

Human Rights Problems in Santa Cruz: The Road Forward

Santa Cruz is a town where

- It is illegal to sleep or coverup at blankets at night after 11 PM if you are homeless.
- In January the *Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Neighbors* got City Council to make not paying three \$97 sleeping tickets a jailing offense.
- Sitting down on any sidewalk in Santa Cruz within 14' of a building is illegal.
- More and more benches are being removed from downtown & time limits for sitting instituted.
- It is forbidden to enter parks after dark.
- Homeless survival gear is being seized and destroyed when found by **Chief Ranger Wallace**.

The City Attorney is spending thousands of dollars

- To jail two homeless street performers Anna and Miguel for unpaid sleeping tickets
- Using an Injunction which will send them immediately to jail for contempt if they sleep
- In a town with shelter for 40-60 people tonight at 1500-2000 homeless outside
- Even though Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, and Laguna Beach all allow sleeping outside

Young and homeless people complained

- They were being turned away from Jack's
- They said, the owner didn't like their congregating on the lawn of Cavalry Episcopal Church across the street.
- Since then, the church under pressure from nearby businesses, in spite of a successful Monday 4-8 PM Calvalry Coffeehouse, has banned homeless people from its lawns.
- Workers at Jack's confirmed that numerous folks had been turned away.
- **HUFF (Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom)** put out a flier on 5-20 calling for a protest 5-27 and a boycott of Jack's until it changed its policies.

Jack's agreed to discuss and clarify

- **Connie**, an owner of Jack's, contacted HUFF and presented her side of the story.
- She explained the problems were those of individual behavior problems.
- She denied there was any policy of discrimination against the homeless.
- She agreed to allow a return of those told to leave if they'd follow the rules.
- She agreed not to discriminate against people simply for being in a group across the street.
- She worked with HUFF to clarify her concerns.
- We continue to work out the situation.

- **We ask for respect of both sides in this situation.**
- **Homeless people have less and less public space in Santa Cruz.**
- **Merchants are under greater pressure because of the depression.**
- **Help end the anti-homeless laws downtown.**
- **Encourage businesses to agree to a general mediation policy.**
- **Support civil rights for the poor in Santa Cruz**