

Chapter 6, More Than Just Parks in the 1980s

Isla Vista in the 1980s was a curious combination of continuity and change from the 1970s. Although the rest of the U.S. was shifting toward conservatism with the election of Ronald Reagan in November, 1980, Isla Vista, led less now by the I.V. Community Council and more so by the IVPRD, tried to continue the alternative traditions of the 1960s and 1970s. By 1980 the IVRPD was the largest landowner in Isla Vista, owning nearly 20 parcels of land scattered throughout the community.¹ Anisq' Oyo' was finished and effectively fulfilling its role as the community's central park, and the Park District was slowly recovering from the blows of Proposition 13, and the CETA cutbacks. The homeowners were still frequently wary and even hostile toward the IVRPD but with the exception of the Tipi Village fight in 1978-79, the western part of Isla Vista seemed quiet.

Isla Vista saw many changes in the 1980s: Borsodi's coffee house, long the foundation of the alternative crowd, struggled to stay afloat and then finally went under in 1988. The Graduate, a nightclub that opened in the former Bank of America building, got a hard liquor license in 1986, becoming the first and only bar in town.² The UCSB Greek system grew rapidly in popularity, and alcohol became the students' drug of choice over marijuana. District manager Joe Mortz recounted the following anecdote in 1981: "Two weekends ago I attended a meeting and was asked by the Chair of the Democratic Party what the District thought of Secretary [James] Watts. I advised that the District had no stands. Her comment: I.V.'s changed."³ And so it had.

¹ Daily Nexus, Friday, Jan. 23, 1980, "Largest Landowner, I.V. Park District Planning Ahead".

² Daily Nexus, Thursday, September 25, 1986, "I.V. Restaurant Strives to Change Old Image"; Wednesday July 13, 1988, "Borsodi's Cafe Closes Doors After 20 Years, Closure Caused by Debt"; Friday, Sept. 26, 1986, p. 13, "I.V. Club Adds Lard Liquor, Gym to its Facility".

³ IVRPD meeting notes, May 7, 1981, GM report.

Despite these changes, the IVCC continued to agitate for cityhood, and the IVRPD remained the defender of alternative values and practices in the community, though fewer and fewer Isla Vistans were interested.⁴ And, although the student population of UCSB was changing and gradually becoming more conservative, or at least, less radical/liberal, Isla Vista was still a place where residents volunteered to prune the District's fruit trees outside their homes, and people recommended that the IVRPD use sheep and cows instead of lawnmowers to cut grass.⁵

But as the IVCC became a one-issue organization (cityhood) and correspondingly declined as a political force in the community, the Park District increasingly found itself assuming the role of de facto city council for Isla Vista. It was a role to which its old opponents ever more loudly objected, and to which the District was not always very well suited. In the 1980s the alternative traditions and spirit of volunteerism died out among many Isla Vistans, forcing the IVRPD to professionalize because the community could no longer be relied upon to do things for itself.⁶ This professionalization cost money, however, and property owners hostile toward the Park District were not interested in paying more for parks and recreation. One element of continuity from the 1970s then, was the on-going conflict between the Isla Vista Park District and its taxpayers.

The District did not begin the 1980s very well. In 1981, the IVRPD's former general manager, Paul Pooley, was convicted of embezzling money from the District, a scandal which greatly damaged the Park District's and Isla Vista's reputation in Santa Barbara.

⁴ Daily Nexus, Monday, June 1, 1981, "1980-81 a Year of Change in I.V. and Santa Barbara".

⁵ IVRPD meeting minutes, January 20, 1983 (for the tree pruning), March 3, 1983 (for the sheep and cows suggestion).

⁶ Daily Nexus, Monday, June 1, 1981, "1980-81 a Year of Change in I.V. and Santa Barbara"; Wednesday, September 30, 1981, "Director Leaves, But Park Plans Continue," note end of volunteerism.

Paul Pooley was the District's general manager from 1978-1980, having been hired after the board laid off its second GM, Jim Nickel, after Nickel and the board clashed once too often over management style.⁷ Pooley was by many accounts a dynamic and brilliant GM. Carter Ray has described Pooley as the smartest person Ray ever knew.⁸ But Pooley had three problems: a low salary, a cheap board of directors, and a penchant for cocaine. In 1980 a County audit discovered that an unknown amount of money from the District's Spring Festival was missing.⁹ Pooley, as GM, was the one responsible for collecting the receipts from the festival, counting it, and depositing it. When the money did not appear, County officials became suspicious. A confidential audit also revealed that Pooley, who had had a long-time conflict with the Board about his salary and over-time pay, had been paying himself twice with the help of his girlfriend, the District's secretary, who was the required second person signing the IVRPD's paychecks. Apparently, the festival money had been taken to buy cocaine.¹⁰

Although the embezzlement did not involve a large sum (the additional paychecks totaled about \$5,500; an accurate count of the money from the festival was never tallied) and Pooley served about 18 months in prison, the impact of what Isla Vistans called 'The Pooley Affair' was politically devastating for the Park District. To many people in Goleta and Santa Barbara, the embezzlement and the added factor of drugs solidified their belief in the incompetence and general untrustworthiness of Isla

⁷ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 29, 1978, motion 780629-4 lays off Nickel and hires Pooley.

⁸ Interview with Carter Ray, July 26, 1998.

⁹ June 12, 1980 memo from County auditor Kristen Johnson to GM Joe Mortz and Board of Directors, report on poor accounting procedures, missing money.

¹⁰ Interview with Tom Stone, August 20, 1998; Interview with Robert Geis, August 19, 1998. Ray is the one who suggested that the embezzlement came from Pooley's conflict over over-time, Interview with Carter Ray, July 26, 1998.

Vistans. In these people's minds, not only were Isla Vistans riotous bank burners, they were coke addicts and embezzlers as well.¹¹

To clean up the political and financial mess, the IVRPD hired Joe Mortz as GM. Credit Union manager Charlie Jones was brought in to be the book keeper, a position that had been combined with that of the secretary under Pooley.¹² In picking Jones to be the new book keeper the District gained a valuable asset; a former board member twice in the 1970s, active in organic gardening, and then District book keeper from 1981-1992, Jones was intimately familiar with the IVRPD and probably attended more park board meetings than anyone else in Isla Vista. He also had a non-ideological approach to his job, which was a refreshing departure from many active in Isla Vista's alternative organizations.¹³ Pooley ultimately pled no contest in Santa Barbara Superior Court in March, 1981 to charges of misuse and embezzlement of County funds while working at the IVRPD in 1979 and 1980. The seven original counts against Pooley were condensed down to two, and alleged that in December, 1979 and January, 1980 he wrongly appropriated nearly \$6,000 from the Park District.¹⁴

Pooley left the Park District in financial shambles, a state that the County audit clearly and harshly revealed. There were problems with timely deposits of funds, an inadequate control system for fixed assets, and a lack of control over receipts. There was no formal fee schedule for services such as renting out the Red Barn, and the Board regularly waived such fees. The District also lacked organized records about how much

¹¹ Interview with Tom Stone, August. 20, 1998.

¹² Interview with Charlie Jones, July 13, 1998.

¹³ Interview with Charlie Jones, July 13, 1998.

¹⁴ Daily Nexus, Tuesday, April 7, 1981 "Suspect in Fraud Changes His Pleas"

property it owned, what it was worth, or accounts for equipment and its depreciation.¹⁵ Gradually under the guidance of Jones and the county auditors, the Park District began to get its accounting procedures in order, as Mortz tried to restore the IVRPD's reputation.¹⁶

Thus, as the IVRPD entered the 1980s, it did so under the triple burden of having lost its property tax money, CETA, and its third GM under a cloud of scandal and disgrace.

