

laws. The ordinances expand the prohibitions against peaceful sparechanging from a seated position, in groups of two or more, or after dark to include silent sparechangers, performers, or political activists on all sidewalks in town. What does this have to do with women walking on Pacific Ave. who get unwanted come-ons from young men? Neither the Downtown Commission nor the City Council could say. But they worked furiously on "finding exemptions" for the "worthy" donation seekers (tablers and performers).

Less hypocritical was Orlando, Florida,

which banned sitting or lying on the sidewalk on August 5, 2002. While the Santa Cruz City Council and the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* said not one word about the main target of these laws — "commercially unviable" homeless people — the Orlando City Council was more outspoken. According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, "The Orlando City Council voted 6-0 Monday to further crack down on the homeless after getting complaints that too many vagrants sleep in doorways or spend hours on sidewalks in front of businesses."

The undeniable conclusion is that, in both Santa Cruz, California, and Orlando, Florida, the purpose of these ordinances is to ban the beggars. For the merchants are loath to see beggars outside of their stores. Since the soliciting ordinance is in place citywide, and most other sidewalks in the commercial districts are less than 14 feet wide, quite a chunk has been taken out of public space to "discourage" homeless people and panhandlers.

An obscure part of the ordinance bans the purchase of an item for an amount that is so much larger than the value of the item that both parties agree it is a donation. One young woman commented. "I tried to get some items for my apartment on Pacific Avenue — \$60 for a pot! Sheets for \$125! I feel I must be donating well above the true value when I shop on Pacific Avenue!"

The ordinances began to take effect on August 23. After a two-week warning period, the police will begin to ticket homeless people for standing and holding a sign after dark which says: "Cold, Hungry, Homeless, Please Help. God Bless!"

Violators must pay the state \$162. If they don't pay the fine, they will be arrested and jailed for an additional \$200 booking fee. Repeat offenders may face the irony of a probation condition that ties them to the Santa Cruz area for three years, but bars them from the downtown area, as is being done with minor marijuana dealers in the latest police crackdown and selective enforcement.

On August 12, the Citizen Police Review Board voted to hold a special hearing to look into police harassment and selective enforcement downtown. A day later, activists asked the Downtown Commission to try to stop the new laws. "At least wait until you hear from Berkeley, Olympia, and Portland on alternative solutions," said an activist from Downtown For All, an organization that formed precisely to oppose the new laws.

It seems that Tom Noddy's internationally famous "Bubble Magic" show will be barred in all commercial districts under MC 9.50.020, which bans "[Any] liquid substance to be thrown, discharged, launched, spilled, or to become airborne." Porter told the Downtown Commission he wanted traditional performers like Noddy "to be exempted."

Noddy is not grateful. "City Council just killed our successful, voluntary Street Performers Guidelines with bad new laws that are simply stupid," Noddy said. "These guidelines took us months to hammer out in 1980 and have worked well for years. Now the Downtown Commission invites me to 'help' rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic? No thanks!"

We must  
Support human rights locally

We can't afford  
Hasty  
downtown  
ordinances

We need  
Public space for all  
Homeless

A more caring community downtown

Santa Cruz poster warns the public about the repressive downtown ordinances.

Downtown For All has begun plans to make citizen's arrests of well-to-do citizens sitting down on the sidewalk waiting for a trendy breakfast at Zachary's or for jaywalking across the street by the Cinema 9. Selective enforcement is the key to banishing the beggars on Pacific Avenue. If well-dressed middle-class people and visiting tourists receive \$162 citations for sitting or crossing a street, the council may just rush back to reconsider.

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Robert Norse contributed to this article.