

January 1998

Two nights later, Waggoner and 20 protesters held a candlelight vigil at Palisades Park, holding up placards reading: "Civil Rights Not Property Rights." Then they lay down next to a Nativity scene that took up half a block. The Mary, Joseph, and Jesus mannequins were provided shelter, while the homeless were not. They appealed to churches to open their buildings at night to the homeless and spend as much on low-income housing as on costly Nativity scenes — a glitzy facade of compassion, behind which stands locked, vacant buildings and cruel police power.

Waggoner and Busch face misdemeanor trespassing and resisting arrest charges. When this author called City Attorney Alicia Cortright to ask if she really intended to spend thousands of dollars prosecuting Waggoner for "trespassing" in a vacant building rather than using that money to open up a shelter, she coldly replied that they were prosecuting and hung up. In Santa Monica, transitional housing units stand empty due to real-estate speculation while people remain unhoused. Homeless agencies funded by the City are afraid to support the protesters, so as to protect their funding.

Waggoner and Busch face pretrial hearings on their charges in Department S of Santa Monica Municipal Court, January 14 at 8:30 a.m. Support the Flamingo Defense Fund at P.O. Box 3622, Santa Monica, CA 90408. Phone: (310) 289-7446. Supporters can call, write, or fax City Attorney Alicia Cortright and Mayor Robert Holbrook to demand that charges against the activists be dropped. Cortright: (310) 458-8336; 1725 Main St., Santa Monica 90401. Re: Case #DR 97-093353. Mayor Holbrook: (310) 458-8201; fax: (310) 395-6727.

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS COMES AND GOES, AND STILL THERE IS 'NO ROOM AT THE INN' FOR HOMELESS PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

IN SANTA MONICA, ACTIVISTS OCCUPY VACANT MOTEL, AND HOLD A VIGIL AT A NATIVITY SCENE TO CHALLENGE CHURCHES TO BUILD HOUSING FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE.



Art by Christa Occhiogrosso