

## A place on the farm for women



If women have come a long way in the past 80 years, the story couldn't be told better than through the history of the ranch house off High Street on the UCSC campus. Originally a home, run by housewives, and later a center for Research and Development programs, this month it became a center, a haven, for the multi-faceted women of today.

Photos by Bill Lovejoy

By MARYBETH VARCADOS  
Living Section Editor

**A** WOMAN'S place is in the house. Welcome to the county's newest woman's center, at the High Street edge of the UCSC campus, where rustic chic meets urban neighborhood.

Once this was a ranch house,

iced tea or lemonade may have been served on the shaded veranda along the front.

The Cardiff house — it's still yellow, and due to be painted soon — was built by Albion P. Jordan in 1864. Jordan and Isaac E. Davis had purchased the hillside land as part of their successful lime quarrying. The Jordans eventually moved to San

it's reported, they frequently were on the honor roll.

At the end of the century, the Cowells moved to San Francisco and ranch caretaker Frank George and his wife, who had no children, moved in and stayed for some 50 years. After left, the George Cardiff family, with several children, moved in.

Diane completed her conference, and hurried out, not unlike a housewife, to show off the kitchen. "Look at the ovens," she encouraged. The envy of any homemaker's heart, the cooking center is spacious, even with an oven for bread baking left from the days when wood provided the heat. Inside it now is stored paperwork on women's issues. And rather than a





reached by a drive that curves up through a lane of shade trees. Horses and buggies carried Santa Cruz women 'round the bend and between the ornate fence posts and up to visit the Henry Cowells and their five children. On warm afternoons, with the bay sparkling in the distance,

Francisco, and Henry Cowell bought out Jordan's share of the ranch and business. In 1888, Cowell purchased the Davis holdings and added to the land holdings, up to 10,000 acres.

The Cowells lived in the little yellow ranch house and the children attended Bay View School, where,

When the University of California purchased 2,000 acres of the Cowell lands in 1961, the farmhouse became the residence of provosts. Then it became offices for the Research and Development projects.

This month, the women's touch returned. The house has been fitted with handicapped access; some rooms have become offices. An air of busyness pervades. There's still one difference from the old days, though. The driveway is not open for auto traffic because of a university rule, and although women from the community can walk up the shaded drive, those with cars must go up Bay Street, and around behind the Carriage House to park.

Once there, a visitor muses. How fitting that women have returned to its hearth, that they again serve tea and chat about, well, women's issues.

Instead of a "lady of the house," one finds the director, Diane Reeves, and her assistant Kathie Olson. Reeves was hired for the job from Cal State at Fullerton, where she developed a large women's center. They bustle a visitor through just as Mrs. Cowell might have nearly 100 years ago. ?

You must visit the parlor, said Kathie, acting as hostess Friday afternoon. Diane was going over papers with someone in her office. No interior decorators or maids need apply here — those chores are handled through the university. Diane was looking over the work of a female sculptor, who proposes that one of her large, woman-image works be installed in the front yard.

"We even have a harpsichord," bubbled Kathie, a mother and housewife who went through UCSC as a re-entry student. She delights, she says, in working with the students, and this house will be for all women in the community — students, faculty and community members. That is the university's stipulation. The center is available to any persons or groups, as long as the cause is non-profit.

The harpsichord, a donation from Peg McCray who made it in 1979, sits on hardwood floors. The adjoining parlor, which is carpeted, still is decorated with art, left from the opening art show.

Some time along in its modern years, the parlor was transformed into two rooms, circling around two fireplaces. On the parlor side, the hearth is more formal, with marble hearth, intended for burning coal and now left with no fires. Modernizing did not destroy the keeping cupboards running aside the flue — here farm wives kept their linens, warm and mildew-free.

The interior-side fireplace of brick, with low couches and magazine-laden tables around, invites you to sit. The chimney sweep's work has been done — the fireplace is useable.

cross stitched "Home Sweet Home," a poster hangs above, with the women's peace message, "It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber." Last week, a bridal shower was held here.

The pantry has become a maintenance center; the bathroom down the hall is unchanged with a curved, claw-foot bathtub still the focal point. "They begged us not to use it," Diane said, laughing, "because they can't replace the fittings!"

Where Mr. and Mrs. Cowell once repaired for the evening — the boudoir — is a conference room, with long table and chairs around. The spacious closet is empty, except for an empty packing box.

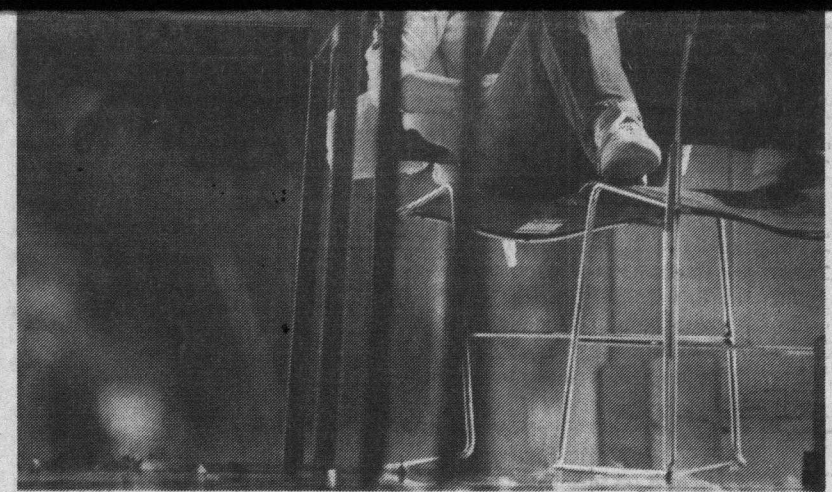
Home sweet home, for today's upwardly mobile women.

