you could see on their faces at such
moments, if you caught them unawares, a particular and
unforgettable look: pensive, troubled, somehow inno-
cent—the look of lost children or abandoned men.

“I have seen the same look multiplied hundreds of times
on winter nights in huge shelters in great cities, where a
thousand men at a time will sometimes gather, each
encapsulated in solitude on a bare cot, coughing and turn-
ing or sometimes crying all night, lost in nightmares as
terrible as a child's or as life on the street. In the morn-
ings they returned to their masked public personas, to the
styles of behavior and appearance that often frightened
passers-by. But while they slept you could see past all
that, and you found yourself thinking: These are still,
even grown, somebody's children, and many fare no better on their own, as adults, than they would have as children."

It was principally the homeless adult male that we served at the Cedar Street Shelter and in the Interfaith Satellite Shelter.

Eventually, we had to move. Our lease was up and the owner had plans for remodeling the premises. We had to look for another site. Page organized a Site-selection Committee, which included some of the local personages, Mayor Mike Rotkin, and the head of the Chamber of Commerce, Lionel Stoloff. We looked around and found an excellent facility with lots of space. The landlord was cooperative although he knew it was going to be a hard sell for the other businesses in the building and adjoining. Things seemed to be going okay until the guy across the street—Leland Zeidler—who owned the Sashmill Complex, got wind of the deal and bought the building out from under us in order to scotch it. Just like that. We had to look elsewhere.

Eloise Smith directed us to an empty building on the corner of River Street (Highway 9) and Highway 1, which the University of California owned and, it turned out, wanted to sell. We jumped on it. The University, of course, wanted full market value. No concessions to the bleeding hearts in town. We had to raise part of the cost as an example of good faith, or I don't know what. A blood tax. A person who wished to remain anonymous sent in $30,000. In the meantime, we had started another program.
Chapter Three
The Interim: The Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program

Harassed by the authorities about occupancy restrictions, we figured something had to be done about the overflow while we were operating the Cedar Street Shelter. We were not in the business of turning homeless people away at the door during storms. The Rev. Paul Pfotenhauer, an old friend, and a local Lutheran minister, was a member of the Shelter Board, a group of concerned citizens and homeless providers who met to discuss the homeless problem. I asked him if he might take a group in at his church—Mount Calvary Lutheran—one night a week, just to make it easy on him. We would provide mats and blankets and transportation. He had a supportive congregation so he was a good one to ask. He checked and said yes they would do it. They were even willing to provide a hot meal for the group. The congregation took it as a great morale builder. We started appealing to other churches to fill out the week. Soon we had seven, one for every night of the week, all providing hot meals. We noticed that the morale of each congregation was significantly increased, with members of the congregation eager and willing to help. Page Smith took it to mean that the homeless were given by God to bring the churches of the land out of their bourgeois blues. He was right.

Nevertheless, it was a hard sell. On our part, there was no one else to turn to—no one in the City Government offered anything. The County was no better. The Churches were our only hope. The weather was a compelling arguing point. Unfortunately, it worked both ways. When the weather got better, the homeless were expected to fend for themselves. But when it was cold and wet, well, maybe... After we managed to organize seven churches, to cover the week, we eventually expanded to over forty churches, county-wide.
At the beginning, there was an unspoken directive: sneak them in and sneak them out. As long as they were invisible, (remember the theme?), it might work. We needed drivers to transport them to the churches. Fred Gray and I were the drivers. Fred drove people in his 1941 Chevy. It burned a rod bearing one night while he was transporting six guests to a church, but they eventually got there. Our pickup site was in front of the Civic Auditorium until the custodian complained. Then we moved over to the Louden Nelson Community Center.

Fred Gray was the Chair of the local FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Board; he arranged for a $5,000 grant so we could buy a van, and for the delivery of 200 wool U.S. Army blankets. Fred was also the firm but gentle director of the interfaith program for the first three years, and continued the system by which homeless guests were responsible for the actual running of the program. Very radical stuff at the time. Eventually, we were able to collect enough blankets and buy enough mats so everyone had a minimally comfortable sleeping arrangement.

Thus was born the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program (ISSP). Now with over forty participating churches, the budget has climbed from less than thirty thousand dollars to nearly two hundred thousand a year. In the last three years, the program has successfully competed for Federal Emergency Shelter Grant funding totalling four hundred and twenty thousand dollars. We provide a meal and shelter to as many as 150 people a night both in North and South County, between November and May, half of all homeless given shelter in the county. In the summer months, we drop down to thirty a night, in order to keep the program going year round. We plan to expand the program in 1992, to provide for sixty people each night, county-wide, during the summer months. We have a full time director, Andrew Morin, and two client service managers. We pay a corps of monitors to oversee the group, our largest budget item, recruited from the ranks of the homeless, who make the program work at the many shelter sites spread throughout the County.

Because of the program's simplicity and the crucial participation of local churches and their congregations and other individuals who volunteer
their assistance, the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program is one of the most cost-effective shelter programs for the homeless in California.

It was an interesting experience to watch this program develop. After we sneaked them in and sneaked them out on the premise that the lower the profile the better—nervous Nellies and nervous Nelsons in the congregation might complain—the churches began to accept them. We understood the reluctance. After all, it is hard enough going shopping on Pacific Ave., what with the homeless and the panhandlers and all, let alone having them sleeping in one's own church. And what about you know what (lice)? We passed all these hurdles when the word got out that we actually left the churches cleaner than we found them, although the custodians didn't appreciate that accolade. But it was a good line. Soon, we had tight little coteries of homeless sympathisers in every congregation in the group, providing meals, ministering, giving of themselves, learning names, and developing friendships.

We stored the mats and blankets for the program in my parents' garage next door to my home. The monitors started hanging around in my office (in my garage) where I was running the Platonic Academy, a non-profit corporation devoted to my career in the herbal industry. I was trying to become computer competent at the time on an IBM clone and not having much luck. I don't take well to commands. It was before the Mac and the mouse, which I now use with perfect efficiency. One of the monitors was a computer whiz, so he started doing text entry for me. One day he told me about his involvement with cryptography while he was in the army. I said: "You know how to decipher? Look under your chair."

He pulled out my Voynich Manuscript box. He did nothing else for the next four months. He hardly looked up. He slept at my desk in my office and I had to bring him food. He had found the world's most mysterious manuscript, an herbal text written in a cipher, or an artificial language, thought to be by Roger Bacon, or a forgery by John Dee, but probably written by an Elizabethan herbalist named Anthony Askham. Nobody knew for sure. I had been working on it for years with my pal, the famous mathematician, Ralph Abraham.
The Voynich is named after a bookseller, a Mr. Voynich, who found the text in a trunk in an Italian monastery at the beginning of this century. This single copy is at the Beineke Library at Yale University where it is called the world's "most mysterious manuscript". I had been introduced to the Voynich by Dr. Leonell Strong, a famous geneticist, who claimed to have deciphered it and who thought it was by Anthony Askham, an Elizabethan herbalist. Dr. Strong died before carrying through his work, which I inherited. All of his notes and cipher workings were in the box under the chair the homeless guy was sitting on. I thought, as I watched him peruse the contents with mounting excitement: "will wonders never cease, God does work in mysterious ways. Here is a poor homeless guy who thinks he is going to crack the cipher of the world's most mysterious manuscript". He seemed equal to the task of carrying through the work of Dr. Strong. He was indefatigable.

After some months of intensive study, he was convinced Dr. Strong had successfully deciphered it. He thought he understood it. He was going to figure it all out. I supported him as best I could until he had a psychotic alcoholic breakdown and threatened to kill a university student we had recruited to help with the Old English part of the work. He finally left town with most of my material. I talk to him on the phone a couple times a year. His ex-girlfriend had seized all of his material, my material, and wouldn't give it up. In Phoenix, Arizona. One of those stories. So much for the world's most mysterious manuscript and the anticipated formula for the Elixir of Life which the manuscript presumably conceals.

