

SC library serves as homeless shelter

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The city of Santa Cruz now runs a small shelter for the homeless to sleep in at night, as do a few non-profit groups. But where do those with no particular place to go, go by day?

The answer, in many cases, is the public library, said Anne M. Turner, the library's director.

For this reason, the library advisory board last night voted unanimously to recommend to the city's housing and community development coordinator that money from state and federal grants be set aside to create a day center for the homeless, Turner said.

For about four years, the library has been trying to help the many homeless who come to the library for a quiet, warm place to sit during the day, she said.

"We make referrals to agen-

Planning meeting for Peace Day set

A meeting will be held Feb. 10 to plan the fourth annual Peace Day celebration in Santa Cruz County.

Peace Day is celebrated in May, and involves various activities throughout the county centering on the theme of "Discovering Our Common Ground."

The planning meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Santa Cruz City Museum on East Cliff Drive near Seabright. Further information is available by calling Sheila Carrillo at 458-4101 or Bonita Mugnani at 479-8905.

cies we think might be able to help," Turner said.

But the librarians are not social workers. And the presence of the homeless is disturbing to some library patrons, Turner said.

Not to put too fine a point on it, Turner said, the homeless have become "an aesthetic issue" in the library, where they tend to occupy the library's chairs for long periods.

"We don't have a lot of sitting-down space," said Turner.

But while very few of the homeless bother anybody, Turner said, "the staff has had to learn skills in confronting people causing disturbances."

The librarians used to call the police to take away "people hanging around," Turner said. Now, if possible, they make referrals to social service agencies.

But the library would like to see a day center where the homeless could take showers and have lockers, and have a telephone, where, for instance, prospective employers could return the calls of job-seekers, Turner said.

Turner said the library's rules governing people who spend a lot of aimless time there are humane by comparison to other libraries. Some libraries have a "no sleeping" rule, she said. In Santa Cruz, people, whether homeless or not, are kicked out only if they are actively disturbing other patrons.

Turner said at least two other U.S. cities have established day centers for the homeless. One is Salinas, she said, and another is Albuquerque, N.M.

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