Some 500 people showed up for the recent open house; the calendar is filling with events. "Isn't it wonderful?" Kathie marveled. "Every woman who has walked in here has remarked how beautiful it is and how wonderful that women deserve a place like this." It also is open to men, she added, "men who want to work along with women."

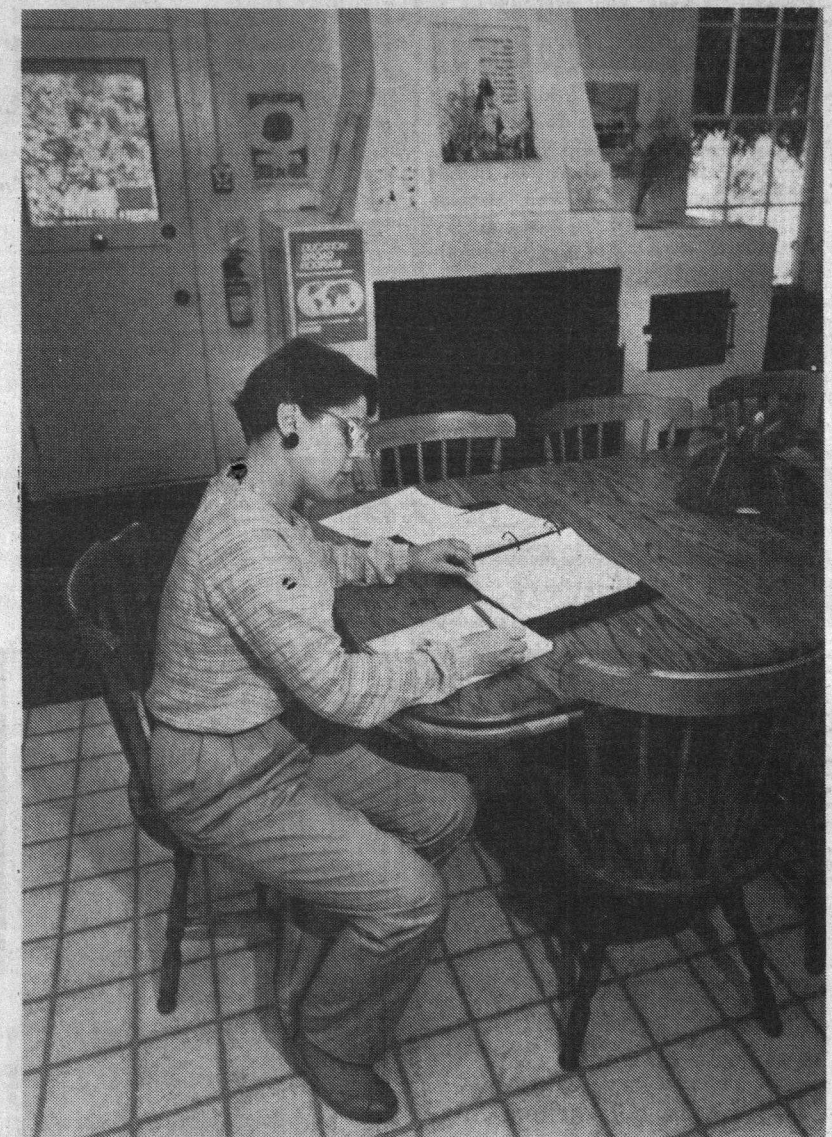
**F**UNDING has been allotted by the university for a year to cover salaries for the director and assistant, any needed remodeling and running expenses. After that, the center is on its own financially, Diane explained. Board members come from the faculty, student body and the community, with representatives of the latter including Julie Olsen Edwards, Shirley Castillo, Noreen Nolan, Laura Sutherland and Mardi Wormhoudt. There are two community vacancies. Also, an advisory committee is forming, and a Friends of the Women's Center to help with fund-raising.

"We are expected to find money from campus to serve the students and from the community to serve women of the community and from the faculty to serve them," said Diane, admitting hers is an awesome task. "If we pull this off, it is going to be interesting," she added. She plans to try for grant money, to seek donations from foundations and from individuals, and to market certain items, such as T-shirts and coffee mugs.

If sign-ups are any proof, there's a need for the center, said Diane, as she reviews groups already asking there. These include: Women In Science, Women's Studies Transfer Students and Radical Social Women (all student groups); from the campus in general — Women's Counseling Group, International Women's Group and Women's Studies; and from the community — Women's Spirituality Group, MATRIX staff, the Girl Scout Council, Women's Crisis Support, KOLAYNU on Jew-



Crown College student Cristy Chung finds a sunny spot on the veranda.



The kitchen table is a work spot for Kathie Olsen.

ish-Arab dialogues, Lesbian Writers Group, Religious Women's Lesbian Coming-Out Group, Celebration of Women Working for Peace and the community women's center Woman-Space.

Kathie's project is a high school outreach in which UCSC students will write lesson plans in women's issues for high school teachers.

Diane reflected on the possibilities of a center which is "not a dump, as women's centers often have been.

"I will consider us successful in the first year if we get funding and have started to work toward letting women in the community take advantage of UC. You know, the town-gown split does not after to affect women."



Diane Reese came from Fullerton to run the center.