But wait, hold the phone, he called last week and said the material was on the way, by mail, heavily insured. Maybe, after long last.... I'll believe it when I see it.

Another monitor who looked a little like a very skinny pit bull lurked around outside my parents' garage once in a while after we no longer stored the mats and blankets there. What the hell was he doing in the driveway at 8:00 am when I went out to get the newspaper? He always had on a fancy racing bike outfit which took me off guard. When I asked him what he wanted, it always turned out to be $30.00 I gave it to him. I didn't know he was a cocaine addict and a thief. He wound up stealing a
suitcase full of paper I brought back from an herbal trip to China. The mailman returned it after he found it two blocks away in a field. He stole a little motorbike that didn’t work and left it a block and a half away when he couldn’t start it. I noticed it and brought it back home. He stole a new briefcase I had bought in Hong Kong where I kept a precious manuscript I had written when I turned fifty and had a short fit of inspiration: The Long Lost Last Dialogues of Socrates.

I had done a psychic dig on the site of the Platonic Academy (my garage—oh, come on, this is Santa Cruz) and had come up with some dialogues that Socrates had taken part in after he had been presumably executed. His friends, instead of the notorious hemlock, had administered an herbal concoction that induced a deep trance state and simulated death, so his body was given over to his friends for burial. He survived, unbeknownst to the authorities, revived, and was kept in hiding for three years before he died from natural causes. This is what he said during those three years. The secret dialogues of Socrates. It was terrific, I thought, me, writing like Plato and talking like Socrates. I even appended to the title page an old antique post card I had received from a former student showing the prison where Socrates had been kept, in the side of a hill, outside of Athens.

It was my only copy. When I confronted him after the theft, he said he had put the briefcase on a driveway a block away after he found out it contained nothing of worth to him. It was not returned.

Oh well, that’s another price I’ve had to pay. I was very attached to that manuscript; I don’t care what the Buddhists say.

We had an annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the homeless at the Presbyterian Church on Mission and Highland, with turkeys galore. We found that when you learn someone’s name, they are no longer ‘homeless’; they are a person; they have not disappeared, or, if they have, they reappear, just like that; they are Tom or Jean or Bill or Charlotte. It was as simple as that: common human decency at work. Both ways. And when you sat down to a meal with them, then they were as good as family.
I had second thoughts about that at the Thanksgiving Dinner in 1989. I did a double take. There he was. He had been a figure on the campus, at UCSC, when I was teaching there over two decades ago. He must have been released from prison, because there he was, helping himself to turkey. I turned to my wife and raised my eyebrows and pointed him out to her. Once he had come to our house and stood at the front door, in a kind of trance, I guess, nose to the door. My wife happened to open the door and there he was. She screamed and slammed the door in his face. He was enough to scare anyone. It is a wonder that someone like that can be tolerated as long as he is. He first showed up in my Bible Class, which I happened to be teaching at the time as the Chairman of Religious Studies. He was my reward for having the lack of temerity to teach the Bible at a state university. He raised his hand at the opening of the first class and he said: “If you have any trouble with any interpretation, don’t hesitate; as I’m God, feel free to call on me. I’ll be happy to contribute.” Everyone in the class winced with me.

He was very tall and he was dressed in a white floor-length robe. His hair was peroxided yellow. There was an aroma of sulphur about him. He looked like he had stepped out of a New Yorker cartoon.

One day he came to my office. “It is unseemly for God to go without”, he said, a great opening line. “I am appointing you as my Faculty Tithing Chairman and you and your colleagues will give 10% of your salary to support me and my work, which you, as Chairman, will collect.”

It’s the only time during my entire teaching career I remember getting pissed off at anyone in my office in terms of losing my temper; I mean I turned black. I felt this black fluid start at my feet and come up my legs and when it hit my head, I said in a tone so ominous, I frightened myself: “Get out of here. Get out!” He left.

Months later, he kicked an Afro-American to death in the parking lot of the Holiday Inn, in downtown Santa Cruz. The man had played Jesus in an off-beat local play: “Tuna Christ.” “God” didn’t like that. He went to jail. Now, twenty years later, he was back, sitting at our homeless Thanksgiving dinner, helping himself to a drumstick, looking absolutely batty.
The homeless mentally ill represent up to fifty percent of the homeless population. This guy was an exception to the rule, as most of the so-called mentally ill are simply eccentric and no harm to themselves or others, even though they are in desperate need of counseling and support. The lack of mental health resources is one of the most serious problems facing homeless service providers and is at the root of why many of the homeless are unable to break out of the homeless cycle. We see young men in reasonable physical shape adrift on the streets abandoned to their own lack of resources in the spiral of despair and defeat with no one to turn to for help and support.

The most evident impression of the homeless participating in the Church Satellite Program was how subdued they were, Thanksgiving or not, when they arrived at the churches. They just wanted to turn in after the meal. They were tired. Some were exhausted. No one wanted trouble. They just wanted to lie down and get some sleep out of harm’s way. They wanted rest from their conflicts.

The support of the churches and the local synagogue gave us the basis for the work we had to do. They were our foundation. Without them, it would have been very difficult; with them, we had a coalition of a broad spectrum of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish support. It gave our efforts a credibility and a base in the community that was unassailable. They all knew what the Bible said about the homeless, the poor, the afflicted, the needy, the downtrodden. Shiloh Superfly was right. His prophetic passages were being fulfilled in our midst.

At the end of our fifth year of operation—June, 1991—our statistics were quite stunning—22,423 people had been given shelter over the year, up 64% from the previous year and 179% from the year before, basically the same one hundred every night, with some fluctuations in the group. The increased numbers were partly due to the expansion of the program into Watsonville. The North County Program expanded from 80 beds a night to 112, and from 15 beds a night during the summer season to 30. Because the demand lessens when the weather improves, we reduce the service from May to November. This is also due to budgetary considerations.
The County of Santa Cruz has contributed no funds to the Interfaith Satellite Program for the coming fiscal year (1991-2) knowing that the Federal grants do not provide for administration; why, I don’t know. It is a kind of Catch-22. If you don’t have the money to run the program, we won’t give you money for the program. Or, conversely, we’ll give you money for the program but you have to find the money to run it. However, the County does help administer the Federal funds that support the program and that has been generously supplied.

Perusing the County Budget is my favorite toilet time reading. You get the impression that those in charge don’t even read it on any occasion. Why all the chairs, why all the desks, why all the computers, why the love seat at Juvenile Hall (for over $1,000), why so much of it, the heart grows weary and sick over every page. And then they have the gall to tell you there is no money for the homeless. The waste, the pork barrel, the padding, the fraud is prima facie—it is there staring you in the face. Years ago, we helped the Community Congress get started out of our William James Association offices. They red pencilled the County Budget wherever they thought unnecessary expenses were being entered for a new carpet, a new set of office furniture, additional elevators, for god’s sake, let them walk up the stairs, all the perks of the bureaucrats. Millions of dollars were transferred to human services. We have to do it again. No one can tell me out of a budget of a quarter billion dollars, the amount of money the County spends every year, hardly a dime can be spared for the homeless. I would like to make the supervisor who told me there was no money for the homeless eat the budget and watch him do it in public. Werner Herzog* would be invited to film it.

By comparison, the River Street Shelter, which the Citizens Committee for the Homeless no longer administers, serving one-third the population of the Interfaith Satellite Shelter, has a budget of $250,000 and receives almost $200,000 in funding from the County. The River Street Shelter is administered by the Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center. It is an example of favored status in terms of a highly organized and staffed non-profit wired to the County and budgetary considerations.

*Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe is a film by Les Blanc.
There is no public scrutiny of budgets by people competent to review them outside of the bureaucratic and administrative agencies involved, no rational planning, and no long-range goals. The newly formed Homeless Action Network involving many of the providers of homeless services may evolve into performing this needed function. As it stands, programs simply grow of their own dynamic and secure whatever funds are available without coordination with other programs and services and without sharing resources.

**Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program**

Over the last three years the Interfaith Satellite Shelter (ISSP) has responded to the growing plight of the homeless by expanding its shelter services to become the largest homeless shelter program in Santa Cruz County. Three years ago during the program year 1988-89, ISSP provided 8,050 Person Shelter Days (PSDs). For 1991-92, ISSP is expected to provide approximately 27,000 PSDs, an increase of 235%. ISSP has increased participation of local churches in the program from twenty one churches in 1988-89, to thirty eight churches in 1991-92. At the same time the budget for ISSP has grown from about $50,000 in 1988-89, to almost $200,000 in 1991-92. However, the budget for ISSP remains a fraction of other homeless shelter programs, including programs that are considerably smaller than ISSP. ISSP provides shelter and a meal for one person for about $7.25, making the program one of the most cost effective in the State of California. The savings that ISSP achieves in providing its shelter services are due to the volunteer participation of Santa Cruz County churches and their congregations, and also the participation of other local citizens who volunteer their time and money to provide meals at ISSP shelter sites.

ISSP Budget 1991-92 (Est.) $196,000
Participating Churches in the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program.

All Saints' Episcopal \textit{Watsonville}  
Aptos Community Methodist Church \textit{Aptos}  
Arthur Road Baptist \textit{Watsonville}  
Boulder Creek Methodist Women  
\textit{Boulder Creek}  
Calvary Chapel \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Calvary Episcopal Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Christ Lutheran \textit{Aptos}  
Church of Christ Scientist \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Community Covenant Church \textit{Scotts Valley}  
Community Covenant Church \textit{Scotts Valley}  
Community Lutheran \textit{Watsonville}  
First Baptist \textit{Capitola}  
First Baptist \textit{Watsonville}  
First Baptist Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
First Congregational \textit{Santa Cruz}  
First Congregational \textit{Soquel}  
First Presbyterian Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
First United Methodist \textit{Watsonville}  
Garfield Park Christian Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Good Shepherd School \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Grace United Methodist Church  
\textit{Santa Cruz}  
Holy Eucharist Catholic \textit{Watsonville}  
La Selva Community \textit{La Selva Beach}  
Light House Christian Fellowship \textit{Soquel}  
Light of Life Lutheran Church \textit{Scotts Valley}  
Live Oak Methodist \textit{Live Oak}  
Messiah Lutheran (\textit{Santa Cruz})  
Mt. Calvary Lutheran (\textit{Soquel})  
National Guard Armory  
National Guard Armory (\textit{Freedom})  
Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints  
Resurrection Catholic Church \textit{Aptos}  
Salvation Army \textit{Watsonville}  
San Augustin Church \textit{Scotts Valley}  
Santa Cruz Friends Meeting \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Santa Cruz Missionary Baptist \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Seventh Day Adventist \textit{Watsonville}  
Seventh Day Adventist Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
St. Andrews Presbyterian \textit{Aptos}  
St. Patrick's Catholic \textit{Watsonville}  
St. Philips Episcopal \textit{Scotts Valley}  
St. Stephan's Lutheran \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Star of the Sea Catholic \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Temple Bethel \textit{Soquel}  
Trinity Presbyterian Church \textit{Santa Cruz}  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship \textit{Aptos}  
United Presbyterian \textit{Watsonville}  
Unity Temple \textit{Soquel}  

On March 5th, 1992, Paul Pfotenhauer and I went over to Monterey to speak to a group of ministers and homeless advocates to encourage them to start a program similar to ours. We had been over a couple times before but the timing wasn’t right and nothing came of it. This time six churches signed up and we were dutifully gratified. County Supervisor Sam Karas was in attendance and pledged his support for the venture. If they hurry, they can write a grant in the two weeks left to them and apply for money from the same Federal funds that support our program in Santa Cruz.
I'm a little tired of hearing about these people as if they're ready for sainthood.

Santa Cruz Chief of Police, Bassett, commenting on the homeless, as reported in the national press.
Chapter Four
The River Street Shelter and the Counter-Advocate Reaction

Eventually we were able to obtain the River Street Shelter as a permanent shelter site on a purchase from the University. The deal almost fell through a number of times and but for a spontaneous trip to Berkeley by Page Smith, to encounter the minor bureaucrat in charge of negotiations, we would have lost out on the deal. After Page presented himself in the guy’s office (and in his face) and made known his concern, the guy finally said we could ask for an extension of the bargaining time, a small point he had neglected to tell us until then, after we thought our time had run out.

There are always little loopholes all around the block for you to find out about, if you’re lucky, or, better yet, experienced in the ways of the world. The “worldliness of the world”, a very negative biblical term, has come to fulfillment in the triumph of the obtuse bureaucrats—those who man the so-called infrastructures of our institutions. They play games with you, sometimes semantic. “If you can’t waive the fee” (it would set a precedent, a bad word to a bureaucrat), “how about indefinitely postponing it?” “Oh, that we can do.”

You have to have a consultant to learn how to talk to an obtuse bureaucrat. Another needless expense.

One could have kept a log of such examples, so many are they, to indict the dunderheads who get in the way, but what’s the point? It’s all part of the process. Better develop a thick skin than take it personally. Better the woods than the trees. “Perserverance furthers”, as the I Ching says. Keep your eye on the prize. Institutional process over idiosyncratic display. I learned that working with Alan Chadwick and the UCSC Garden
Project in our negotiations with the university, my first learning experience in terms of encountering the triumph of the obtuse bureaucrat, the spectre haunting higher education in California.

When the River Street Shelter opened, certain officials took credit for it where little or no credit was due. They appeared at the formal opening, which they, of course, had organized and we didn’t even attend. Our shelter. A few of us lurked outside wondering where these guys got off congratulating themselves on being obstacles we had overcome. But it was at least the beginning of some small support from the County and the City that would eventually build into a fairly solid program on presumably very scant resources. This is my small concession, by way of a clumsy sentence, to working with the powers that be.

Fred Gray, who had appeared in the opening days of the Cedar Street Shelter, advised us on County/City conflicts, where we got caught in the crossfire without quite knowing why anyone was shooting. We were uninformed about the history of the conflicts between the City and the County and he explained why things were so complicated and why we were a pawn on the chess board. He helped us get some operating money for the running of the shelter. He was the Executive Director of the Community Action Board (CAB) at the time and knew his way around the infrastructures. He became the first Director of the River Street Shelter and also helped organize and run the Interfaith Satellite Shelter. He was perfectly qualified for the job and knew exactly how to handle an extremely difficult situation of which organizing and operating a shelter for the homeless was a prime example.

In order to obtain and operate the River Street Shelter, Fred Gray proposed that the City buy the property and the County provide operating money. Purchase price was $539,000, or the assessed value. Operating money for the first year was $110,000. Fred had identified the money for the purchase in the City accounts before asking for it, which should be highlighted as a very smart procedure. They can’t say no if you know they have the money sitting there with no concrete plans to use it. Fred also used his inside knowledge of City affairs to ferret out the fact that the City’s bid to the university was consciously set a full $100,000 below the
minimum bid, which we knew would be unacceptable. Armed with this knowledge, which was tightly held within the City offices, we were able to announce a fundraising drive of $100,000 just prior to the City submitting its bid. This effectively locked in the deal. It was very unlikely that the City would then back out of the deal. Our clear understanding was that the City had intended that the bid would be rejected, leaving the university as the bad guy.

