

From: msiemsen [mailto:msiemsen@mac.com]
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2014 4:15 PM
To: LibraryAdvisoryBoard
Subject: weeding of collection

November 17, 2014

Butte County Library Advisory Board

I am concerned about the weeding of the collection which has been going on for the past several months at the Chico Branch and possibly other branches of the Butte County Library. If recommending policy regarding such weeding is not a function of the Library Advisory Board, it should be. As representatives of the community, I hope that you will share my concern regarding the damage being done to the collection.

Literally hundreds, possibly thousands of items have been removed from the shelves of the Chico branch. The stated, major, possibly only, criteria for pulling an item from the shelves is that it "has not been check out for five years." This may be an appropriate criteria for some genres, modern fiction comes to mind, but many of the items weeded are non-fiction works more likely to be used as reference material and not necessarily check out by the user. There is no way of tracking if an item has been taken from the shelf, used and returned without being checked out, though such use is clearly one which meets the primary objective of having a library in the first place.

If the items were being weeded to make room for new material the process might be better justified but it appears that the only current result of the extensive weeding has been to leave the library with expanses of empty shelves. It would take thousands of dollars worth of new materials to fill these spaces again. Earlier a number of art books were discarded. Many of these showed pictures of "old masters" works. These are not changing and the books, eagerly carted away for pennies by patrons, will be very expensive to replace. I doubt that we will ever see them replaced.

I am concerned that a single person apparently has the responsibility for making the decision about whether an item stays or goes. While the actual work may have to be preformed by library staff, it seems to me that the Advisory board should be providing guidance as to the policy and that perhaps more than one input might make for a more balanced approach to the process.

I hope that you will care enough about this concern to put an item on the agenda for your next meeting and discuss it then. Pease contact me if you would like further input.

Sincerely,

Margaret Siemsen

Library volunteer,

Former Member of the Library Advisory Board