The financial problems that lead to Pooley's embezzlement were rooted in community pressures on the District to be fiscally conservative. Because of taxpayer pressure to not spend a lot of money, and the loss of property tax and CETA moneys, the IVRPD tended to do things cheaply, and often not very well. Although at first glance it appeared as if the IVRPD had a lot of employees, most were either part-time or CETA hires or both in the 1970s and early 1980s. The District had few people who were committed full-time to it. The combination of low wages and many part-time positions also lead to high turnover, which negatively impacted the quality of work.¹⁷

The removal of Pooley as GM gave the Park District an opportunity to change, both in terms of internal management and in its methods of doing things. In addition to bringing Jones in to clean up its finances and accounting records, the Park Board hired Joe Mortz in January, 1980 to be its new general manager, and although Mortz could be a prickly character, he was well suited to the job. Mortz realized that he had to both restore the community and county's faith in the District's management, and rebuild the IVRPD into an institution that

¹⁵ June 28, 1982 memo, from County auditor Kristen Johnson to IVRPD, in July 1, 1982 meeting notes.

¹⁶ IVRPD meeting minutes, August 5, 1982.

¹⁷ Final report of Gordon K. Zenk, November 1, 1977, memo to GM Jim Nickel.

could function in a post-Prop. 13 world. As a long-time Isla Vista he had also watched the conflicts Ray and Nickel especially had had with the board, and he demanded the freedom to manage as he saw fit without board interference. (Mortz was to leave the District in 1981 after a year of tension over the roles of the board of directors and the General Manager.¹⁸ But he returned in 1982 to fill future GM Jack Hagerty's term on the Board and was then elected in his own right in 1984.¹⁹)

Recognizing that most of the land the Park District owned was left undeveloped as "natural open space" because the IVRPD lacked the resources to maintain the property, Mortz tried to make the District more efficient through more mechanization.²⁰ To off-set what he perceived as a "lack of direction," Mortz overhauled the District's master plan, laying out the goals of consolidating the lots around Estero Road and tearing up the street to make room for the community farming system. He also wanted to build a community center and a new District office at Estero, and intended to support the Estero site with income from four to six alternative housing units that would be built where Tipi Village used to be. Based on Mortz's ideas, the Pink House was renovated and turned into the District office and a meeting place.²¹

¹⁸ IVRPD October 15, 1981 meeting minutes, Item B, General Manager Contract.

¹⁹ IVRPD meeting minutes, October 7, 1982, motion 821007-04; 1984 General Election results, November 6, 1984, Santa Barbara County Elections Office. Mortz served from 1982-86, when he resigned and was replaced by Lisa Rothstein, see IVRPD meeting minutes, May 15, 1986, motion 860515-9.

²⁰ August 7, 1981 letter from Mortz to County, notes that the District had just lost 16 CETA positions; Daily Nexus, Wednesday, September 30, 1981, "Director Leaves, But Park Plans Continue". The director who left was Kerry Moyer, who returned to work for the District for many years as grounds manager.

²¹ Daily Nexus, Wednesday, September 30, 1981, "Director Leaves, But Park Plans Continue"; IVRPD meeting notes, December 1, 1981, GM report;

Although realizing that volunteers were harder to come by in the 1980s than in the 1970s, Mortz still spent a lot of time trying to convince Isla Vistans to donate time to "their" parks. He worked with interested residents to improve various parks, such as Sueno Park, with the District contributing supplies and the volunteers labor, as part of his plan to make up for the loss of CETA workers.²²

And Mortz proposed in 1981 establishing a special tax, assessing each dwelling up to \$20 per year or \$8-12 per person annually, to raise \$80,000 to make up for money lost to Prop. 13.²³

One of Mortz's greatest contributions to the District in his short term as GM was getting significant support from the California Coastal Commission and the California Coastal Conservancy in 1981 to buy the Getty parcels of the Del Sol vernal pool site that the District did not yet own.²⁴

It was in part because of the national conservative shift in the 1980s that liberals in Isla Vista focused so much on using institutions such as the IVCC and the Park District to protect what they considered progressive and necessary programs and practices. As CETA and other federal social welfare funds dried up, the IVRPD increasingly came to support community services beyond parks and recreation in Isla Vista. But it struggled to do so in the face of opposition from its taxpayers and new, more socially conservative means of addressing social ills.

Communitarian values, tolerance for alternative lifestyles, and a holistic attitude toward the environment and resources all persisted at the Park District

²² Santa Barbara News Press, February 18, 1981, "Volunteers complete Isla Vista park".

²³ Daily Nexus, Wednesday September 30, 1981, "Director Leaves, But Park Plans Continue".

²⁴ IVRPD meeting notes, April 13, 1981, September 22, 1981, November 4, 1981, GM reports; Daily Nexus, Wednesday, September 30, 1981, "Director Leaves, But Park Plans Continue".

long after they had died out in Isla Vista. Created to be a vehicle for a different and better type of community and fostered with the 1960s counter culture values of anti-materialism, equality, and democracy, the IVRPD stood out as different from both other governmental agencies and other recreation and park districts in California and the nation. Although most Isla Vistans are not politically involved, in the sense that they usually do not attend meetings, serve on committees, run for office, sign petitions, speak or attend rallies, much less vote, enough people were active enough in the past to create the illusion of a community committed to an alternative way of life.²⁵ What attracted different-thinking people to the IVRPD in the 1980s was the fact that it was one of the few alternative institutions in the community that was actually institutionalized. For many years the Füd Coop and the I.V. Credit Union were on shaky ground, and the Park District was the only agency that had some semblance of stability due to its legal structure and tax base.²⁶

The District maintained its commitment to alternative values through such policies as waiving fees for those who could not afford to pay, sponsoring the Jugglers' Festival, encouraging community arts such as the Gorrilla Theater, practicing organic horticulture and recycling, and supporting various social welfare programs in the community such as Let Isla Vista and the I.V. Recovery Group. The Park District also regularly supported the I.V. Youth Project (and still does), recognizing that it provides many recreational activities for young people that the District was not always able to provide itself.²⁷ In addition to financially contributing to the Youth Project, the IVRPD developed such recreational

²⁵ Former IVRPD accountant Charlie Jones was the one who described this idea of an "illusory" alternative community in the 1970s and 1980s. Interview with Charlie Jones, July 13, 1998. Richard Appelbaum shares Jones' sentiments that while there was an alternative community in I.V. it was still very small, totally no more than a few thousand people out of a community ranging in size from 12,00-20,000. Interview with Richard Appelbaum, July 31, 1998.

²⁶ Interview with Charlie Jones, July 13, 1998.

²⁷ IVRPD meeting minutes, May 17, 1973, motion 73077; meeting minutes February 5, 1976.

facilities as a dirt bike motorcross and a skateboard ramp in the 1980s. And finally, the IVRPD was at the heart of supporting and promoting live music in Isla Vista by providing the Red Barn and Anisq Oyo as venues for performances.

One important and lively community institution the IVRPD supported was the Gorrilla Theatre. Founded in 1969 by the owners of Borsodi's coffee house, Robert and Linda Borsodi, the Gorrillas were a group of local actors and artists who wrote and performed their own plays. For a couple of years in the 1980s the Gorrillas parked their trailer of theatrical costumes and sets on District property at Estero.²⁸ At the time of the Gorrillas' arrival, Estero was a haven for trash dumping, and the District was already in a financial bind trying to maintain its properties. As part of the agreement of leaving the trailer at Estero, the Gorrillas agreed to clean up the area regularly until it was finally able to sell their trailer in 1988. The District in turn helped the Gorrillas prepare a sheltered area of Estero by the gardens and Tipi Village for a stage and the trailer.²⁹

With the Gorrillas set up at Estero, the Barn being used for large community events, and the District now based in the Pink House, the Estero property became the area where more active recreation was allowed, or where activities that did not fit in elsewhere could be squeezed in somehow. For instance, in 1980 local youth successfully proposed to the District to build a dirt motorcross bike track at Abrego and Camino Corto.³⁰ In the mid-late 1980s the District turned the site into a skateboard ramp with the help of John Sommer and

²⁸ IVRPD meeting minutes, April 19, 1984, June 7, 1984, June 7, 1984; May 4, 1984 letter to District from Jon Zuber on behalf of the Gorrillas; Daily Nexus, Monday, November 19, 1984, p. 6, "IVRPD Discusses Self-Defense Classes".