As of November 1987, we had a centralized emergency shelter on a permanent basis and a well-organized Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program to accommodate the overflow. Our goal was never to turn anyone away who was looking for a place to sleep. All we had to do was add another church. Fortunately, there were churches to spare.

In an unused garage attached to the shelter so much donated clothing spontaneously appeared that a free used clothing center was spawned. Volunteers appeared who sorted and organized the mass of clothing and this effort in itself developed as a major project. Sandy Loranger was an amazingly dedicated and organized person who turned the mounds of clothing into an organized shop, complete with sized and labeled articles of clothing. It was a kick to see a local street figure named Shadow sitting at a sewing machine and mending clothes.

The level of interest on the part of County officials, as evidenced by a notorious memo on official stationary, concerned itself with newspapers blowing around the driveway and why drapes didn’t match (the furniture was donated). It was predictable that those public officials who were so interested in the physical facility, rarely showed any real interest in the true work of the shelter—the guests. We did get donated metal frame beds from the City Property Manager, Lisa Rose, and mattresses from the university, and were thus able to furnish the shelter with almost no expense.

Television sets, answering machines, food, kitchen utensils, linens, toys, magazines and books, landscaping supplies, all came in through the front door as though by magic. We never turned anything away even though we wound up with a large accumulation of odds and ends. But it revealed
to us again that the resources for supplying such an enterprise seemed inexhaustible, whereas bureaucratized institutional sets discourage and hardly respond to such donations.

Fred had a kind of personal radar system and seemed to know about homeless people who were not sheltered because they were so indigent and out of it they were lost to their own devices. He located a 72 year old man in a rainsoaked sleeping bag in a business suit, where, for five days, he had been waiting the return of a friend who had gone off to cash the old man’s social security check. He was crippled and unable to move and he would have died as his friend was not going to return. He was brought to the shelter and cared for. Adult Protective Services had closed his file thinking he had died. It is not an easy fate to end up under the conservatorship of a county agency.

It was not the first time that we registered the unfortunate conflict between case-management and non-institutionalized person-to-person concern and care. Although the professional social service care is based on case-management, the model of social welfare systems in this country, it is important to allow for non-professional concern and programs such as our own, where the word ‘case’ is never used. The fact that social services do not work well under public institutions, and that public social service institutions do not tolerate private efforts they can’t control is a clear lesson of this experience.

During the twenty months we operated the River Street Shelter, there was only one fight. That fist-fight was not between clients but between two staff people. It is unfortunate that the basis for the brawl was racism; still, it seems remarkable that this was the worst of it, given the level of disturbance and crisis that many clients were burdened with. I can only credit the remarkable record of peaceful process to Fred Gray’s humane and caring attitude, which supported an environment of trust and mutual respect.

A major source of operating funds for the River Street Shelter came from County Mental Health Services. The lack of available rental space and emergency shelter space for the emotionally and mentally disabled clients
of Mental Health made the deal attractive for the County. The River Street Shelter became the place where County Mental Health put its most difficult “cases”. The level of trust and acknowledgement that this implied in our ability to be productive and supportive of people in grave crisis unfortunately didn’t carry over to vocal support.

We suffered from the fact that our administrative support unit, under the non-profit with which we were then affiliated, was understaffed and overburdened. This left Fred and his staff with the bulk of the administrative work as well as the direct work with clients. This was quite a burden. It was remarkable the degree to which they were able to be productive with the clients and maintain the burden of the administrative work.

Almost as soon as we were up and operating, Page Smith started voicing his idea for Community House, a permanent rental/shelter to be built on the vacant lot behind the River Street Shelter. This would provide a room for the homeless who would always be in need of an inexpensive place to stay either because of some disability or because they would never make enough money to afford local rents. But the main reason was stability. The River Street Shelter, like most shelters, was transient. You could only stay a month and then you had to move on. Where? Wherever. We needed a facility that would afford a permanent room on a very low rental basis for those who qualified.

Fred ran the shelter for the nearly two years we operated it. During that time we had to cope with the counter-productive tactics of Robert Norse, a self-styled homeless advocate who suddenly appeared one day out of the blue. We had no idea where he came from and what he was up to except that he was going to be trouble, not only to the local authorities, but also to us. He reminded us of the worst vision of a 1960s “outside agitator” type who comes to town to fuss things up. The type that never does anything productive, and never means to do anything productive—but is especially good at making a fuss. For its own sake. An old style agent provocateur with a t-shirt reading “épater le bourgeoisie”. There were those among us, especially Fred, who came to believe that Robert intended to cause disruption for the benefit of those who wanted our enterprise to fail. Most of us came to believe that he lived off an annuity of some sort.
and was free to agitate full time. Moreover, he got lots of press.

Robert enlisted Jane Imler and she joined forces with him to attack our work. The main complaint was that we were spending too much money for the number of homeless we could accommodate. It wasn’t our fault. We were stuck with the obtuse zoning rule that only so many people per toilet were allowed to stay at the shelter—a terrific condition for homeless housing—so we were tied up with adding additional toilet facilities in order to increase our capacity. We were allowed 16 people per day and even though there were 30 people on a bad night, we averaged 17 over a period of 20 months. This fact, that we were able to accommodate more people on nasty wet and cold nights, and still average only 17 people was not something which sat well with the public entities that floated above us. They wanted to know just why we had exceeded our quota of 16. It was the same old crap from Cedar Street all over again. Nit picking on the numbers on any given night.

The garage at the Shelter, which had operated so well as a free clothing shop was eventually remodeled by the City into dormitory units accommodating another 14 people and adding another two bathrooms. The City needed to give itself a use permit to allow the use of the remodeled garage. The dormitory units were thus left unused for two weeks during the winter. So Jane and friends staged a protest sit-in in one of the dormitory’s bathtubs on New Year’s Eve and were arrested for trespassing. I could hardly blame her even though the woman whose life we had saved by opening a shelter was attacking us. She failed to distinguish between us and the City and County. I started to think it would have been better to have let her starve to death and then opened a shelter. The complaints were mostly nit picking complaints, we thought, irritating and against the grain. But it depended on whose side you were on in this division within the homeless advocate groups.

Wait a minute. Weren’t we in this together? Why attack your fellow advocates who were finally getting a decent program together? Well, it was a big fall out. Fred was on the line and we were caught in between. We weren’t much help. It was a process we had to work through. Given enough time, Norse would completely discredit himself even in the eyes
of the homeless, just those whom he meant to represent. They wanted to punch him out.

It was a bad period with a lot of bad publicity. We held our breath...and our noses. The worst moment in it all was when the Mayor at the time—Mardi Wormhoudt—a woman capable of phenomenally aggressive and ill-tempered vibes, whom I grew to dislike with a passion, called out the Attack Troops, also known as the SWAT Team, to harass the homeless protesting the camping ban.

Outside of our church program there was nowhere to get a meal at night. Jane Imler and friends made soup available at the Town Clock as the evening meal for the homeless. The Mayor didn’t like that and took steps to stop it. It all looks ragged and rather silly now, but at the time, it made Santa Cruz look foolish and mendacious in the eyes of the nation as the incident was reported in the national media. The Mayor insisted you had to have a permit to give a hungry homeless person a sandwich and you had to have an inspected and certified kitchen to give someone homeless a cup of soup. Anything to get in the way of free food. It was a very bad episode.

And then Mitch Snyder came to town, for the second time. He had already come to Santa Cruz at Page Smith’s invitation the previous summer, but I was in Northern Wisconsin, so I missed him. The second time, I met him at the Town Clock, where he had come to show his solidarity with the protesters. He was very grim, very serious, very taciturn, and battle-worn, wearing a worn battle jacket. I gave him a bear hug as a comrade in arms. He wanted to know how we could bear to suffer under a city and a mayor that prevented giving food to the homeless. He cut through it all like a hot knife in butter. After all, he had brought Reagan to his knees, after fasting on him at the door of the White House, one irascible Irishman to another, and had finally been given his shelter, a campaign promise of Reagan, which he dragged his feet on after he was elected, one of the largest in the country, where he would eventually hang himself in his room.

