

We were jailed for feeding hungry people from the steps of San Francisco City Hall's polished brass entrance, in 1993. (Eat your heart out, Oz.) Most of us knew in advance we might get arrested, and prepared accordingly. I, however, was apprehended because I was freaked out by the sight of a very young woman who seemed to be getting twisted and brutalized by the police during her arrest. That upset me somewhat. I turned my eyes away.

Then, having to see these grown, young policemen — uniformed, in high-topped boots — throwing fresh salad onto those marble steps and stomping bagels rolling down those steps. They deliberately destroyed the food in front of people who were obviously hungry. Armed police were acting out this obscenity from the uppermost stairs, looking down at us.

All I could think of was giving them a tongue-lashing. Knowing my children were in safe hands, I was free to be my natural self without having to give up my main job as mom. No way could I justify bowing to that intense state terror-mongering.

I became concerned for police who get trained to do such things. One guy actually heard my words, but several others tossed me quickly into the van with the younger woman. She gave me the freedom to protest injustice.

Seven hours later, we sat behind bars in a holding tank that looked and felt like the white, rectangular inside of a huge toilet bowl. Seeing the architecture, I expected water hoses; they provided more subtle tortures. I was not allowed to call my son nor my childcare angel.

When I was finally allowed to call, after midnight, I was told I'd missed seeing the sculpted latex face of my son's super Frankenstein body art, and that no one had been able to get a camera.

From jail, I said, "Put him on the phone, please?" He wasn't too disappointed that I hadn't gotten home yet, though

in its growth, including significant contributions toward this area's acceptance of children in public gatherings, and she did incredible advocacy for pro-active "solutions" for welfare reform (read: jobs). She brought our Nonviolent Futures project back to life. She further linked our welfare moms with other kinds and "classes" of helping programs, including Coats for Children started by Maggie Reynolds.

Somehow, she helped get my son and I, homeless then, and many others from Santa Cruz County, the sponsorships needed to participate in Mitch Snyder's Housing NOW! March on Washington in 1989.

With welfare parents' young, successful bilingual food pantry, she leveraged volunteers and accomplishments into creating a "Pantry Network," still strong today, connecting all the various food programs dynamically.

She never gave up on anyone in the mutual helping and self-help programs we all created. The group's name changed to Welfare and Low Income Support Network during her leadership, creating stronger links with other California women's and self-help groups.

Of course, she did a lot of other things as well; she was a good community organizer. Her stint with Western Service Workers Association, though shorter than hoped because of growing health considerations, sharpened her natural talents. She taught me, "Don't assume any person ever means no until they say no."

### HOMELESS WOMEN'S SLUMBER PARTY

Once, Lotus was in charge of "getting stuff" for our annual Homeless Women's Slumber Party. I was just a conduit between Linda Edwards, homeless street heat activist, whose idea the slumber party was, and Lotus, who became the networking brain that brought our party to life each year. People still think I did something. All I'd done was say "yes" about the first year being at my pad, and kept track of the names of interested folks.

Lotus did the real work — getting everyone's needs met so they could have a night off, though they be women in a men's social order: Later there was still more work: figuring out how to finance it, getting all the food each year, anticipating how many of us would actually get there.

sad about me missing his creation, and he wanted to know about jail. Lucky mom I was. My son's caregiver gave a thousand percent and thus became "family" for me.

None of the publicly visible work and activism I've done in the past 18 or 20 years would have been possible if Lotus (with her daughter Kerry) and ultimately other women and a few men, had not been my substantial support system.

Lotus was there when the Union of the Homeless was launched in Santa Cruz in 1992. She had known Anders Corr when he was a youngster. He launched that chapter of our too-long movement to decriminalize homelessness and to honor people who are homeless. She didn't hesitate to put all her support behind Anders' vision of liberated land. Others followed.

Thus the Union began, thrived for some time, and provided strong, organized back-ups, food, and legal support groups for numerous actions — including everything from mass civil disobedience to pot-luck picnics in the park, cooked by welfare mothers and held for "all the men outside."

When the Union of the Homeless evolved more, part of it became Santa Cruz's first Food Not Bombs collective. Then, Lotus' kitchen was where the midnight coffee got percolated for many long nights awake on the sidewalks of downtown Santa Cruz, for homeless people and activists in the initial rounds of our resistance to this City's batches of anti-homeless laws.

### TELEPHONE ANGEL FOR HUNGRY WOMEN UNITED

Once, Lotus was the sole support person for Hungry Women United. Five others of us, several children in tow and Jane Imler at the helm, sojourned successfully to Sacramento, determined to stop then-Governor Pete "let them drink six-packs" Wilson's expected pay raise. We had been fasting together. It worked.

She helped organize us for the Poor Peoples' Summit at Mills College sponsored by Women's Economic Agenda Project in 1990. With Kim Argula's leadership, she anchored local resources so women could be free to go all weekend. It was like a magic vacation.

When I left office as Welfare Parents Support Group's first president, she became Prez, and was deeply instrumental