

Grand Jury

# Human issues atop jury's list Homeless, AIDS victims need help, says report

General Services agency  
targeted — Page A3

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SANTA CRUZ — Increases in local help for the homeless and AIDS victims has been called for by the 1985-86 county grand jury in its final report released today.

Noting there have been at least 22 cases of AIDS, 13 of them fatal, in this county, the grand jury recommended local health agencies increase educational programs for the public and health care for the victims.

Of 20,088 reported AIDS cases in the U.S., 10,800 persons have died, and the always-fatal disease has become the leading cause of death among young men in New York City.

San Francisco is the second-leading city in the incidence of the disease whose victims are usually gays, drug users who use a needle, hemophiliacs and infants infected before birth.

For every AIDS victim, six other persons are afflicted with AIDS-Related-Complex (ARC) which can be a forerunner of AIDS.

The grand jury noted local health agencies provide confidential screening for victims and that AIDS

care and educational programs are provided by the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, Hospice and within the public-school system.

In this county, Pajaro Valley Unified School District has lead the way in adopting an infectious-disease policy based on the state's program for schools.

While applauding what is being done, the jury called for greater effort in counseling, medical services and physical care for AIDS victims.

In investigating the problem of the homeless, the jury spent 300 hours looking at local programs and shelters.

The jury noted there are only "47 emergency shelter beds" for an estimated 650-plus population of homeless people who need a place to sleep, shower and eat.

"We must concern ourselves with the impact of the local homeless population and provide local solutions, or ignore the problem," the jury stated, noting that very little help is coming from outside agencies.

There are an estimated 1,000 homeless in this county but more than 300 are people who seek no help. They are the ones passing-through.

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## Grand jury

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working occasionally. People who "dislike structure and feel that shelters are too restrictive because of the rules," the jury stated.

The remaining 650-plus are either those with mental and drug problems or those simply lacking the skills to find and keep work, and they need shelter.

"While most of these people did not have major behavioral problems, they did not have money or jobs and were desperate for shelter because they feared injury or abuse if left to sleep on the streets.

"Their desire for shelter outweighed any negative feelings they had concerning the restrictions and rules of local shelters," the jury stated.

Shelters are located at the New Life Center, The First Step Family Shelter, the NAACP Shelter, Women's Crisis Support and Shelter Services and the Pajaro Valley Shelter for Women and Children. Additionally, 25 beds are provided by the St. Francis Soup Kitchen, and local churches accept some of the overflow on an emergency basis.

"The shelters visited by the grand jury were found to be operated with efficiency and compassion. The premises appeared to be clean and supervision was adequate but shelter staff reported they were forced to turn away eligible applicants almost every night," the jury stated.

A major stumbling block in getting shelters is that neighborhoods don't want to host them.

Positive steps noted by the jury include work by the county's Task Force on the Homeless to get a permanent shelter, the work of the Shelter Project in collecting data and the service of St. Francis Kitchen and area churches.

Other reports by the jury cover the following:

• Allegations of widespread age discrimination in mobile home parks throughout the county were investigated by the Grand Jury and

found to be substantially true. Of the approximately 5,000 mobile home spaces, only about one-third were found to be available to adults under 35 years of age, and less than 10 percent allow families with children. Nearly 40 percent prohibit anyone under the age of 55. The Grand Jury concedes that the issue is shaping up to be a "political hot potato."

Noting that local governments have taken a "wait-an-see" attitude regarding age restrictions, the Grand Jury recommends that local governments abolish age restrictions in any parks "not specifically designed to physically accommodate senior citizens."

Additionally, "until young adults and families begin to speak up and challenge the existing system, it appears unlikely that local governments will do anything to make the American dream of home ownership anything but a dream."

• The grand jury supports Watsonville Supervisor Wayne Moore's request that the Board of Supervisors initiate a "positive purge" of voter-registration roles in the county.

A positive-purge system, accomplished by mail, would better update voter rolls and would be viewed as a positive preventative measure.

• The grand jury reiterates its recommendation made in its interim report last January that Watsonville Jail be re-opened and staffed on a regular part-time basis during peak hours of arrests, funded jointly by the county of Santa Cruz and city of Watsonville.

The grand jury urges the Board of Supervisors to study the cost effectiveness of re-opening Watsonville Jail.

The jury also says that the city of Scotts Valley should pursue a "long-term, permanent" solution to its existing "unacceptable" Police Department facilities.

• Scotts Valley residents are "apathetic" and need to take an ac-

tive role in the operation and methods of city government by attending City Council meetings.

While this grand jury notes that a possible explanation for the poor attendance — as noted in the 1984-85 grand jury report — could be the "inordinate length" and "endless discussions regarding many agenda items," it also found no solution to the problems "other than that of vigorous public involvement on the part of citizens at their own City Council meetings."

• The grand jury calls for policy changes concerning the method the city of Santa Cruz uses to handle insurance claims filed against it. The grand jury in the coming year is to closely monitor claims to ensure investigations are conducted fairly.

This was necessitated by the receipt of conflicting information regarding claims from Santa Cruz city staff, city attorneys and the claimants themselves, the jury stated.

• The grand jury makes special note that it wishes to dispel the popular image of grand juries — namely that they are "a group of somber senior citizens." Instead, the jury stated, the county's 1985-86 grand jury is comprised of a broad spectrum of ages and expertise.

This year's foreman, Arthur Hackwood of Santa Cruz, will be succeeded by Jayne Bahrenfuss of Aptos for 1986-87.

Other members are Sandra Farley-Johnson, James Fox, Linda Gordon, William Hall, Sandra Kaplan, Mary Ann Magnusson and David Walker, of Santa Cruz; Jack Best of Aptos; David Burton of Soquel; Jane Christmann and Robert Ray of Scotts Valley; Edward Banks, Helen Conant and Manuel Lawrence, of Watsonville, and Rory Muscatell of Boulder Creek.

Ronald Galloway and Susan Merica-Jones, both of Santa Cruz, resigned in January 1986 and August 1985, respectively. Replacing them were Bonnie Brofft of Brookdale and Henri Etta Van Valkenburg of Santa Cruz, respectively.