It was a very black day when I got the news and had to accept the fact that
despair and suicide had overcome one of our heroes. I had seen him again at the National March For the Homeless, in Washington, D.C., in October, of 1989, where a large contingent had gone from Santa Cruz. He was striding across the hillside of the Washington Monument, my favorite object in the whole world, where everyone gathered for the march. I took his picture. It was a day of triumph for him, given the nationwide outpouring of concern and sympathy for the cause of which he was the symbolic spokesman.

As the national spokesman for the homeless, you could see it in every pore of his personality, in the fibre of his being, in his tone of voice. In my youth, I had been deeply influenced by Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, all the way back to my Lutheran Seminary days, around 1954, in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was actually the agent for the Catholic Worker newspaper at Luther Theological Seminary, where I was a student. It has dutifully arrived in the mail ever since. I had even visited them in New York, at the Catholic Worker headquarters, where I met Ammon Hennacy, Dorothy Day's sidekick. He gave me an autographed copy of his autobiography: *Confessions of a Christian Anarchist*. I liked Christian anarchists. Snyder was in the same tradition. He was burning with the passion of his cause and everyone withered, by comparison, before his gaze.

Recently, I saw Martin Sheen on a television interview program talking about his friendship with Mitch and how, when he went to Washington to spend some time with him, Mitch asked him how many pairs of shoes he had. "Two", said Sheen, in terms of what he had in his suitcase. "Well, you only need one pair. Give your other pair to someone who has none."

He was like that. He reminded me of a title of one of Kierkegaard's *Edifying Discourses*: "The Purity of Heart Is To Will One Thing."

Then came the right-wing backlash against the homeless radicals—Carolyn Busenhart and company—the "Take Back Our Town" people, a no more absurd slogan for narrow and mean-spirited minds. They wore red shirts out of some color blind affinity with Brown Shirts, apparently to go with their red necks. An ugly lot. I thought someone on our side
had paid her and her ilk to act out the worst side of the opposition in order to generate more sympathy for our cause. In any event, that was the consequence of her organized protest.

Robert Norse had called for the homeless to gather in Santa Cruz over the 4th of July holiday. So the Red Shirts stood on the sidewalk and cursed and spit and acted stupid as the homeless walked by. They had an even briefer shelf life than Norse.

All the heat died down, and a compromise was reached to serve food on the site of the River Street Shelter, an obvious solution. After all, there were those who declined to use the Interfaith Satellite Shelter Program, where they could get an evening meal. They didn’t want to go to a church where they could sleep on the floor. What about them? Maybe as many as fifty up to one hundred or more. Before she left town, Jane Imler and Paddy Long organized the effort to feed this neglected group, much to their credit, and with the help of the homeless, they began serving a hot meal every late afternoon. She called it “Calamity’s Cupboard”, as in “Calamity Jane” and we made her operation an affiliate of the William James Association, to give her the auspices of a nonprofit corporation.

One thing led to another and what with Jane’s poor health, Karen Gillette, who was employed by the County Human Resources Agency, took over the effort after Jane dropped out with Paddy Long continuing to help on a daily basis.
Chapter Five
The Free Meal Program

Operated by the homeless themselves, A Free Meal is overseen by Karen Gillette, as volunteer coordinator. She succeeded Jane Inmier in the effort to offer a free meal to the homeless every afternoon. It was also a reaction to the antics of Robert Norse coming from the homeless themselves. They began to realize that the fighting going on (presumably in their behalf) was never going to lead anywhere and seemed to be fomented for its own sake. They were tired of it. They were tired of the politics, tired of watching the homeless walk all over town in search of the "political stew", a movable feast if there ever was one. The County had offered a kitchen and this offer was accepted by the new group.

Brian Koepke named it "A Free Meal", in part, meaning free from Robert Norse. He became persona non grata at the site. They were tired of his confrontational mode of politics in their behalf. Instead, the homeless turned a cooperative face to the authorities, willing to work in common toward a common goal. The confrontational episode was over.

Even the "post office table" and those who manned it, decided to fold up their very public image, which took lots of flack, and go over and volunteer to help serve at The Free Meal. They brought a kind of anarchistic independence with them, working as hard as they had fought in terms of their very public presence outside the Santa Cruz Post Office. The Free Meal became known for its militant self-help spirit, in large part because of this group of volunteers.

The atmosphere of the site is not that of a soup kitchen where most people are dour and depressed. It has more of the atmosphere of a college dorm or a Grateful Dead parking lot scene without the concert. A common question asked by a visitor is: why is everyone so cheerful here?
The enthusiasm is tangible.

Underneath and supporting the festive mood is a serious commitment. A Free Meal is a world within a world, where everyone feels equal, everyone feels respected, and everyone feels valued. It is a living example of how our society should work, freely, with no ulterior motives and no hidden agendas. Those who can work take care of those who cannot work and without passing judgement.

Up to two hundred people are served on a given evening. Over the past year (1990-91), A Free Meal has continued to provide a safe gathering place for shelterless Santa Cruz residents, serving over 72,000 meals. The mealsite has become the focal point of the homeless community, providing a much-needed sense of place for those who would otherwise have none and no where to go for an evening meal.

The level of volunteer support is extremely high, allowing costs to be kept at a minimum. At this point, the potential of their self-help group has exceeded the size of the program. They have many more job applicants than positions, and more volunteers than actual work to be done. It is this combination of enthusiasm and hard work that drives A Free Meal. The Homeless Community Resource Center, to be organized along the same lines as A Free Meal, will be organized with the same spirit and will involve the homeless in the organization and administration of the program.

The other afternoon I paid a visit to the Free Meal in order to get a first hand impression of the operation and to get some names.

The cooks are Mike Hobson and Roger Westlock. The Field Manager is Mike Carltock. From my perspective, he is one of the reasons for the good vibes. He buys the food and sees to the problem of keeping order. The food is largely obtained from the Food Bank where foodstuffs are sold at .14 cents a pound whether it is rice or beans or cheese or vegetables, butter, bread, tea, coffee, dried milk, sugar, etc.. It is due to this inexpensive source that the cost of a meal is about 45 cents a person. The program runs on about $500 a week. The meal served that day was pasta, pretty much standard fare, call it lasagna another day, moving on to soup,
rice and whatever. Robin Hernandez is the dishwasher and Rose Santana is a dishwasher and baker. Our old friend Paddy Long invariably shows up and helps out making mental notes on what to look for at the Flea Market in terms of tools and supplies, striking up conversations and sustaining friendships. Community service workers on court referral and volunteers fill out the work force. The number one problem, I was told, was alcohol, which usually meant fights and unruly behaviour. The chronic boozers were well known and fairly well contained. Peer pressure works like a charm when you think your program is in jeopardy so everyone pitches in to keep the boat from being rocked. There were only two rules: no drunks or no alcohol on the premises and no fighting. Although the program is in a current financial crunch, it is assumed that funds will be found to continue serving meals. It is too important a program to allow to lapse.

If anything proves my idea of entropyners into entrepreneurs it is the Interfaith Satellite Monitors, the Free Meal staff and volunteers, the Homeless Gardeners, and the Service Center—to be organized with this principle in mind, where the homeless are given the chance to consider the projects as their own rather than imposed upon them. Then all of the untapped and unutilised energy has the opportunity to show itself.
As we have already described it, if you don't mind a little review, our efforts in behalf of the homeless began in December of 1985, when the William James Association, of which Page Smith and I are the Co-Directors, undertook to run a shelter for single males and some women, on Cedar Street, in downtown Santa Cruz. When the lease, taken out by the County, without discussion with the City, expired, in March, the Santa Cruz Citizens Committee for the Homeless, a newly formed non-profit superseding the William James Association, looked for a new site.

