

# Lamplighters Keep Social Service Flame Aglow



Lamplighters' craft sale will be November 12, and looking at one of the afghans which will be offered are Stan Sutherland, Lamplighter president, and Mrs. Cecil G. Bills, volunteer director.

By BARBARA BURKLO  
Sentinel Staff Writer

There is a kind of dignity and grace about the Lamplighters for the Blind. To watch this organization of 50 visually handicapped people and their volunteer helpers at one of their bi-monthly meetings is to see practical compassion at work.

Don't think this is a group that functions only at a self-seeking level. While they do make and sell many things for therapy and profit, they have a host of social service projects, besides.

They make lap robes for hospitalized veterans. They collect cancelled stamps for the Norwegian tubercular children's project (100 pounds per year). They give money out of their modest dues to the Crippled Children's Fund. They help support a retarded, blind child at the Good Shepherd Home of the West, a Lutheran home for retarded children at Terra Bella, California.

They sponsor Girl Scout Troop 1023 of Live Oak. And they sent \$25 to the Red Cross for Mississippi River flood victims and \$45 for Christmas stockings for U.S. servicemen in Vietnam. Further, they gave \$100 to the local Drug Abuse Prevention Center.

"Social service is good therapy for these people," says Mrs. Cecil G. Bills, director of the Lamplighters for nine years.

One Lamplighter who is eager to tell her story is Mrs. Emerin Ellis, who was the first Santa Cruz County resident to have a corneal transplant. "I can read fine print!" she says delightedly. Lamplighters told the Santa Cruz Lions' Club, their sponsor, about Mrs. Ellis and the Lions arranged for her to have the operation last summer in San Francisco.

The Lamplighters meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the Harvey West Clubhouse, which they use rent-free as a courtesy of the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department. The Lions' Club refurbished the clubhouse for the Lamplighters' use. Lions provide bus transportation for members to and from the meetings, taking them right to their doors.

a beautiful shawl. Mrs. Bills call this "double work." Another example of double work is in rug making. They use only cotton and wool in very good condition and always need more donations. One worker tears the fabric into strips, turns in the edges and bastes them. Another worker weaves the strips on the loom into a rug.

Scraps of yarn given to the group were knit into a very lovely, many-colored afghan. Persons who have ma-

terials to donate may call Mrs. Bills at 475-6471.

At one of the meetings each month, members have a rummage sale of clothing at very low prices — mainly for their own needs. And so rummage is another welcome donation. They give unused rummage to the Drug Abuse Prevention Center.

Devotions are part of each meeting, and are given by the club's chaplain, Olive Kersh. Mrs. Kersh also works for the Santa Cruz

County Transcribers' Guild, copying textbooks into Braille for the county's blind school children.

Birthdays are celebrated too and a special dessert is served to go with the sack lunches which members bring.

"Some of these people have no social life except for these two days a month, so we try to give them a wonderful time," Mrs. Bills says.

The Lamplighters' annual Hospitality Day and Craft

Sale will be Wednesday, November 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the clubhouse. All the proceeds are distributed among the members at Christmas and Easter.

At Christmas, the club's Girl Scout Troop prepares the luncheon for their Christmas party and the Lions' Club gives every member a gift and treats them to a Christmas dinner.

The Capitola Lions' Club takes them out for a Thanksgiving dinner and gives them

gifts and the women of the Star of the Sea Catholic Church sponsor a Valentine's party each year.

Volunteers currently working with the group are: Mrs. Opal Adams, Mrs. Betty Curtis, Mr. and Mrs. George Gates, Mr. and Mrs. George Henderson, Mrs. Anna Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Jay Jordan, Mrs. O. E. Mayou, Mrs. Vera Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Rockett, Herbert Sherman, Mrs. Marie Karas, Mrs. Mary Dryden and Mr. and Mrs. Bills.



Mrs. George Gates, volunteer, holds up a finished Christmas wreath, while lamplighters make more wreaths. From left, Herbert Sherman, volunteer; Jo Van Steenbergen, James Moncreif, Ernest Harkins and Carl Madson.



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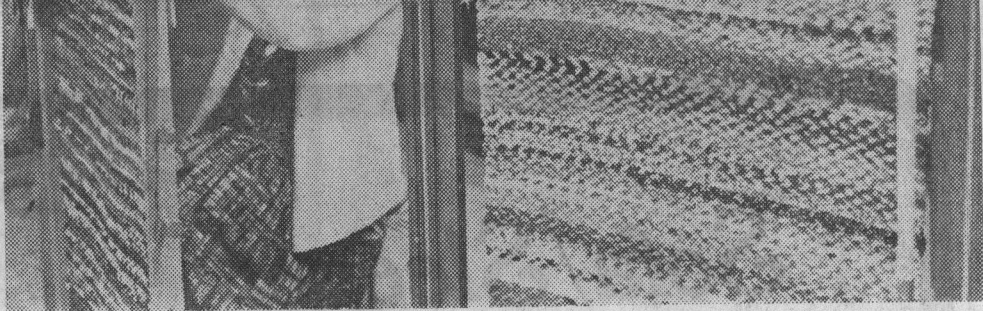
9-Size 9-10



guide the Lamplighters in their craft work, and it is impressive to see what these people can accomplish with a minimum of help. And they rely, for much of their handicraft, on donated craft materials.

Mrs. Bill says yarn, fabrics and other craft media always are needed as a basis for the group's work. For instance, a woman brought them a knit dress which she had started, but wasn't able to finish.

A blind worker unraveled and rolled the yarn, and another blind person knit it into



He whistles while he works—Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Cabuenies like to make rugs at the Lamplighters' looms. Mr. Cabuenies has been coming to the group's activities for 10 years and after his marriage, five years ago, began bringing his wife. Both are totally blind.

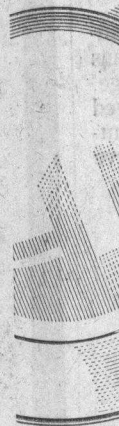


Mrs. Paula Vance is given a manicure by Mrs. Opal Adams. The volunteer performs these little services for the Lamplighters, who, though they are amazingly self sufficient, appreciate small personal attentions.

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