



THIRD AND E STREETS
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SEP 15 2009

CIT.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 15, 2009
TO: Superior Court Presiding Judge Gary Nadler
FROM: Margaret F. Lynch, Ph.D., Chair, Sonoma County Library Commission *MFL*
SUBJECT: Sonoma County Library Commission Response to the Grand Jury Report

We thank the members of the Grand Jury for their concern about the Central Library in Santa Rosa. We appreciate their understanding of the role of the public library in our communities and the challenges that we face in carrying out our mission in a fair and balanced way.

The Commission's response is attached.

GRAND JURY

SEP 28 2009

RECEIVED

cc: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Chris Thomas, Acting Sonoma County Administrator
Denise Gordon, Sonoma County Court Executive Officer
Janice Atkinson, Sonoma County Clerk, Recorder, Assessor

SONOMA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
RESPONSE TO THE 2008-2009 GRAND JURY REPORT

- R1 Stop just reviewing the enforcement policies of the Standards of Behavior and start implementing them.**

Library Response: This recommendation has already been implemented.

Safety of staff and patrons is a priority for the Library Commission. To make certain that everyone was prepared, the implementation of the procedures was preceded by briefings for staff at each of the Library's eleven libraries. Staff is now using both the enforcement policy and procedures.

- R2 Immediately prioritize the implementation of the interior floor plan at the Central Library and move the computers to the side wall out of the present main aisle, as approved by the FY 08-09 Sonoma County Library Budget.**

Library Response: The Library will implement this recommendation when funds become available.

The statement that the funds were already budgeted is incorrect; no funds have been budgeted to remodel the Central Library. At this time, with reductions in Library income, we do not anticipate being in a position to make the changes in the foreseeable future. Outside funding (e.g., gifts, donations, endowments, and city funds) is required to implement any remodeling projects; the Library is only paying for a small portion of each project. While other libraries in the system have access to outside funds, those in Santa Rosa do not.

- R3 Request a filter on all computers at the Central Library as a means of protecting minors against pornography, taking advantage of the e-rate discount and achieving the protections embodied in the "Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation of 1977."**

Library Response: The Library will not implement this recommendation.

San Jose Public Library staff reviewed studies on filtering effectiveness and tested the most popular filtering products. Here is an excerpt from the summary of their findings:

Despite the fact that our test was geared toward filtering out only content of an adult sexual nature, other text and image content that was not of an adult sexual nature was filtered out as a consequence. The filters we tested falsely blocked many valuable web pages and other online resources, on subjects ranging from war and genocide to safer sex and public health. No filter was reliably able to distinguish text or image content including obscenity, child pornography, or "harmful to minors" material from other, legal content. As a result, each filter blocked a wide range of constitutionally protected content in its attempt to block other content. Other published studies cited in the References section have consistently shown that the more successful the filter is at blocking the content it wishes to block, the more unsuccessful it is at letting constitutionally protected (i.e., neither illegal nor harmful to minors) content through. This was the case in our test as well.¹

- R4 Immediately impose a smoke-free zone to the entire Central Library property extending to the edge of the city sidewalk. (Permission was granted by the Mayor of Santa Rosa on October 1, 2008.)**

Library Response: The Library will implement this recommendation.

The Library Commission agrees that smoking on the Library's grounds is offensive. A staff committee is assisting with the project to regulate smoking on the grounds of all three Santa Rosa libraries, including enforcing the regulations and allowing an area for staff to smoke.

¹ The full San Jose Public Library report and studies they reviewed is available at:
http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/Rules/20080514/Rules20080514_g1.pdf