²⁹ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 7, 1984; August 16, 1984; September 6, 1984; October 4, 1984; December 20, 1984; meeting notes, April 7, 1988, Assistant GM report notes that the trailer was sold and moved.

³⁰ IVRPD meeting notes, January 17, 1980; meeting minutes, March 20, 1980.

a local Boy Scout troop.³¹ (The District ended its support of the Boy Scout troop that held the insurance for the ramp in 1991 because of the Boy Scouts' anti-atheist and anti-homosexual policies.³² Noise from the ramp also worried the District, which moved the ramp from the corner of Camino Corto and Estero to another spot closer to the Red Barn after several neighbors complained.)³³

One unusual service the District provided was bicycle registration. The IVRPD was always looking for new ways to make money, and in 1984, hit upon the idea of registering the thousands of bicycles in Isla Vista. The year before UCSB had instituted a mandatory bike registration program but without consulting its bike-riding students. The Park District quickly proposed a voluntary program in contrast with the University's mandatory one, and charged \$3 instead of UCSB's \$6. The Department of Motor Vehicles, which administers bike registration, did not care whether the University or the Park District registered bikes as long as the vehicles were registered, and so the IVRPD was allowed to institute its own registration program, which in typical IVRPD fashion, director Mike Boyd called a protest against the University's "taxation without representation." It used the money from the registration fees to fund the program, putting any surplus money collected into maintaining Isla Vista's barrier parks,

³¹ IVRPD meeting notes, April 15, 1986, October 2, 1986, February 3, 1987, GM reports; IVRPD meeting minutes, January 15, 1987, February 5, 1987; meeting notes, April 21, 1988, Assistant administrator report; Daily Nexus, Friday, February 3, 1989, "Skateboarders Could Get Recreation Area, Plans Include Wooden Ramp for 'Skaterats' Near Red Barn on Isla Vista Vacant Lot Site".

³² IVRPD meeting notes, October 1, 1990, June 1, 1991, GM reports.

³³ IVRPD meeting minutes, February 5, 1987; meeting notes, February 3, 1987, GM report; February 19, 1987, Assistant GM report; meeting minutes, March 5, 1987, May 21, 1987; meeting notes, September 17, 1987, Assistant GM report; Daily Nexus, April 6, 1987, "Skateboard Ramp to be Moved After Petition"; meeting notes November 19, 1987, January 21, 1988, August 4, 1988, August 18, 1988, Assistant GM report.

landscaped street barriers which the university had maintained in the 1970s but stopped in the early 1980s.³⁴

In tune with its growing role as Isla Vista city council the IVRPD became involved in providing a variety of social services or at least financially supporting such services. One was a self-defense/rape prevention course initiated in late 1984 after four attempted rapes in November. Despite some directors' view that self-defense should include men as well as women, the District allocated \$800 to fund women's self-defense programs.³⁵

The Park District also housed the Isla Vista tool loan program, an innovative project developed in the 1960s to meet the needs of a community of renters. The tool loan program rented out such household items as hammers, saws, and screwdrivers for minor household repairs. Operating as a co-op, the tool loan program was part of the Park District but was funded by the University's Housing Office, the Associated Students, and the Graduate Student Association, and was located in the Craft Center at the corner of Seville and Embarcadero del Mar.³⁶ It disbanded in 1983.³⁷

In the 1970s and early 1980s the Craft Center was a site of much artistic and creative activity. But by the mid-1980s the Craft Center was not so heavily used that the District could consider a proposal from the I.V. Füd Coop next door

³⁴ Daily Nexus, Friday September 28, 1984, p. 3, "A.S. and IVCC Plan Bike Registration Program, I.V. Park District Seeks County Approval"; October 9, 1984, "Isla Vista Outlines Bike Registration Plan, Park District To Sponsor New Program"; Thursday, September 26, 1985, p. 9, "I.V. Offers Alternative Bike Registration".

³⁵ IVRPD meeting minutes, November 15, 1984, December 6, 1984; meeting notes, December 3, 1984, GM report; Daily Nexus, Monday, November 19, 1984, p. 6, "IVRPD Discusses Self-Defense Classes".

³⁶ Daily Nexus, Friday, January 27, 1983, p. 6, "Isla Vista Now Able To Rent Tools Through Improved Loan Program".

³⁷ November 1, 1983 letter from Paul Relis to Board.

on Madrid to turn the center into office space for the store and District.³⁸ Then there were the proposals from such business leaders as Verne L. Johnson, owner of Isla Vista Market, that the District demolish the Craft Center and lease the property to a type of business not currently in I.V. to strengthen the community's downtown business area.³⁹ But nothing came of these proposals, and the Craft Center continued to be used mainly by potters such as Dan Treganza, who leased the center for ceramics classes for much of the 1980s.⁴⁰

For a number of years in the 1980s the Craft Center was also the site of Isla Vista's recycling program. Although very committed to recycling, the IVRPD has not managed directly the many recycling programs that have served the community. Instead, it has contracted out with other organizations, leasing space for a drop-off recycling and aluminum buy-back program, usually at 961 Embarcadero del Mar. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the recycling program was run by SUNRAE – Solar Use Now for Resources and Employment, and then later by long-time Isla Vistan Kit Delmarsh and now by the Community Environmental Council.⁴¹

But the District frequently had problems with the various groups that ran I.V.'s recycling programs. SUNRAE, which provided I.V. with recycling from 1979 until 1985, was frequently behind on its rent for the Craft Center site, which it shared with potter Treganza, and the IVRPD regularly struggled to get its

³⁸ IVRPD meeting minutes, May 16, 1985, Vox Populi, July 11, 1985, vote 4-0 to hold a public hearing on the use of park bond funds to develop the Craft Center and Pink House.

³⁹ August 1, 1985 letter from Verne L. Johnson to the IVRPD, found in August, 1985 meeting notes.

⁴⁰ Jim Crandall, Interview with Jim Crandall, Glenn Lazof, July 25, 1998.

⁴¹ IVRPD meeting notes, January 17, 1980 first proposal to use the Craft Center as a recycling point; Daily Nexus, Tuesday, January 22, 1980, "SUNRAE Renews Recycling Pick Up Through Isla Vista"; Thursday, January 29, 1981, "10 Years Service in I.V., I.V. Recycling Marks Anniversary"; Thursday, October 11, 1984, "Recycling Center, Two Tenants Want Site"; Wednesday, January 23, 1985, "I.V. Recycling Site Changes Management". Also IVRPD meeting minutes, September 20, 1984, October 4, 1984.

money.⁴² The District was also unhappy that SUNRAE did not often keep the public bathrooms open as it was required to, and District staff believed the environmental educational programs SUNRAE provided (or was supposed to have provided) were inadequate.⁴³

Even more frustrating to the IVRPD was SUNRAE's lack of consultation with the District about its activities. In 1982, when SUNRAE moved into the Craft Center it cemented the dirt floor of the green house and cut a door in the metal wall to make an office for director Ed Maschke. All of this was in violation of SUNRAE's lease with the IVRPD, and District officials were unaware of the "improvements" until someone at the District noticed the changes.⁴⁴

Compounding the Park District's frustration was the fact that their lease with SUNRAE was highly favorable to SUNRAE; the recycling program paid a minimal rent and had a very patient landlord.⁴⁵ After several months of conflict and numerous lease violations, SUNRAE threatened to break its lease in the late 1982, thus ending the recycling program. Although nothing came of this demand at the time, the District continued to be unhappy with SUNRAE.

