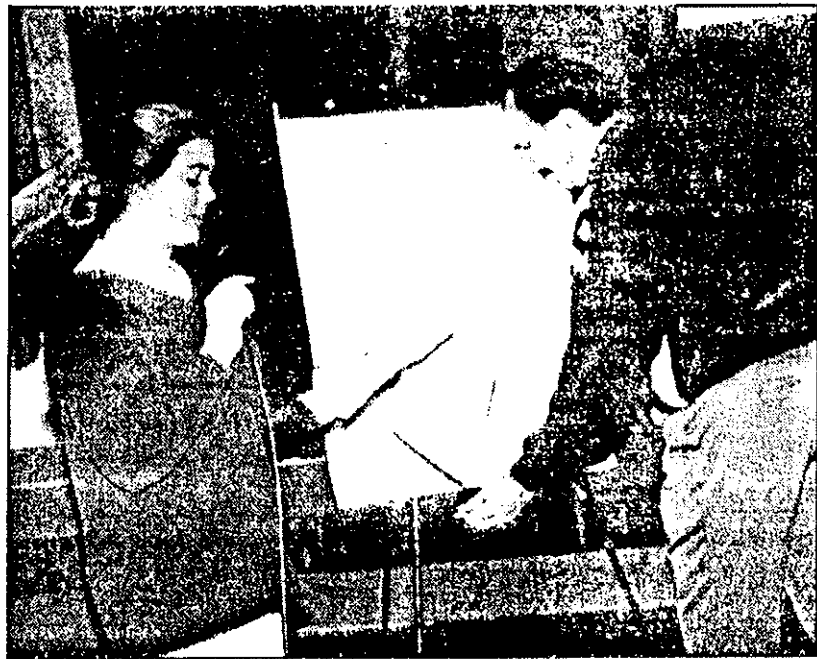


Teens seeking place to hang out



Moderator Kellie Thomasson relates some of the problems teenagers face in Auburn and the need for a downtown teen center during a town hall meeting on Tuesday in the Placer High School auditorium. Kent Suemnicht, one of the proponents of the center, lists the needs and plans for a center. Thomasson disclosed plans to use the National Guard Armory at the Gold Country Fairground beginning later this month as a meeting place for teenagers.

Auburn area teenagers outlined plans this week to use the National Guard Armory at the Gold Country Fairground as a temporary youth activities center.

A program to keep youngsters off the streets and in a healthy environment will begin this month with a work day on Saturday and on March 9 in planning for upcoming events. A "Battle of the Bands" concert is planned on March 16. Teenagers have named their new gathering place as "The Spot."

At the second town hall meeting on Tuesday, seven students led by moderator Kellie Thomasson read a list of particulars of some of the problems they have had with uptown business operators. She also cited the teenagers need for a space to "hang out."

The Armory has been offered for teenage use on Saturday nights as a location for a pilot program, with the possibility of additional use by youngsters on other days. Sgt. Mike Farrell said use of the Armory by local teenagers is an opportunity to enhance the National's Guard relationship with its host community while expanding the local benefit of the U.S. military's ongoing "drug demand-reduction program."

Members of the Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce were scheduled to meet Thursday night in the Armory to view the facilities, according to Kent Suemnicht, chamber president-elect.

The first town hall meeting to discuss teenager problems in the city was held last November when civic leaders invited students and local merchants to talk about some conflicts between teenagers and business persons in central Auburn. At the meeting, it was acknowledged that there was a need in Auburn for a place for teenagers to go to "hang out," skate and relax with their friends.

A recent survey involving more than 500 students from Placer, Thayer Douglas, and Chana high schools showed that over two-thirds of those who responded were willing to work on the development of a downtown teen center.

Representatives of the Auburn Police Department, Auburn Boys & Girls Club, the Caring About Kids Community Council, and community leaders have been working to find a site for the teenagers since the first town meeting.