

# High Noon at Town Clock

Elizabeth Kadetsky

The "establishment" turned into something of an Ebenezer Scrooge and homeless activists became "agitators" this holiday weekend as increasingly heated protests against the city's camping ban took the form of a battle between malcontents and administrators.

The showdown began last Saturday when a familiar cast of homeless activists set up a free food table at the

12-1-88 SUN  
Town Clock in Santa Cruz. A small army of eight police and one city official responded by warning the activists that without a use permit, both their food and the location on which they were serving was illegal.

The group has been serving free meals accompanying protests at almost every bi-monthly city council meeting since July. On Friday, November 25, they passed out flyers an-

Homeless  
nouncing daily meals at the Town Clock. "At that point, of course, county health becomes worried," described Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt. "Permits are required for all food service, so whether you're charging them for [food] or not, you do need a permit.... This is not just some kind of bureaucratic runaround. The county health department takes very seriously how the food was prepared, particularly hot food."

The group, dubbed the Homeless Rights Coalition, is now retaliating with a vow to continue serving daily meals at the Town Clock. At Saturday's banquet served to approximately 90 people, police responded with a promise to begin making arrests on Monday. And now we have a standoff.

Consider the following: Homeless activists have no intention of seeking a permit to serve free food. Said HRC member Brian Koepke, "If we are is-

---

**"This is not just... a bureaucratic run-around. The health department takes very seriously how the food was prepared."**

**—Mardi Wormhoudt**

---

sued a permit we will take one." When asked if they would apply for one, he noted, "So far they're coming to us."

Since Thursday the activists have also issued a flurry of scrawled and typed statements in the form of press releases, "news" sheets and a "warning to all government officials": "We have the right to Public Assembly and Public Association. We have the right to Right Livelihood," reads one of them. "It is the Right of every Homeless Person to Recieve [sic] Gifts through Public Association. Any attempt to infringe upon our Rights will be openly opposed and will become

(continued)