

Girls Pay Debt To Society In Crowded County Jail

By JEAN BAKER
Sentinel Staff Writer

The heavy steel door closed, the key turned in the lock, and there we were—15 of us—face to face in a room clouded with smoke.

At one end of the room hung a small calendar weighted with its black Xs marking off the days. A few tiny louvers on the long panel of a frosted window opened to the hint of spring on the outside.

Against another wall stood a bookcase with many tattered paperbacks sagging in their places and a heavy-duty sewing machine. A bulletin board listed release dates, a few personal comments, a cartoon . . .

Girls huddled about the tables, eager to talk—each to tell much the same story.

On the first visit, one of the girls, chosen as hostess for the day, served coffee and conducted a tour through the quarters—three bunk rooms with beds for 10 and three toilets, a bathroom and the day room where everyone clustered. At night, when the bunkrooms are overcrowded (and they frequently are), some sleep on the floors in the day room.

These are the women's quarters at the Santa Cruz County jail.

One of the matrons, Sally McDonald, explains, that, "of course, it is too crowded. Time was that when we had two in jail here, it was big business. We didn't need any more space."

But conditions have changed and more girls are going to jail—many for only a few days, more for longer sentences, up to nine months.

Society rightly demands that man (or woman) must pay his debt when a crime has been committed. Removal from that society is the punishment for the crime.

But there are more "punishments"—not exacted (or approved of) by those in charge but existent nevertheless, some due simply to a low budget.

For instance, anyone who visits the local jail is suddenly made aware that the quarters are totally inadequate. No one is advocating wall-to-wall carpeting, a television viewing room, a lounge—just adequate facilities to house those who have had their freedom temporarily or indefinitely restricted.

The women complain a lot—some are bitter. Nearly all of them feel that injustices have put them there. This is seldom, if ever, true locally. Each is there for a reason

but the reasons vary greatly and so do the sentences.

Those on longer sentences are, of course, there for more serious crimes and ideally should not be housed with those who are there for failure to pay a fine or on drunken charges.

More practically, those on longer sentences, and not scheduled for a state prison, should probably be sent to another jail where rehabilitation could begin.

There is neither time, space or personnel to begin the work of rehabilitation in the Santa Cruz County jail. Nor does the budget extend to provide equipment and personnel necessary for this.

In many other jails within the state, girls are taught a trade. They learn to sew or cook; some are given clerical experience or other outlets so necessary in the process of rehabilitation.

The Santa Cruz County jail does have a sewing machine and the young women do make use of it while they are there. Recently, an exercise cycle was added to provide needed recreation.

Once a week, all are taken to the roof for fresh air. Mrs. McDonald explains that this would be done more often but the same roof area is used by the 130 or more men in jail, and once a

week is all the time allotted the girls.

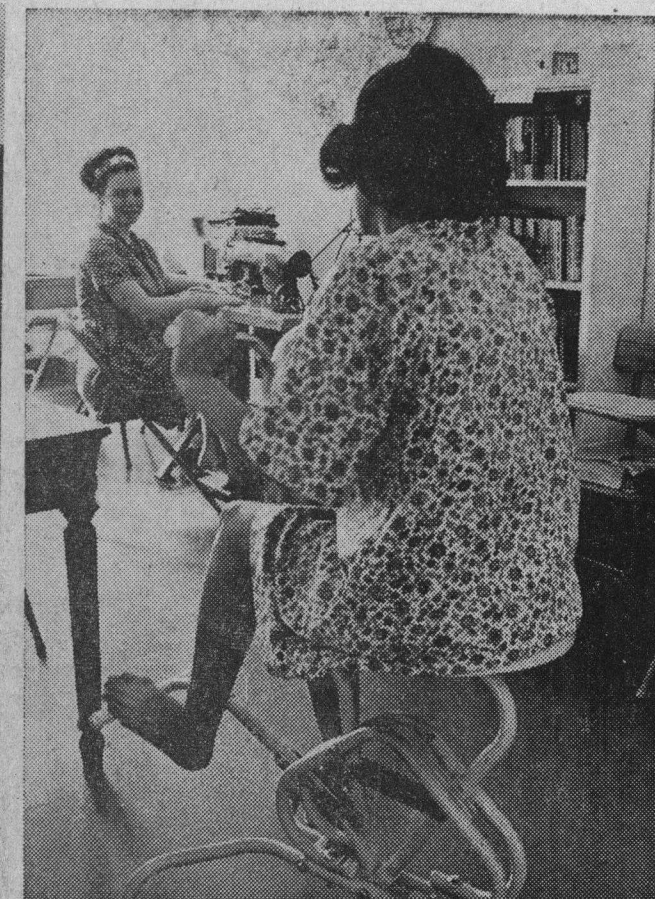
The food at the jail is prepared by men and is a hearty fare—almost too heavy for women, they complain. But the biggest gripes about the food are not what they are served but what they are not.

No fresh milk. Powdered milk is used in cooking but never is a glass of fresh milk served. Several suggested they wished they had fruit juice or a snack in the evening before retiring. They are tired of the coffee which they are served three times or more a day. Juice is served every Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Nearly all the girls smoke. One commented, "If you aren't a smoker when you come, you will be when you leave. There isn't much else to do. We read, play cards and try our best to get along."

Several said they would like to have vitamins.

Girls are allowed family visitors once a week—Saturday afternoons. They can write and receive three letters a week. All in and out mail is censored. They may



have some magazines, paperbacks and a limit of \$7 per week for spending money to purchase cigarettes or candy from a caddy commissary passed through the cells daily. Occasionally, they may make telephone calls.

The jail provides soap but the girls must supply all other necessities. Recently, one of the matrons bought a stick deodorant (with her own funds) which all girls share.

Illnesses, toothaches or other complaints are cared for at the county hospital. This means that the matron must take the girls for examinations or other care.

There are five matrons at the local jail—Mrs. McDonald, Mrs. Doris Drew, Mrs. Judy Reed, Mrs. Marian Wieland and Mrs. Ella Hinson. They not only care for the girls, feed them, take their meals to them and make periodic checks, but they also double as clerks—booking,

releasing and keeping records.

The girls have nothing but praise for the matrons and the work they are doing. "They try real hard."

(Next week: A profile of the girl in jail.)

There is neither time, space nor personnel to begin work of rehabilitation in Santa Cruz County Jail. Quarters are inadequate, activities few. Treat is once-a-week visit to roof area for fresh air.

Sun., April 20, 1969

Santa Cruz Sentinel 21

LINDA'S BEAUTY SHOP

(Formerly Susie-Q)
301 Olive St. (rear)

SPECIALS FOR TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

\$20.00 PERM.—12.50

\$15.00 PERM.—10.50

COMPLETE WITH CUT & STYLE

PHONE: 426-5570 FOR APPT. FREE PARKING

301 OLIVE STREET (ENTRANCE ON ANITA)

Leask's
FASHION SHOPS

downtown, pacific st church, rancho del mar, aptos

crisp
summer

On The Club Calendar

The Sons of Italy Lodge will welcome new members

A School of Instruction is planned when Pythian Sis-

CALLING ALL