

Open Heart, Open Home

Creative Profile of Matt Friday by Lisa Davenport

About 1985 - 1986. We, Bruce and I, had been doing a lot on the Monterey Peninsula. We had a cute two bedroom place in PG [Pacific Grove] a bedroom ourselves, but always [had] one, one was available.

The great thing about that room was we were able to meet everyone. Word got out. A spare bedroom, when you have a lot of friends - know a lot of people - it's not a spare bedroom for long. A place to come and stay with us, that bedroom, it became a waypoint for traveler's from around the world on their way, here and there, stopping to stay with us and they were from everywhere, Russia and England and all over the US - with us.

The apartment, my place - our place became known as a place for people to stay. Informally word gets around, one person tells another and soon the phone rings and it's a new friend on the way.

These were not just people, they were people with ideas, smart people who were moving around from anywhere you can think of; stopping to stay with us. Here's the lovely thing, it was a pure form of barter. Never had to ask. What did I need? What could help? It was just done.

There is so much energy around us, there were organizers, artists, writers, activists. Many great conversations there in the apartment in Pacific Grove.

This was a different time and trust was not an issue. Not an issue of if or who to trust, you just knew to trust.

Anyhow, they had colorful stories, pasts, some very educated and somehow it just happened that they would show up and stay. We all had ideas of what we could do for our community. This was after I had been a daycare teacher, set up programs for underserved kids, and even started a recycling center. That's another story. I'll get to that one.

But, our house - again that apartment became a place to meet others. Like I said, we were hosting such a diverse group of people. Counterculture friends who wanted to do things for the community and I learned so much about the potential, we all have to help one another.

The one time that stands out to me and that I am really proud of is a Thanksgiving dinner. It was a Thanksgiving dinner... I told you I was not a believer in Christianity, but this dinner came together in a wonderful way. People helping people. Now, It just so happens I was able to host a feast at Thanksgiving in our place for 30 people. These people had nowhere else to be, homeless and some with psychiatric issues. Money for the thing was donated. That's how things were done. There was a need and the need was met. No questions about bureaucratic or permissions, just we need to do something for the community --- how can we make it happen.