But when the IVRPD replaced SUNRAE with the Community Environmental Council as the managers of the recycling program, it did not have better luck. A few weeks after the CEC took over SUNRAE's lease in May, 1985, a fire broke out at the Recycling Center when a couch in a storage shed caught fire. Although the damage was only about \$150-200 worth, the IVRPD blamed SUNRAE and the CEC for allowing the area to become cluttered with flammable

⁴² IVRPD meeting notes, October 18, 1979, proposal for a comprehensive recycling program to be run by SUNRAE; Daily Nexus, Tuesday, January 22, 1980, "SUNRAE Renews Recycling Pick Up Through Isla Vista"; IVRPD meeting minutes, Jan. 21, 1982 notes late rent.

⁴³ IVRPD meeting minutes, February 25, 1982.

⁴⁴ IVRPD meeting minutes, April 15, 1982.

⁴⁵ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 3, 1982, December 2, 1982.

materials.⁴⁶ But the District continued to have the same problems with the CEC as SUNRAE in keeping the recycling area of the clean.⁴⁷

In the late 1980s the recycling program was run by Kit Delmarsh, a long-time Isla Vista who also operated a used bike/recycled bike parts shop first at the Pink House and then at the Craft Center.⁴⁸ But the third time was not a charm, as the IVRPD experienced difficulties with Delmarsh making unauthorized alterations to 889 Camino del Sur where he had an office and a storage shed; in 1988 the District discovered he had installed a toilet in the house.⁴⁹

In the summer of 1989 the recycling program was threatened when the County forced Delmarsh to close his bike shop because he did not have the coastal development and conditional use permits required to operate a business, nor did he have running water, also a requirement. In addition, Delmarsh was violating his lease with the Park District, which required that the recycling program be operated by a non-profit.⁵⁰ Although Delmarsh was not getting rich off his bike shop, it was certainly not a non-profit operation, although the IVRPD continued to defend him against the County and insisted that his business was legal. Delmarsh had a history of operating small for-profit ventures on District property; in the early 1980s, he gained permission to operate a fruit stand at

⁴⁶ Daily Nexus, Monday, June 24, 1985 p. 5, "Fire Damages Recycling Center in I.V." June 7, 1984 discusses SUNRAE's lease and the District's frustration with the recycling program; July 5, 1984; August 16, 1984, September 20, 1984. Meeting minutes August 1, 1985, notes lease for CEC at Craft Center went until May 31, 1985.

⁴⁷ August 22, 1986 letter from Scott Abbott to Sheri Eiker, Community Environmental Council.

⁴⁸ IVRPD meeting minutes, February 19, 1987, grants Delmarsh permission to operate recycling center; meeting notes, February 17 1987, GM report notes Delmarsh's proposal to also rent the Pink House; June 4, 1987, Assistant GM report discusses Delmarsh' use of the Pink House to store bikes; May 18, 1987 lease between Delmarsh, IVRPD.

⁴⁹ IVRPD meeting notes, March 17, 1988, May 19, 1988 Assistant Administrator reports.

⁵⁰ June 28, 1989 letter from Wallace aide John Buttny to Kit Delmarsh; Daily Nexus, Wednesday, July 5, 1989, "I.V. Bike Shop Faced With Fines, Closure"; Santa Barbara News Press, July 13, 1989, "Isla Vista recycler may have to close".

Pardall Gardens and at Little Acorn.⁵¹ Ultimately, Delmarsh moved his shop from the open lot in front of the Craft Center to an empty storefront on the corner of Pardall and Embarcadero Del Mar, where his business, now named the Isla Vista Bike Boutique, still operates.⁵²

With Delmarsh going into the bike business full-time, there was temporarily no recycling center in Isla Vista, although St. Mark's Church bought back bottles and cans.⁵³ After years of inconsistent service, curbside recycling as well as drop-off bins returned to Isla Vista in the early 1990s with the CEC again overseeing the program, although it has struggled to make a profit.⁵⁴

In addition to the Craft Center, the Red Barn at Estero was another important IVRPD site. The Barn was regularly used for IVRPD and IVCC meetings, large private parties, theater performances, and band concerts throughout the 1980s until 1993, when the facility was deemed unsafe and closed to public use.⁵⁵ The Park District encouraged live music at the Barn by renting out sound equipment and providing lighting for performances at both the Barn and the Anisq' Oyo' amphitheater.⁵⁶

But the IVRPD had several problems with people abusing the Red Barn in the mid-late 1980s. Bands would play over the sound limit and upset the

⁵¹ IVRPD meeting minutes, July 15, 1982.

⁵² Daily Nexus, Friday, September 15, 1989, p. 16, "Pressure From County Forces I.V. Bike Shop to Change Its Location".

⁵³ Daily Nexus, Friday, September 15, 1989, p. 16, "Pressure From County Forces I.V. Bike Shop to Change Its Location"; Wednesday, October 11, 1989, "At St. Mark's, Recycling Not Just Game".

⁵⁴ Daily Nexus, Wednesday February 15, 1989, p. 4, "Program Claiming Recyclable Goods in County will Expand Service Area"; Friday, May 5, 1989, p. 5, "County Debates Extending Recycling Program to Include 23,500 Homes"; Wednesday, February 7, 1990, p. 3, "Isla Vista Restaurants Recycle Bottles to Help CEC Project," and "CEC Recycles Paper Despite Lack of Profit"; Wednesday, September 26, 1990, "Curbside Recycling Program Ready to Expand Further into Isla Vista"; Friday, September 25, 1992, "Isla Vista Drop Off Recycling Available"; Wednesday, April 28, 1993, "I.V. Recycling Losing Money; Some Consider Eliminating Sites".

⁵⁵ IVRPD meeting notes, February 1, 1993, Interim GM report.

⁵⁶ IVRPD Recreation Manual, undated, around November, 1986.

neighbors. Party goers would trash the Barn and not clean up afterward.⁵⁷ Realizing in the late 1980s that the Barn was being rented out increasingly by punk bands who attracted violent fans, the District attempted to be more aggressive in controlling who used the facility, checking with the Foot Patrol before concerts as to whether Barn renters had any gang connections. Argued GM Glenn Lazof, “We need to be proactive to protect users of District facilities.... If these bands have a history of trouble, the GM can cancel the event out of concern for public safety.”⁵⁸

Bands nearly lost the Barn as a venue in 1988, when the District closed the facility in August after a concert attendee brought a club with him. In response to this incident and to continued complaints from neighbors, the IVRPD decided to temporarily close the Barn to concerts and to allow only rehearsals. The District also decided to shut off the power and close the facility at 11 p.m. on weekends, the only time rehearsals were allowed.⁵⁹ Five months later, in January 1989, the Park Board reopened the Barn after testing its sound ordinance.⁶⁰ In re-opening the Barn, the District agreed that if the sound exceeded 90 decibels outside the property line and if the Foot Patrol received a complaint from a neighbor willing to make a citizens' arrest, and the band refused to shut down, that the musicians would be cited for disturbing the peace. Violators would also be subjected to a \$100 fine and not be allowed to use District facilities for one year. The IVRPD

⁵⁷ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 21, 1984, Sept. 20, 1984; IVRPD meeting notes, May 7, 1987 Assistant GM report, recommends raising the user fee from \$100 to \$150 because of abuse. Daily Nexus, Thursday, October 2, 1986, “Red Barn to Close Temporarily After Post-Concert Damage”.

