

# Rehab, Down at the Farm

One day when I was out on the road crew, a young dude walks up and asks, "How do I get a job like this?" I answered, "All you gotta do is get convicted." Life is so good out here that 19-year-olds come up to prisoners to ask us for jobs. That is what The Farm is rehabilitating us for.

by David "BD" Dumars

Others have written about laws that violate the civil rights of homeless people to sit down, to sleep, to table at night, or to panhandle. I wish to bring up a more fundamental and controversial issue: the right to shit. Depicting homeless people as uncaring, slovenly and generally disregarding the necessity for public health is fundamentally bigoted.

Talk about people pissing and defecating on the sidewalk — why are we not targeting tourists heading for the bars? People walk out totally drunk and piss against the nearest wall, then stumble home untouched by the police. Folks in jail talked about this whole thing and pointed out what is *not* occurring: people are definitely not being incarcerated for public drunkenness when they leave a bar loaded to the gills.

Yet a high percentage of people in jail are repeatedly arrested and ticketed. Are these

people who cause a lot of trouble? No. They are just people who fit a certain profile — Native Americans, the unshaven, long-haired folk, poorly dressed people. And some Santa Cruzans are there for getting well-known.

A significant number of people in F Dorm, where I stayed at first, assert they are targeted because they are known by the police — as young, as homeless, as being seen around drug activity. They are not just incidentally run into by the police; the very same cops pick them up again and again. Laws, particularly laws against urination and defecation, are enforced in a discriminatory fashion. The only toilet facilities are available where people are spending money, in eating establishments and other small proprietorships.

It's not just clean-cut American families who find themselves on the streets. Not a shot in hell of resolving problems like drug addiction, alcoholism and mental illness by sending them into jails. They may not be on the street trying to shield themselves in merchants' doorways, but even though you don't see them, they're still there. All you're doing is criminalizing people, aggravating their problems. A guy called The Hippie was gone for two weeks and got thrown back in jail for petty theft. He said the police were intentionally looking for him because he said things against the new laws attacking homeless people. Ron, an older, bearded fellow, in County Jail 300 times, said he spends every winter in jail.