After an extensive search the property at River Street was located and chosen by the site selection committee consisting of several members of the City Council and representatives of the business community (Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce). The University of California was preparing to sell the property which it had purchased from the State in 1964 for overflow housing for students. As stated, the property was appraised at something in the neighborhood of $539,000.

The Santa Cruz Citizens Committee for the Homeless raised approximately $100,000 toward the purchase price. It was this money which gave dramatic evidence of community support for the venture and made the whole deal possible.

The deed of sale specified that the property could only be used for beneficial public purposes but the land had hardly been acquired before the City Council, lead by Mayor Wormhoudt, began trying to sell the portion of property not in active use as a shelter, somewhat less than an acre, for commercial purposes. They thought they could sneak this through behind the back of the Citizens Committee. These efforts were tireless and covert. We can only assume that the purpose was to be able to refute
the public charge that the City Council had recklessly expended public funds to purchase a property used by only 35 homeless or about $20,000 per bed, even though the money came from federal sources.

Unable to overcome our opposition, the City was persuaded to sell the property to the Citizens Committee even though it had already been purchased for the homeless. Get it? We had to buy the land we had already arranged to be bought for the homeless one more time, as though to penalize our efforts. The City had the less-than-an-acre appraised for $425,000. The City then said it would sell us that portion of the property, the whole of which we had worked so hard to help buy, for $350,000. We would have to find that amount of money to buy property we had already acquired for the homeless. The more we repeated this fact, the less it helped us to understand it.

The purpose of the purchase and what we had in mind ever since organizing the River Street Shelter was to build Community House for the long-term homeless—elderly homeless and those with physical and mental disabilities, in other words, those in most need for a permanent room for the rest of their lives.

We agreed to raise the additional $350,000 and we did so. Paul Pfotenhauer and Fred Gray managed to raise $125,000 from two Lutheran groups, and Fred managed to secure $225,000 from the American Red Cross, in the wake of the earthquake. We applied to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant of $725,000, for the construction of Community House and we asked our friend, Mark Primack, a local architect, to design it.

On March 1st, we found out that we did not receive the State funds, in the first round of the cycle. Two steps had been left out of the process, steps we were not informed about. We had to have a Public Hearing. Why? And we had to have a management plan. Why hadn’t that been clear all along? We suspected sabotage originating from the local level. Then we found out that a number of other conditions would have to be met before the City would cooperate any further and close escrow.
Finally, on June 11, 1991, all the conditions were met and we closed escrow. We own the property already owned for the homeless. But, now, instead of it being city property, it belongs to the Citizens Committee for the Homeless. We had paid our blood tax.

In early July, we found out that we had been denied State funds on the third round of the submission of our grant request. Seemingly specious reasons were given for our denial. Our grant is under appeal as we prepare another application and look for other sources for funding.

When I returned from Wisconsin at the end of the summer of 1991, I eyeballed the property driving by on Highway 1 and there the tents were—an ad hoc campground was clearly evident from the freeway. I had heard about it by phone during the summer. Homeless people who had always camped there and had kept a very low profile sneaking in at night and sleeping under one of the large trees on the property were now pitching tents and slowly over time a campsite had developed. Some fifty people, it was estimated, were sleeping there at night. The police had been alerted to the situation and the very humane and understanding Assistant Chief of Police—Lt. Dunbaugh—was willing to cooperate with the situation as long as the campers were willing to police themselves and minimize difficulties. Drunks had been dealt with by forcing them to move off the property. They had taken up residence a block away.

I went down to take a look with Paul Pfotenhauer to see how things were going. After all, it was our property and we were responsible for what was happening there now that we had closed escrow and had acquired the site from the city. Everything seemed fine. Brian Koeke immediately stepped up to talk to us, an old friend and homeless advocate, himself homeless. He assured us that things were going smoothly now that the drunks were gone. The garbage was picked up. No fights. Just homeless people in pup tents sleeping in the field.

Then the local paper ran an article and it looked as though we would have to shut down the ad hoc campground. We were hoping to keep things going until the Interfaith Shelter opened on November 1st in terms of the expanded operation. We were only trying to buy three weeks of time.
We were not about to post the site and subject homeless people, our con-
stituents, to be arrest, for trespassing. It is an example of double binds the
social order forces upon you—arresting homeless people for camping on
property designated for a homeless shelter.

Now tell me about use permits. Tell me about politicians who know full
well what is going on and then, when the news gets out, cover their ass, as
the saying goes, by denying all knowledge. Tell me about sticking it to
the have-nots as a kind of American pastime spectator sport. We seem to
have become a society that dwells on targeting the victim. It could be
called “beating a dead horse.”

The Board of the Citizens Committee met to deliberate on the issue. We
decided we would not post the property. We would not order the home-
less off. We would not abandon them to find some other out-of-the-way
place, but, instead, would open a site within the Interfaith Satellite
Shelter Program, a church with a campground, to accommodate those who
would avail themselves of it.

The next night Page Smith slept out on the field and I went down to
spend a couple of hours with him. It was Friday night. I made a tour of
the field and could not locate him. He was indistinguishable from the
other campers. A homeless woman whom I appealed to, took me over to
him. There he was next to the fence in his sleeping bag, one of America’s
greatest living historians, my pal, stretched out on the ground. The
group around him was a little raucous, loud laughter, some high spirits,
some music, but not too loud. We talked things over.

I was reminded of a visit from Donald and Dorothy Nicholl, two weeks
before. Dorothy had told me about a national sleep-out in behalf of the
homeless throughout Great Britain. She had slept out in some town
square. Here was Page starting our own version all by himself.

The deadline for the ad hoc campground arrived on Monday evening and
only Robert Norse and two followers, one drunk, were arrested. A
portable toilet was torched later that night and it cost us $500. All of the
campers who wanted to go were taken by van to the camping site next to
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church where those who had no tent were provided with one thanks to Paddy Long. We made arrangements for them to be picked up and brought back every day so they could get into town and avail themselves of the free meal. We considered it a successful solution to a difficult situation.

Some unnamed advocates on our side cooked up a small prank and took the torched toilet and deposited it on Robert Norse's front lawn, with a little graffiti added, addressed to him. It was a self-evident statement.

Amid all the furor over the use of the property, through those intervening months, Fred Gray, in the role of Project Director, Mark Primack, our Architect, and Thom McCue, from Housing For Independent People Inc., have managed to secure a Design and Special Use Permit from the City for Community House, and a $40,000 grant, contingent on approval of our request to the State for $630, 000 of construction money. Many issues of concern had to be addressed before the City could sign off on our design. Our team was able to provide the right answers to the City's questions.

We have submitted an outstanding proposal to the State for construction financing, and have applied for $1,000,000 in federal tax credits* to assist with the financing. This has been a learning process for all of us. We hope to see the project built and operating within the next year. Community House will be the only transitional rental housing in Santa Cruz, and, once built, will be the prototype for other two similar developments.

Fred, Mark and Thom labored long and hard to produce a very refined design for Community House. As it now exists, the design is essentially fixed. Community House, though representative of a major amount of work and worry, will be safe haven for all who have a chance to live within its walls.

* Which will yield $500,000.
Community House

Community House will provide 37 single-room rental units with bathroom for very-low income people, at a total cost equal to about 6 modest single family residences. In addition, Community House will have on-site laundry facilities, a large central common area, a large communal dining and meeting hall, a restaurant-quality kitchen and ample areas for sitting, reading and visiting. Bicycle parking and bus passes will be provided, as well as 15 on-site parking spaces.