⁵⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, February 2, 1988, GM report.

⁵⁹ IVRPD meeting notes, August 2, 1988, GM report; Daily Nexus, Wednesday October 12, 1988, “Rehearsal OK, Concerts No Way at Red Barn”.

⁶⁰ Daily Nexus, January 12, 1989, p. 3, “I.V. Board Intends to Allow Live Music at the Red Barn”; Thursday, January 19, 1989, p. 4, “I.V.'s Red Barn to Be Site of Volume Test, May Reopen If Sound Level OK”.

also decided not to allow concerts during finals week nor at Anisq' Oyo' during graduation weekend.⁶¹

Although unhappy about the problems at the Barn, the IVRPD was equally displeased about the Foot Patrol's refusal to enforce its sound ordinance, which had been in effect for ten years.⁶² It also felt that neighbors' complaints were less about the noise and more about trying to ban live music in Isla Vista altogether, and objected to homeowner pressures for a County noise ordinance.⁶³ In response, the IVRPD became the home of the Committee for the Preservation of Live Music in Isla Vista, and several IVRPD staff sat on the committee.⁶⁴ In addition, the District's Facilities Users Group, or FUG, was a strong defender of live music in town as well.

In addition to providing recreation and cultural programming, the Recreation and Park District became deeply involved in providing social welfare services to the poor and homeless of Isla Vista, activities that were expensive in terms of time, money, and political capital. The District found itself squeezed between property owners who objected to IVRPD resources going toward activities not directly related to parks and recreation, and an often difficult homeless population.

⁶¹ Daily Nexus, Tuesday, January 24, 1989, p. 3, "IVRPD Decibel Check Oks Red Barn".

⁶² IVRPD meeting notes, October 18, 1988 GM report, October 20, 1988, Assistant Administrator report notes sound ordinance tests for Barn; Daily Nexus, January 12, 1989, p. 3, "I.V. Board Intends to Allow Live Music at the Red Barn".

⁶³IVRPD meeting notes, May 14, 1990, GM report, discussion of conversation between Lazof and Wallace aide Marc Chaconas; Daily Nexus, Monday, May 7, 1990, "Local Noise Ordinance May Limit Live Bands, I.V. Federation to Review Law Tonight"; Wednesday, May 9, 1990, "Time-Limit Noise Law Discussed by I.V. Fed, Voluntary Shut-Down Ordinance is Proposed"; Tuesday, May 22, 1990, "Supervisors to Discuss Limit on Nighttime Music in I.V.".

⁶⁴ Daily Nexus, Thursday, January 12, 1989, p. 3, "I.V. Board Intends to Allow Live Music at the Red Barn"; Thursday, January 19, 1989, p. 4, "I.V.'s Red Barn to Be Site of Volume Test, May Reopen If Sound Level OK"; Tuesday, January 24, 1989, p. 3, "IVRPD Decibel Check OKs Red Barn".

Homelessness became visible nationally in the 1980s, and Isla Vista was not immune to the problem. Although there had been street people in I.V. since the late 1960s, they had for the most part been young people who had voluntarily chosen a lifestyle of minimal possessions and transiency. They were an integral feature of an alternative community. But as early as the fall of 1978 there was a perception that the street population of Isla Vista had changed. No longer largely young people passing through on their way to the next student community, the street people now in I.V. were increasingly what is now called homeless, often alcoholic or drug abusers, frequently refugees from California's closed mental institutions.⁶⁵ Primarily men, they enjoyed loitering, drinking, and fighting in Isla Vista's parks, and survived on panhandling, shop-lifting, and state and federal disability support.⁶⁶ The fact that by 1978 up to 30 people were estimated to be living in Anisq' Oyo' Park and that many students, especially women, had begun to avoid the area because of harassment, indicates that Isla Vista's alternative community was long gone. At the time, GM Pooley argued that the problem was not people living in the park, but other community members being overly judgmental.⁶⁷ By the early 1980s, the street people of I.V. were almost uniformly recognized as a problem to be addressed, or avoided.

Working with the homeless put the IVRPD in an awkward situation. While the Park District sought to provide services for all of the community, including the very poor, and it believed in a humane, liberal social welfare system, some of Isla Vista's homeless heavily and negatively impacted the parks. Purchasing and developing a 20-site park system has required an enormous expenditure by the Park District in terms of time, resources, physical labor, and

⁶⁵ Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998.

⁶⁶ Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998.

⁶⁷ Daily Nexus, Friday, November 17, 1978, "Local Residents Air Views on Anisq Oyo Crowd, Merchants and Politicians Speak".

money. The IVRPD routinely had problems in the 1980s with people living in its parks, panhandling and harassing other would-be park users, and littering, publicly urinating or vandalizing the District's only public bathrooms in the Craft Center. The Park District also had on-going problems with people setting fires, and installing furniture such as couches in the parks.⁶⁸

The problem of homelessness in I.V. was, like in all communities, complicated by the fact that there were few services for the homeless, and the few that did exist generally favored those poor who were actively seeking work and shelter. The people who lived in the IVRPD's parks were frequently ineligible for services beyond free meals, and they were only able to get those if they were sober. Frustrated that no other social service agency in Santa Barbara was stepping forward to deal with the homeless problem in Isla Vista, the IVRPD actively and often unsuccessfully tried to convince other community groups to provide a shelter in the community.⁶⁹

The IVRPD responded to the growing problems of poverty and homelessness in Isla Vista in several ways: by financially contributing to groups such as Let Isla Vista Eat and the Isla Vista Recovery Center; opening the Red Barn as a temporary shelter in the winter and providing storage space for the homeless at the Barn; keeping public bathrooms open, and restricting drinking in the parks popular with alcoholic transients, especially Anisq' Oyo', Little Acorn, and Estero.

The anti-poverty and hunger program LIVE – Let Isla Vista Eat – was founded in 1982 by former IVRPD GM and then current director Joe Mortz.⁷⁰ In

⁶⁸ Daily Nexus, Thursday, September 29, 1988, “Homeless Few in Isla Vista Cause Problem, Isla Vista Recreation and Parks District Asks Local Agencies to Help End Public Nuisances”. District records are filled with reports of vandalism and problems with alcoholics and the homeless.

⁶⁹ Daily Nexus, Wednesday, July 26, 1989, p. 5, “IVRPD Soliciting Help for Emergency Homeless Shelter”.

⁷⁰ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 23, 1983, Aug. 11, 1983.

addition to providing free meals to Isla Vistans, LIVE acted as a liaison between the community's poor and homeless and other community organizations and authorities, including the Foot Patrol and the Park District.⁷¹

The problem of hunger in I.V. became the Park District's problem in 1988 when LIVE had to leave the University Religious Center in May, and find new accommodations.⁷² The IVRPD had already supported LIVE through a small appropriation each year, but now the anti-poverty group asked to use the District's facilities at the Red Barn and to distribute food at Little Acorn, a popular homeless hang-out.⁷³ This the District granted along with giving the anti-poverty organization \$4,000 in direct contributions.⁷⁴ The District also allowed LIVE to borrow its truck to help with food distribution.⁷⁵ By the late 1980s, LIVE had concentrated its food distribution work at the Red Barn and Pink House.⁷⁶ But LIVE's presence at Estero conflicted with the weekend parties, and its policy of not serving food to anyone who was not sober did not always go over well with the people who camped at Estero.⁷⁷ In addition LIVE ran an ESL class at the Pink House, which the District supported.⁷⁸

In addition to supporting LIVE, the IVRPD tried to find groups willing to operate a homeless shelter in Isla Vista. In the late 1980s St. Michael's Episcopal

⁷¹ Daily Nexus, Tuesday, March 6, 1990, p. 3 "Homeless Petition for New Restrooms"; Friday, March 9, 1990, "LIVE to Sponsor Homeless Forum, Public Discussion with Police and Residents to be Held at Red Barn".

