

# Travelers Welcome Local Youth Hostel

By PEGGY RUDNICKI

Sentinel Staff Writer

A different kind of traveler comes to the Santa Cruz Youth Hostel.

Rather than the motorist who drives over the hill to spend the day with huge umbrellas and a cooler of beer on the beach, the hosteler is usually a young person vagabonding his or her way through California.

They come on foot, on bicycle and hitchhiking to spend one or two nights at the hostel located this summer at Marelo High School on West Cliff Drive.

Founded three years ago by the Community Switchboard, the hostel charges 75 cents per night for lodging, breakfast and a hot shower, and generally houses 15 to 20 people a night, according to Rhonda Levine, hostel director.

Most of the people who come to the hostel are young — 18 to 25 is the average age group — and on the move. Many are from out of state — Canada, the East and Europe.

One night's sampling of the hostel showed two men from France, a young man from Canada, a woman from Oregon and a number of people from the East Coast.

"I've been on the road for two weeks now," said the Canadian. "I heard about the hostel from a girl I met bicycling down Highway 1, so I stopped in." He is bicycling from Canada to Mexico for the summer and said he covers about 80 miles per day.

The travelers from France, who are hitchhiking through the United States, heard about the hostel from the Switchboard in San Francisco.

According to Ron Freemire, a proctor at the hostel, the Community Switchboard in Santa Cruz is their biggest source of clientele.

Ron, along with women's proctor Liz Slusarz, is in charge of the hostel three nights a week, while four other part-time proctors fill in during the rest of the week.

The proctors' duties include registering people, supervising clean up and breakfast, and general supervision. They also enforce hostel rules which include the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, drugs, smoking and possession of

weapons.

The day begins for the hostelers at 7 a.m. with a cooperative clean up and breakfast — usually a peanut butter sandwich and fruit — before they leave at 9 a.m.

The hostel is closed for the rest of the day until 8 p.m. when it is reopened for registration.

The hostel facilities at Marelo include a men's and a women's dormitory, showers and restroom facilities, and a registration room, and according to Ron, "people are pretty good about cleaning up."

Rhonda stresses that the hostel only offers temporary housing and has a two-night maximum stay requirement.

According to several of the travelers staying at the hostel, Santa Cruz is one of the few places in California that has such a hostel program.

"I've spent a lot of time sleeping on beaches," said one young man traveling down from Oregon, "and a lot of times I got kicked off by a policeman at 2 a.m. This place is a welcome change."

The hostel project is funded by the city and the county. Its total budget for this year is \$5,790 and Rhonda estimates these funds will run out by the end of the summer.

These monies are used to pay salaries and operating costs such as utilities, food and supplies. Rhonda says the hostel is in need of donations to help cover costs.

She adds that blankets, beds, food and other material contributions are needed.

A winter site for the hostel is currently being sought, says Rhonda, but since funds for rent payments are gone, this year's winter hostel will have to be donated.

Yet Santa Cruz' hostel is only a forerunner of things to come. The state legislature has recently passed a bill allocating \$2.1 million for the organization of a statewide hostel system.

According to the proposed plan, hostels would be located in State Parks along with hiking and biking trails.

Meanwhile, Santa Cruz' hostel continues to offer a place to stay and a hot shower to the hundreds of young people who grab a backpack each summer and head off to see the U.S.A.



Hostelers take part in a cooperative cleanup of Santa Cruz Youth Hostel each morning before continuing on their way.

## Who's in the News

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Pitman were hosts at their ranch ear-

Pitman-Loomis reunion. Some 65

teacher and actress, and she has written for radio and television as well as writing poetry.

Maria Matilda Dedrick is a violinist, violin teacher and