Budget

Property Purchase $350,000
Misc. Development Costs $60,000
Construction Costs $1,150,00
Total Development Cost $1,560,000
Page Smith and Paul Lee celebrate with Jane Imler ending her fast upon the opening of the Cedar Street Shelter in 1985

Photo, Bill Lovejoy

"He who oppresses the poor insults his Maker, and he who is kind to the needy honors him." Proverbs 14:31

"He who smites the poor insults his Maker, and he who rejoices at another's calamity will not go unpunished." Proverbs 17:5

"He who is gracious to the poor is lending to the Lord; he will repay him for his generosity." Proverbs 17:17

"He who closes his ears to the cry of the poor will him self also cry and not be heard." Proverbs 21:13
The Cedar Street Shelter San
Lorenzo River Clean-up Crew with
Paul Lee and Page Smith

Jan Imler and Mitch Snyder at the Santa Cruz
Town Clock April, 1989

Photo, Coryo
The Homeless Garden Project Crew
Top left to right
Dan Butrica, Moonrise, Michael Walla, Bill Tracey, Daffy Maxwell,
Kim Trunk, David Bennett,
Manuel Gutierrez, Josph Bader III, Judson Scoon, John Taylor,
Adam Silverstein, Lynne Basehore, David McCall.
Chapter Seven
The Homeless Garden Project

Why I hadn’t thought of it before, I can’t say, but everything according to its time. Someone called from Carpenteria, California, from Paradise Herb Farm, early in 1990. Did I want a million dollars worth of herb plants? They were going out of business. “Sure. As long as I didn’t have to pay for them.” “Well, you’ll have to pay something.” “How about a tax deduction by virtue of our non-profit homeless cause?” I asked. “We might be able to work something out,” they replied. Many, many, phone calls later and a considerable shrinkdown from the original offer, we sent a truck down and picked up two thousand herb plants. It cost a thousand dollars before we were done. I could have had a better deal at the local nursery, or from my pal, Kent Taylor, who has one of the largest commercial herb gardens in California. But what the heck. I knew if we had a couple thousand plants on hand we would have to get them in the ground and we would have to have some ground to get them into; hence, the Homeless Garden Project!

I went to see my friend, Francis Corr, who runs Santa Cruz Farms, an organic truck farm. I thought a few acres adjoining his farm, on the Pogonip Park property, city land, would be a good deal and a logical site for a homeless garden project.

Francis was willing to bring in water, provide starts, and supervision. What more could you want? We walked through a little thicket behind his farm, crossed the boundary into Pogonip and there were two or three acres in a little dell. “How about here?” he said. We went to Jim Lang, Director of City Parks. “How about it?”, we said. “No” he said. “No way! It’s too political until we have a plan for Pogonip. But there are a couple of acres of city land adjoining a community garden down near Lighthouse Field. How about that?” We went to take a look. “I’ll take
it," I said, as I sniffed the ocean breezes, the air of Santa Cruz being one of my favorite phenomena. It was a block from the ocean.

We brought the herb plants over to the site and dropped them off. Remarkably, they were only a block away. We had stored them, upon arrival, in a field behind the place where Harmony Grits a local blue grass band, lived. They were willing to care for them until we got our garden.

Then came Arbor Day, April, 1990, and Lynne Basehore called and wanted to know if I wanted to plant a tree with the Mayor. I said, "no thanks." But she sounded so appealing and friendly, I told her about my homeless garden project. She said she was interested. She had planted trees in Malaysia. I invited her to come over and discuss the project we had in mind. A few days later, she walked in the door and Fred Gray, now our grant administrator for Community House, and I, looked at one another and raised our eyebrows and rolled our eyes in unison. We had our Director of the Homeless Garden Project.

She moved into the position, volunteering her time, for which she won the J.C. Penny Foundation "Golden Rule" Award, which carried with it a $1,000. contribution. Adam Silverstein, an environmental studies major, newly graduated from UCSC, joined the project and together they constituted the staff. We were off and running. Homeless candidates were recruited for the cause. We had a decent budget and were able to pay minimum wage for three mornings a week to our first group of homeless gardeners.

Kent Taylor, my herb grower friend, had told me about a model project in Los Angeles, run by Ida Cousino, for homeless Vietnam Vets and so we contacted Ida and asked her to come up and give us a workshop on how to do it. On a Saturday, in October, we heard about her story and how she makes about $75,000 a year selling to local restaurants. She told us we needed a celebrity to help sponsor us. It would help overcome obstacles and open doors and give us the press we needed. So, as he was my brother-in-law, an acclaimed star, and the name I love to drop, to the annoyed chagrin of my family, Harrison Ford was appealed to and kindly sent a check. We had our celebrity sponsor.
To give our initial crew some training in the Chadwick Method, I asked the staff at the UCSC Student Garden and Farm to provide some training. They were willing to do so and our first group of six went up for a number of days and learned how to double dig, compost, sow flats, and prick out seedlings into beds. It was just the backup we needed to get started. They offered to give us surplus seedlings and to send some of the apprentices down from the Agro-ecology program to help out. A new member of our staff, Jane received her training there.

A couple who are professional dowsers offered to dowse the garden, not for the purpose of finding water, but to realign the energy fields, a new use of dowsing, according to what I knew. I missed the ceremony, but was given a description of it. After all, the garden is in Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz is famous for containing practically every new age number imaginable. Why not straighten out the energy lines? I know enough about ley lines and energy centers to have some sense that there could be something to it. After the dowsing, within a week, we were given a pick-up truck, a VW bus, a van, a compost shredder, a small tractor, a roto-tiller, and a quantity of tools, as if to confirm the new energy. Some kind of energy had been straightened out. Next we’re going to ask them to dowse for money.

I decided to organize a class on the garden through the cordial offices of Mike Rotkin and Community Studies at UCSC. We had a strong student input. I introduced them to the history of the Chadwick Student Garden Project at UCSC and the attendant themes relevant to the environmental crisis and the need for reaffirming the integrity of the organic. The physicalist/vitalist conflict over what counts for knowledge in the system of the sciences from the artificial synthesis of urea (1828) and the origins of ‘organic’ chemistry as a background for undermining the integrity of the organic was also discussed. It happens to be one of my favorite themes. I also told them of the history of homelessness in Santa Cruz, our efforts in their behalf, and the significance of voluntary associations and nonprofit corporations, as the enabling institutional instruments for community activism. The last item is another one of my favorite themes.
The first project of the class was to do this book, the history of homelessness in Santa Cruz, since the opening of the Cedar Street Shelter, in 1985. I had written an account of the Cedar Street effort, illustrated with almost all of the newspaper articles, and had circulated it privately. Now it was time to bring it up to date and make it public. Our goal was to give the citizens of Santa Cruz an accounting of what has happened in behalf of the homeless in the last six years.

We wanted to include other homeless projects, as well as our own, and give a brief description and an annual budget, but some of them refused to respond to our request. Apparently, they didn't want their budgets scrutinized. So we decided to focus on our own efforts, concentrating on the three programs under the Citizens Committee for the Homeless (the Interfaith Satellite Shelter, the Homeless Garden Project and Community House) and the two programs under the William James Association (the Free Meal Program and the proposed Homeless Resource Center). Therefore, this is only a partial picture of programs for the homeless in Santa Cruz, a picture of the work of two nonprofit agencies.

The students also worked in the garden, befriending the homeless, helping them out where they could, and engaging in fund-raising efforts. By this time, we had increased the staff. Shana Ross was in charge of foundation grants and public relations; Barbara Davis was in charge of publicity and media; Geraldine was our client services representative, dealing with all the personal problems of our workers; Robin, a professional landscape gardener, was in charge of marketing. She had expressed her interest in the project and brought Proposition C to our attention which had been passed as the Countywide Environmental Proposition, championed by Gary Patton, a County Supervisor, distinguished for his environmental leadership. We were in line to implement a number of its provisions, projects we had already undertaken, such as recycling and composting.