⁷² IVRPD meeting notes, undated, sometime in March, 1988, proposal from LIVE director Joe Mortz about use of district facilities.

⁷³ IVRPD meeting notes, July 11, 1983.

⁷⁴ IVRPD meeting notes, December 29, 1989, GM report.

⁷⁵ IVRPD meeting notes, July 11, 1983.

⁷⁶ IVRPD meeting notes, undated, sometime in March, 1988, proposal from LIVE director Joe Mortz about use of district facilities; IVRPD meeting notes, April 4, 1988, GM report.

⁷⁷ IVRPD meeting notes, April 4, 1988, GM report; July 28, 1989 letter from Mortz to the Board; meeting notes, August 14, 1989, GM report.

⁷⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, August 14, 1989, September 4, 1989 GM reports. Meeting notes, October 2, 1989, December 5, 1989 GM reports note a competing ESL program at the Pink House, One Stop Immigration.

Church hosted Transition House, a Santa Barbara-based shelter that gave priority to women with children and men actively seeking work.⁷⁹ Its director noted that "Locals who are homeless by choice may be guests of the house, as space permits, for a stay once every 12 months for the express purpose of re-evaluating their lifestyle and making positive, effective contact with appropriate community agencies to resolve their homelessness," a generous gesture, but hardly effective in resolving the community's problem.⁸⁰ Never a very large shelter, Transition House closed its Isla Vista shelter in 1991 due to a lack of residents.⁸¹

With Transition House at St. Michael's only having space for ten people and focusing on families, and LIVE already based at Estero, the Red Barn became a de facto homeless shelter in the winter months between 1986 and 1991. But the logistics of finding responsible volunteers to supervise the facility and enforce shelter rules was daunting for both the Park District and the UCSB student volunteer clearinghouse, Community Affairs Board.⁸²

The Park District's mind was made up for it in February, 1989, when a homeless man, Richard Reed, died of bronchitis outside the Red Barn.⁸³ Besides organizing with CAB to supply volunteer supervisors for an emergency cold weather shelter, the District tried to persuade Isla Vista's homeless population to use the National Armory or other Santa Barbara shelters, but faced resistance.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Daily Nexus, Wednesday, April 29, 1987, p. 5, "Isla Vista Federation Discusses Proposed Shelter for Homeless".

⁸⁰ June 30, 1987 letter from Transition House executive Director Alice Hasler to GM Lazof.

⁸¹ Daily Nexus, Thursday, April 4, 1991, "Isla Vista Homeless Shelter Closes Due to Lack of Use".

⁸² Daily Nexus, Thursday, January 28, 1988, "Possible Shelter for I.V. Homeless Topic of Meeting" notes that Barn had already been used twice as an emergency shelter in the past two years.

⁸³ IVRPD meeting notes, February 14, 1989, GM report; Daily Nexus, Wednesday, February 8, 1989, "Cold Weather Leads to Transient's Death, IVRPD Trying to Get Other Homeless Into Shelters but Facing Resistance, Blocks".

⁸⁴ Daily Nexus, Wednesday, February 8, 1989, "Cold Weather Leads to Transient's Death, IVRPD Trying to Get Other Homeless Into Shelters but Facing Resistance, Blocks"; Thursday, February 9, 1989, "Red Barn Opens as a Temporary Shelter, I.V. Park Board Takes Action After Transient Dies From Exposure in Recent Cold Wave".

One resident of great concern to the IVRPD was Everett Hill, a 74-year old wheelchair-bound man who camped nightly at Estero. The District could not get Hill to seek indoor shelter, and even after Reed's death, the Foot Patrol refused to arrest anyone for illegal camping, nor would the county paramedics remove someone unless they were already close to death. The IVRPD hoped that if Hill could be arrested he could receive medical treatment once in the county's jail system. But Hill regularly paid the \$10 fines that came with the Foot Patrol's citations and then disappeared.⁸⁵

With the Red Barn being used as a homeless shelter the IVRPD was faced with the problem of trying to meet a serious community need with inadequate facilities. The Barn was not heated nor insulated, and did not even have a carpet. Board members were also unhappy that other agencies or authorities had not stepped in to address the need for a homeless shelter in Isla Vista, and stressed their views that the IVRPD was a park district, not a social service agency.⁸⁶ But they missed or ignored the fact that the IVRPD had already been acting as Isla Vista's de facto government for several years, and that providing charity was one function of local government.

Because of the growing homeless presence at Estero, the Park District decided to build cubicles for people to store their belongings at the Red Barn. One regular source of conflict between grounds workers and I.V.'s transient population was the staff throwing out people's belongings found in the parks.

⁸⁵ Daily Nexus, Monday, March 6, 1989, p. 4, "Man's Shelter Provokes Controversy, Police Continue to Issue Citations to Homeless Man; IVRPD Concerned"; IVRPD meeting notes, April 4, 1989, GM report, notes that Hill had disappeared.

⁸⁶ IVRPD meeting minutes, February 8, 1989, February 16, 1989, motion 890216-16; Daily Nexus, Tuesday, February 21, 1989, "Red Barn Continues as Shelter for Homeless, Volunteers Supervise Facility, Believe it 'Inadequate', No Plans for Improvement"; Wednesday, July 19, 1989 p. 2, "I.V. Seeks Winter Homeless Shelter, Community Faced with Finding Solution After Red Barn Proves Inadequate"; Monday, February 5, 1990, "Barn Opens Doors as I.V. Homeless Shelter, Raindrops Won't Fall on Transients' Heads".

The cubicle idea was designed to resolve that conflict.⁸⁷ But there were immediately problems, as people stored drugs and drug paraphernalia, as well as food, which attracted scavenging animals to the Barn. There was also the matter of electricity theft from the Pink House.⁸⁸ Additionally, the someone left a hot barbecue in one of the cubicles in 1991 and nearly burned the Barn to the ground.⁸⁹

By 1992 there was a growing problem with maintaining a cold weather shelter in Isla Vista. The District was still reluctant to use the Barn as a shelter, and the University Methodist Church, across the street from Estero, struggled also to find reliable volunteers for the shelter it operated in the early 1990s, with a UCSB fraternity, Alpha Gamma Omega, and the Hunger Homeless Action Group.⁹⁰ In 1994 the Methodist Church closed its doors as a shelter.⁹¹

Another service the IVRPD provided for the homeless, although it was nominally for everyone, was the Free Box. The Free Box was an old Isla Vista institution that is still in effect at the Park District. A large wooden box stands outside the District office in which people can donate old clothes, and anyone is free to take anything they want or need from the box. The box has always been located on the corner of Embarcadero del Mar and Madrid, and regularly sees busy traffic. But the larger problem of poverty and homelessness have negatively

⁸⁷ IVRPD meeting notes, July 10, 1987, GM report; meeting minutes, October 1, 1987; meeting notes, October 12, 1987, November 17, 1987, GM report; Daily Nexus, Monday, February 5, 1990, "Barn Opens Doors as I.V. Homeless Shelter, Raindrops Won't Fall on Transients' Heads"; Wednesday, May 2, 1990, "p. 3, "IVRPD Questions Barn Storage Areas".

⁸⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, July 5, 1988, GM report; May 21, 1990, FUG report; July 18, 1991, Assistant GM report.

⁸⁹ IVRPD meeting notes, September 5, 1991, notes fire at the Barn August 20. Also, IV CAN meeting October 17, 1991 notes lack of storage area since cubicles burned.

⁹⁰ Daily Nexus, Monday, January 27, 1992, "Homeless Shelter Jeopardized by Local Volunteer Shortage".

