

Outlook bleak for Salvation Army donations

By LINDA HAWKINS

The first Salvation Army Christmas kettle appeared on the waterfront in San Francisco in 1894. A Salvationist suspended a cauldron from a metal tripod and topped it with a sign that read "KEEP THE POT BOILING" to collect money to maintain the Salvation Army's sailors' home there.

Today in Oakland County the money tossed in kettles at shopping centers and on street corners helps feed and clothe families who either can't get county social service aid or can't wait for their cases to be processed.

The picture in Oakland County this year is bleak. John Ciesla, community services director for the Oakland County Corps, commented, "We are down to five or six bags of non-perishable food."

Last year the Royal Oak Corps in the Salvation Army Church on Main Street provided 93 families with food from April to September. This year during the same six-month period, the Army helped 383 families, a "dramatic increase of 300 per cent since last year in pleas for assistance," Ciesla said. The Corps gave food clothing and toys to nearly 1,700 people last Christmas.

This year a few boxes of dolls, waiting to be dressed by women's groups, sit next to cartons of sweatshirts donated by a sporting goods store. The dusty cans of food on the shelves are from last year's stock.

While Ciesla says the Salvation Army is "a church first and a social agency second," the philosophy of the Army's founder, William Booth, continues: "You can't preach to a man on an empty stomach," Booth said, when he opened the Army's first shelter home in London before the turn of the century.

Ciesla, who is not a Salvationist or member of the church himself, says the Army is concerned with "getting out in the community and telling people about us." The Army is building a community center just behind the church. It will house the Sunday school rooms, the Army's welfare offices and a gym.



The Salvation Army down through the years has tried to combine a social agency with religion. As its founder William Booth said, "You can't preach to a man on an empty stomach."

Ciesla, formerly youth director for the Salvation Army in South Bend, Ind., is particularly proud of the Army's efforts to make the facilities accessible to the handicapped. An elevator is being installed and doors have been widened to accommodate wheel chairs. The center will be dedicated late in March.

Salvation Army volunteers will be out selling copies of "War Cry," the Army's official magazine, door-to-door until Christmas Eve. They will also be manning the traditional ket-

tles at locations throughout the area. Ciesla files permits for each kettle.

The Royal Oak Corps, headed by Major Albert Rowland, serves communities within a radius of 30 miles in Oakland County, including Southfield, Birmingham, Ferndale, Oak Park, Farmington, Berkley and Royal Oak.

Ciesla hopes that people will begin to bring nonperishable food and canned goods to the church at 3015 N. Main in Royal Oak. The telephone number there is 555-5620.



Major Albert Rowland stands in front of the Oakland County Salvation Army's bare cupboard of food stuffs. The corps is expecting a dismal year this Christmas with requests up,

but donations dropping. Food and canned goods should be brought to 3015 N. Main St., Royal Oak.

Is it time for change in plants?

By LINDA TAYLOR

It seems everybody is "into" plants. Every kitchen window sill is filled with them, every corner shopping center has a plant store, and even discount stores and supermarkets have a plant corner.

For Jack Durrwachter of Birmingham, owner-manager of the Plant Hut in West Bloomfield, that means it's time for a change.

The Plant Hut, on Orchard Lake Road, recently celebrating its first anniversary, is constantly changing, according to Durrwachter, who is a plant and design veteran. He believes that to survive, competition, plant stores must change and perhaps even become a combination plant-floral shop.

He also thinks too many of today's plant shops are run like hobbies and will not succeed in the competitive business world.

"Plant shops must become efficient businesses to succeed," he said. "They must offer a variety of merchandise and be a more complete shop."

ONE OF THE THINGS Durrwachter is doing to make the Plant Hut more competitive is to stock a variety of popular high-glazed pots for plants, as well as economical baskets, macrame hangers, plant stands, and gift and novelty items.

In automotive design for years, Durrwachter tries to inspire customers to do more with plants than put them in pots on the floor. In his shop and in homes he has helped decorate he used plant pedestals, plants on the floor and hanging baskets all in one area to give dimension.

"Because of the increasing cost of plants, people are buying smaller plants. Putting a small plant on a pedestal, however, adds height. The pedestal is a nice, new element," he explained.

He said he thinks plants have become so popular recently because of the stark, contemporary designs of homes.

"There is a lack of feeling in the home. Plants relate back to nature and soften hard lines of contemporary homes," he said. "You can soften the sharp edge of a corner with a plant."

OTHER CHANGES Durrwachter is getting into brings him into competition with floral shops. These include offering delivery of plants and selling dried flower arrangements.



Plants and pots of all descriptions are needed to keep up with the ever-changing desires of plant enthusiasts. Accessory plant pots are in the background, while chrome pots are in the foreground.

He also said carrying cut flowers and hiring a designer to do flower arranging may be in his future.

AS FAR AS PLANTS are concerned, Durrwachter said he specializes in selling hearty plants that are relatively easy to take care of. "We don't sell some of the most popular plants because they are difficult to handle," he said.

He said the leafier plants hold moisture better and are less susceptible to insects. He also buys plants locally rather than having them shipped up directly from Florida, as he said many plant outlets do. Plants that are sprayed for insects and are given time for acclimation are more likely to survive.

"It's an extra expense, but the plants are stable," he explained.

Durrwachter, whose shop measures 1,500 square feet, said he is frequently called on for advice on treating sick plants often purchased at shops not specializing in plants.

Good lighting, high humidity, and movement of air help plants stay healthy, he said.

"Plants like 80 per cent light from the blue color spectrum and 20 per cent from the red. Fluorescent light gives the blue and incandescent adds red," he said.

Plants are also best if left in one spot and not constantly moved, he said. And talking to plants, he added, "is not as important as the feeling of the people handling the plant. Plants are like dogs. They sense love and attention."

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