We had taken a field trip to Berkeley to look at a garden we had heard about on 4th Street. Just a corner lot. I had seen it on a visit to The Gardener, a wonderful upscale garden shop across the street. I happened to be with Virginia Baker, the Chair of the Chadwick Society. "Look at
those raised bed and that intensive crop", I said. I could hardly believe my eyes. Word had it that they made over $50,000 annually, with cleaned and bagged salad greens, servicing the Berkeley restaurant market. Kona Kola Farms, it was called. They also imported fancy coffee from Hawaii. So we made a date to take the Director—Michael Norton—to lunch at Chez Panisse, the great restaurant in Berkeley, run by Alice Waters, who had been inspired by Chadwick's method of high quality food production and whom I had met at Green Gulch, the Zen farm Chadwick had originated.

An invitation to Chez Panisse was irresistible bait. We asked him to tell us his secrets. Sure enough, he had been inspired by Chadwick and the French Intensive method of high-yield, high-quality produce. He had visited the UCSC Student Garden Project as well as Glee Farms, a project I had read about with great interest in the Wall Street Journal, involving intensive gardening in greenhouses in the New York and New Jersey ghettos, a program designed to train delinquent youths in greenhouse production. I was especially interested because Glee Farms specialized in culinary herbs. He told us his whole story. He was into coffee importing, mostly just the famous one from Hawaii—Kona—hence the name of the garden. Coffee importing was seasonal; he needed something to do in the off-season. So he started the garden. They grew the most choice salad greens for the Berkeley restaurant market and yes, they made over $50,000 a year. We were overawed. A corner vacant lot in Berkeley!

He told us to go look at the composting operation down the block. We did. There was a very large lot with very large compost piles. And bins of wonderful soil—the end result of the recycling effort. They were one of a few such efforts nationally and they had designed their own machines which cost a horrendous amount of money. It was a great model for what we wanted to do albeit on a much smaller and hand-intensive scale, without the cost of the large machinery.

Then we called on Gary Patton, our leading environmentalist County Supervisor, to invite him to our class meeting. He graciously consented and gave a wonderfully impassioned talk about the reasons behind Measure C and how we could become involved in the implementation,
immediately appreciating our model in terms of the opportunity for the homeless, as well as the de-centralized neighborhood hand-intensive composting and recycling effort. We were in business. He agreed to support our cause and open doors for us, including the study in process, by a major consulting firm, on how to implement Measure C, for the County of Santa Cruz. Within a month or two, he proposed over $50,000 in County funds to be granted to the Homeless Garden Project to support our effort. We eventually got $2,000. It was a tight year for the budget, although after I reviewed the budget myself, I wondered how the county could justify any number of items in the $250,000,000 indicated, such as new chairs and desks for practically everybody involved, new computers at inflated prices and so on. The only item under Homeless Grant was a copy machine at $5,000. Who got that? Our copy machine was donated by Webbers, a local firm, after one phone call. And why five times the ordinary cost? Why ask why?

Ida Cousino called and said we had to go to a meeting of the National Horticultural Therapy Association she was organizing in Palo Alto. We would be founding members of the Northern California Chapter. So we went. It was a great backup for the main focus of our work—we knew that the therapeutic aspect of our project took precedence over the economic. As long as we kept our focus on the therapeutic benefits of gardening for the homeless, the economic would follow. Or so we hoped.

At the Arbor Day Celebration of 1991, a year after meeting Lynne, the Homeless Garden Project mounted an attractive booth, with homeless gardeners and staff in attendance. We served strawberry shortcake from our first crop of strawberries, sold lettuce, and sold Homeless Garden T Shirts, which Clay Holden silkscreened for us. I handed out reprints of our “Behold Pogonip/ Greenbelt Poster”, which Mark Primack designed, featuring the Sacred Oak of Santa Cruz. At noon, I lead a group to the tree in the center of Pogonip, the Sacred Oak, which we dedicated as a Heritage Tree. Now it has a nice little plaque at it’s base announcing it as the Sacred Oak of Santa Cruz. I continue to do services there every Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, as I have done each year since 1977.
Harrison Ford and his wife, Melissa, and mutual friends, Earl McGrath, and Bob Becker, came to visit the garden in June, while they were in Santa Cruz for Willard Ford’s graduation from UCSC. Willard is my nephew. He was a student in the Homeless Garden Class and had helped me organize the class and recruit members. I was nervous about the visit, afraid of it being an imposition, due to time constraints, but it went fine. Harrison and Melissa were presented with t-shirts for the family and a box of produce and wine and coffee. Harrison planted a lemon tree which we call “the Indiana Jones Lemon Tree.” He signed autographs and posed for pictures. Everyone was tickled pink. He was impressed at the amount of stuff coming up and saw immediately that it was a model for national implementation. He said he would help with publicity.

We almost ran out of money a month later and then in one week we received a grant from the Packard Foundation ($15,000 matching, which meant an eventual $30,000), a grant from the City of Santa Cruz of $5,000 and the already mentioned $2,000 from the County. Harrison called and said he would make another donation. We were out of trouble.

It is now a question of securing the future of the garden, finding new space in the event we are turned out when our lease expires in the summer of 1993, thanks to a one year renewal. Hopefully some acreage at Pogonip will be made available, a 612 acre City Park, where the homeless gardeners would be organized to develop a major botanic garden. A proposal to that effect has been made to the Pogonip Committee, recently formed to entertain project proposals for Pogonip.

Efforts are underway to develop counseling services, particularly for those with substance abuse problems, alcoholism being the most pervasive and intractable. There is some indication that the therapeutic effects of gardening is having an impact on a number of the chronic alcoholics working in the garden who are reducing their intake or stopping altogether. Some have been on the wagon for months, cold sober, after years and years of alcoholism. This, above all, demonstrates the therapeutic validity of the Homeless Garden Project and is one of the most rewarding aspects of the effort.
In early October, a Soviet television crew came to the Garden to interview workers and staff about the project. Ron Frazier, a San Francisco rock and roll impresario, had taken an interest in the Garden and the Chadwick Method and thought of them as models for international application, particularly in Russia. He developed a proposal called "The Global Garden" and hopes to organize a group of volunteers to travel to the Soviet Union to demonstrate the Chadwick Method and to replicate small hand intensive and high yield gardens, such as the Homeless Garden Project. Mikhail Taratuta, Bureau Chief for Soviet National Television and Radio, was impressed with the garden and the emphasis on the organic methods employed. It remains to be seen whether any funding is forthcoming to mount such an effort as a Soviet exchange which looks very unlikely.

It is all we can do at the present time to secure funding for the garden itself. We are on a short shoestring with a budget of $10,000 a month. In early October, we began an intensive fund-raising campaign with the hope of recruiting enough supporters to secure the financial future of the project.

We have constituted the Committee of One Hundred and the Committee of One Thousand. To join the Committee of One Hundred members are asked to pledge a monthly contribution of $25.00. Members of the Committee of One Thousand are asked to pledge $10 a month. If you are willing to become a member of either committee please write to Paul Lee, Box 409, Santa Cruz, California, 95061 or call 408 423 7923. I hope, as a result of reading this book, you will join with us, in our effort to end homelessness in Santa Cruz. To do so, we need your support and money, in order to continue our work. Send a check for $10.00 or $25.00 and we will sign you up for membership in the respective committee and will invoice you every month for as long as you can support our efforts. In this way, we will build a support group to sustain the programs described in this book.

Toward the end of October, the Comic News, a popular local newspaper featuring cartoons, included a supplement/insert on the homeless garden put together by members of the staff and the gardeners, especially Bill Tracey, one of the gardeners with excellent writing skills and Patrice Vecchione.