⁹¹ Daily Nexus, Friday, January 21, 1994, p. 5, "I.V. Winter Refuge Forced to Close". This was the third shelter in I.V. to close: in 1986 the University Religious Center closed its shelter, and Transition House left I.V. in 1991.

impacted the Free Box program. For many years the IVRPD experienced abuse of the Free Box, ranging from people using the box as a bed or toilet, taking clothes and then selling them, and vandalism to the box itself.⁹² The box has also frequently been used as a dumping ground for non-clothing items.⁹³

One of the more contentious and expensive services the Park District has tried to provide is public bathrooms. The issue of public bathrooms was a big one in the 1980s, as restaurants tired of non-paying customers using their facilities, and the IVRPD struggled to afford the growing cost of keeping the two restrooms by the Craft Center and the one at the Pink House open to the public and functional.⁹⁴ The Park District also tried to install public toilets in its downtown parks, working unsuccessfully for a couple of years in the late 1980s to get public grant money for a bathroom in People's Park.⁹⁵ Although some Isla Vistans argued that providing public toilets would attract more transients to the community, the IVRPD rejected this view, instead arguing that it was irresponsible and inhumane to not provide the homeless such facilities, and that as one of the community's few public agencies, the Park District should be the one to fill this need. The problem was that public bathrooms were expensive, both in initial purchase and in maintenance.⁹⁶ And there was the additional difficulty of people sleeping in the public bathrooms making them unusual by

⁹² IVRPD meeting notes, July 24, 1993, November 2, 1993 GM report;

⁹³ IVRPD meeting minutes, February 17, 1983; Daily Nexus, Wednesday, October 13, 1982, "Disagreement Brews Over Free Box in I.V."

⁹⁴ Daily Nexus, Tuesday, March 6, 1990 p. 3, "Homeless Petition for New Restrooms"; IVRPD meeting notes, March 30, 1987, June 2, 1987 GM reports.

⁹⁵ IVRPD meeting notes, undated GM report, around February-March, 1987, prematurely notes receipt of a 1984 State Parklands grant for public restrooms; meeting notes, March 17, 1987, notes failure to get grant.

⁹⁶ Daily Nexus, Wednesday, October 1, 1986, p. 7, "Local Board Works to Improve I.V. Parks".

others; one man camping in the office restroom lit a fire in the toilet and nearly burned down the entire bathroom and office in the winter of 1989.⁹⁷

By the early 1990s the IVRPD was in a running battle with Isla Vista's transient community about the bathrooms. When the District closed a restroom because of illegal camping or damage to the facilities, vandalism would occur either at the bathrooms or in one of the parks, especially Anisq' Oyo' and Little Acorn. People camping in the parks frequently vandalized the bathrooms in retaliation for District actions that angered them. The sprinklers in the parks were also a frequent target, and staff noticed that when they cleaned the Red Barn area, vandalism appeared at Children's Park.⁹⁸ And when the District closed the bathroom at the Red Barn to try to conserve water, gardeners complained that people were using their plots for toilets, forcing the District to consider installing portable facilities.⁹⁹

By the late 1980s the IVRPD had to confront the fact that it had a virtually permanent population of drug and alcohol abusers who spent their time in its parks. Additionally, as Santa Barbara passed and then enforced anti-homeless ordinances against camping, many of the city's homeless migrated to Isla Vista, where they clashed, sometimes violently, with Isla Vista's homeless community.¹⁰⁰

Argued Gm Lazof of the alcohol situation in Anisq Oyo: “the public drunks are really taking over.... We are not talking about the ‘homeless’. We are talking about people with alcohol/drug problems congregating in Anisq ‘Oyo

⁹⁷ IVRPD meeting notes, January 31, 1989, GM report, notes the fire. Meeting notes, March 30, 1987, October 2, 1989 GM reports notes problem of people sleeping in the office bathroom.

⁹⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, March 17, 1987, January 18, 1988, July 18, 1988, August 2, 1988 GM reports.

⁹⁹ IVRPD meeting notes, June 13, 1989, GM report; Daily Nexus, August 2, 1989, “IVRPD Fined by Goleta Water District for Excessive Use”.

¹⁰⁰ September 23, 1988 letter from Board president Mike Boyd to DA Tom Sneddon.

Park.”¹⁰¹ The manager found it frustratingly ironic that UCSB students were routinely cited for violating the open container ordinance “but folks with more serious problems are free to get wasted in Anisq ‘Oyo Park each day.” He urged the Foot Patrol and District Attorney's office to more vigorously enforce all of the county's alcohol laws.¹⁰² The IVRPD also asked both the Foot Patrol and the county District Attorney's office to enforce public intoxication and illegal camping ordinances, but received little cooperation or help from those authorities.¹⁰³

Yet despite these frustrations, the District resisted pressures from some in the community, primarily business owners, to make the parks so undesirable as to cause the drinkers to leave. Lazof argued, “GM opines that in the long run it is very destructive to remove the amenities in our parks just to encourage the drunks to move somewhere else. They will simply select the next nicest place to be and go there. It is a mistake to make the parks so uncomfortable even the drunks won't use them.”¹⁰⁴

And as Board president Mike Boyd argued to DA Tom Sneddon, “Unlike some complaints you receive, this District's complaint is not against the homeless. Many homeless persons have a long standing in this community and more than a few of the full time drunks have shelter available. In fact many of our regular street people have expressed concern about the most recent influx of drunks.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ IVRPD meeting notes, September 13, 1988, GM report.

¹⁰² IVRPD meeting notes, September 13, 1988 GM report.

¹⁰³ IVRPD meeting notes, December 3, 1981, GM report, notes problem of people illegally camping in I.V.'s parks; Daily Nexus, Thursday, September 29, 1988, “Homeless Few in Isla Vista Cause Problem, Isla Vista Recreation and Parks District Asks Local Agencies to Help End Public Nuisances”.

¹⁰⁴ IVRPD meeting notes, September 13, 1988 GM report.

¹⁰⁵ September 23, 1988 letter from Board president Mike Boyd to DA Tom Sneddon.

In trying to address this problem of heavy drinking in the parks, the IVRPD found that it could not get rid of the alcoholics, only push them out of one park into another. The District initially resisted efforts by homeowners and businesses to ban or restrict the consumption of alcohol in Isla Vista's parks, considering it discriminatory, anti-homeless, and the restriction of the personal freedom of many because of the misbehavior of the few. But under the influence of director and social worker Laura Price, the IVRPD gradually began to amend its long-time defense of alcohol in its parks. Price, who regularly worked with I.V.'s homeless population as the director of the I.V. Community Action Commission, believed that toleration of drinking in Anisq' Oyo was an indulgence that had the direct effect of discouraging families from using the park. She argued that the parks no longer belonged to the community, but instead to a very small community of alcoholics, some of whom were homeless, others who were not. While restricting alcohol consumption in the parks would not prevent people from drinking, it would help reduce the harassment, alcohol-related violence, and drug-dealing that regularly occurred Anisq Oyo and Estero, Price argued.¹⁰⁶ In the fall of 1988, the IVRPD took its first steps toward prohibition by closing Anisq' Oyo' at midnight to drinking and loitering, and requesting that the Foot Patrol more strongly enforce the county's public drinking laws.¹⁰⁷ But after the Park District restricted alcohol use in Anisq Oyo and then in the other downtown parks, many of the parks' alcoholic residents simply moved to other areas of town.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998; Santa Barbara News Press, September 16, 1988, "Isla Vista to call for law in the park".

¹⁰⁷ IVRPD meeting minutes, Sept. 15, 1988, motion 880915-5.

¹⁰⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, May 14, 1990, recommends a day-time ban on drinking in Anisq' Oyo'; October 4, 1990, FUG report recommends banning drinking at Estero; meeting minutes, October 4, 1990, motion 901004-11; October 15, 1992, motion 921015-4, and January 7, 1993, motion 930107-08 discusses alcohol ban for Children's Park; July 1, 1993, motion 930701-05, July 28, 1993, motion 930728-11 prohibits drinking in downtown parks.

Greek Park on Segovia and Embarcadero del Norte became, and still is, a popular hang-out spot for I.V.'s homeless. Greek Park had been an example of District cooperation with community groups in developing active recreation parks. Built in 1981-82 and then rebuilt in the late 1980s-early 1990s, the park has volleyball and basketball courts, a wooden deck and a fire pit for barbecues. Greek houses raised part of the money for the development and helped maintain the area.¹⁰⁹ This park, that was once used almost exclusively by the Greek community is now completely controlled by Isla Vista's homeless, a fact which has sometimes prompted complaints from nearby sorority and fraternity houses.¹¹⁰

The homeless situation in Isla Vista impacted much of the IVRPD's work in its parks in the 1980s. Decisions about whether to take ownership of Estero Road and block the street off, or how to fix the Little Acorn lathehouse were colored by the knowledge that "people without shelter", as the District's management euphemistically called the homeless, predominated in those park areas.¹¹¹

Little Acorn Park was one of the more popular camp-sites, because the lathehouse provided a small amount of shelter and generally made activities less

¹⁰⁹ Greek Park was bought in January, 1978 from Elizabeth N. Jones for \$22,000. Isla Vista Parklands General Plan, June 21, 1979; IVRPD meeting notes, January 5, 1978, GM report (Land Acquisition suggestions); July 27, 1981 letter to the District from UCSB Interfraternity Council, located in July 16, 1981 meeting notes; meeting notes, June 15, 1982, GM report; IVRPD meeting minutes June 4, 1987, motion 870604-11; September 17, 1987, motion 870917-18; October 1, 1987, motions 871001-7, 871001-8; October 15, 1987, motion 871015-9; November 5, 1987, motions 871105-10, 871105-11; meeting notes, March 19, 1987, September 17, 1987, October 15, 1987 Assistant GM reports all discuss work with greeks on the park; Daily Nexus, November 5, 1987, "UCSB Greeks Team Up with IVRPD on New Isla Vista Park"; Tuesday, April 12, 1988, p. 3, "IVRPD, Greeks May Match Funds for Park Development"; meeting minutes, March 17, 1988, motion 880317-4; April 7, 1988, motions 880407-6, 880407-7; April 21, 1988, motion 880421-2; meeting notes, April 5, 1990, Assistant Administrator report.

¹¹⁰ Daily Nexus, Friday, October 11, 1996, "I.V. Transients Anger Residents; Police Unable to Quell Complaints".

¹¹¹ IVRPD public hearing notes, March 18, 1986, GM report.

visible from the street than more open park areas.¹¹² But the District was also willing to work with the local street population to try to make life more comfortable for them. Although the Park Board insisted on removing couches and other such furniture from Little Acorn in 1984, they authorized the construction of benches for people to sit on, and had installed a barbecue fire pit for the homeless to use in the park.¹¹³ The following year, however, the Park District decided to rebuild the lathehouse to make it more difficult to drink and camp in the park.¹¹⁴ And in 1987-88, the Little Acorn underwent an even more dramatic change in design when the District removed most of the wooden structures, the barbecues and the wood stove, and turned the abandoned garden area in the southwest corner into a lawn.¹¹⁵

The IVRPD's plans for Estero were also shaped in large part by the presence of the homeless. After the Red Barn became a shelter and storage area, the entire Estero area became a haven for homeless people. As early as 1985 the IVRPD was expressing concern that if people discovered that the District owned the street as well as the land around it that Estero Road would become a site for illegal campers as the Craft Center was.¹¹⁶ And true to the District's fears, when the IVRPD gained ownership of the street in 1986, Estero became cluttered with abandoned vehicles that people used for shelter.¹¹⁷ Many had moved the cars

¹¹² IVRPD meeting minutes, June 21, 1984.

¹¹³ IVRPD meeting minutes, June 21, 1984.

¹¹⁴ IVRPD meeting minutes, May 12, 1983; April 1, 1984; January 17, 1985; April 4, 1985; meeting notes, January 14, 1985, GM report.

¹¹⁵ IVRPD meeting notes, July 2, 1987, November 17, 1987, GM reports. Meeting notes, March 14, 1988, GM report note landscape architect Cheryl Jensen's hiring, as does May 31, 1988 GM report. Daily Nexus, Wednesday, July 6, 1988, "Local Park to See Renovation"; GM reports, marked September 13, but in the October 6, 1988 meeting notes, November 15, 1988, GM report note work on Little Acorn. Daily Nexus, Wednesday July 6, 1988, p. 3, "Local Park to See Renovation"; Thursday, November 10, 1988, p. 3, "Lathehouse in Little Acorn Park Renovated to Cut Loitering".

¹¹⁶ IVRPD meeting notes, July 30, 1985, GM report.

¹¹⁷ IVRPD meeting minutes, December 19, 1985.

there in the belief that the IVRPD would protect them from police harassment about illegal camping.¹¹⁸

The IVRPD's involvement in social welfare in Isla Vista came as a result of the boards that were elected in the 1980s. As they had been in the 1970s, the directors of the 1980s were frequently young, often current or recently graduated UCSB students, and politically involved in student social activism. But the directors of the mid-late 1980s, people such as Mike Boyd, Eileen Cross, Laura Price, Lisa Rothstein, and Mitch Stockton, were less connected to the Isla Vista of the 1970s. Many had met each other through the peace/anti-nuclear movement that in Santa Barbara centered around large demonstrations at the Mt. Diablo nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo county.¹¹⁹ They got their political experience through working in the UCSB student government, Associated Students, not the IVCC of the 1970s as many of the late 1970s-early 1980s directors had.¹²⁰

By the late 1980s, there had emerged a clear generational split between old and young Isla Vista activists, people like Lodise, Gault-Williams, Kerry Moyer, Lazof, Scott Abbott, and Scott Wexler, vs. Cross, Price, Rothstein, and Stockton (Boyd was a political entity unto himself and cannot be easily classified)¹²¹. Although viewed by conservatives as being cut from the same liberal student activist cloth, directors such as Rothstein and Price especially, saw themselves as different. Unwilling to fight the old battles of the 1960s and 1970s with the homeowners in the Isla Vista Association, these younger board members were focused on their goal of bettering the community. They were committed to the

¹¹⁸ IVRPD meeting notes, July 2, 1987, July 13, 1989, GM reports.

¹¹⁹ Laura Price, Eileen and Greg Cross, Mitch Stockton, Farfalla Borah, and Diane Conn were all involved in the peace movement of the late 1970s-early 1980s, Interview with Diane Conn, July 9, 1998; Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998; Interview with Farfalla Borah, July 8 1998.

¹²⁰ Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998; Interview with Lisa Rothstein, July 20, 1998.

¹²¹ Interview with Glenn Lazof, July 14, 1998, Interview with Mike Boyd, September 4, 1998.

environment and preserving open space, but they also wanted nice park land and recreation services. They were concerned about Isla Vista's high density and high rents. To the chagrin of more conservative-minded members of the community, these directors were more focused on social issues, such as the growing problems of poverty, hunger and homelessness in I.V., and these concerns led them to support programs such as LIVE, and to demand rent control and better building inspection in Isla Vista.¹²² Most of all, the community's long-standing social ills led these directors to advocate even more strongly for local autonomy, which they equated with Isla Vista cityhood.

¹²² Interview with Lisa Rothstein, July 20, 1998. Interview with Laura Price, July 17, 1998.