

Ben Lomond library may close . . .

Libraries 1980-1985

By Richard Palmer

"They want their big, fancy buildings downtown. The library administration just doesn't care about us."

That's the reaction of Ben Lomond resident Paul Ellis to the proposed Feb. 1 closing of the town's tiny library, unveiled last week by the county Administrative Office. And it's an understandable one since the Ben Lomond Town Association, of which Ellis is chairman, has spent the last several months painting and fixing up the library.

"We've been working to fix up the library, to improve it and make it more attractive," says Ellis. "Now they want to close it."

Brought on by budget cuts laid at Prop. 13's doorstep, the proposal also calls for the closing of the three other branch libraries Feb. 1, another July 1, and a total reorganization of the library system.

That proposal was accepted at

Bankrupt: Christ Circle owes over \$900,000

Christ Circle, the embattled private school five miles northeast of Boulder Creek, has filed for bankruptcy.

The corporation which ran the school has filed a petition in federal

Monday's heavily attended meeting of the library system's Board of Trustees. Though she voted in favor of accepting the proposal, Mrs. Elinor Engstrand, the Valley's representative on the board, said people "shouldn't take this lying down," and advocated cutting back operations at all libraries rather than closing certain branches.

County supervisors, who run the city-county library system along with the Santa Cruz City Council, is scheduled to review the proposal Jan. 15. But regardless of what supervisors do, the future of the Ben Lomond library looks dim.

County administrative analyst Luther Perry says yearly circulation

at the Ben Lomond library is just 3,600 books, while it costs about \$14,000 to operate the branch. Cost per book circulated is about \$4, while the countywide average is just \$1 per book.

"You can tell from these figures it would be cheaper to open a paperback bookstore and give books away," says Perry. "It costs more for people to borrow books from the Ben Lomond library than to go to the grocery store and buy them."

This is not the first time the library has run into problems. Circulation at the branch has generally declined the last four years, according to librarian Jeanine Stevens, and the library was closed the last half of 1978 due to revenue cuts brought on by Prop. 13.

"People were very upset when the library closed, understandably," says Ms. Stevens. "Right when people heard we were going to close, my circulation went up, and though it's

been going up since we reopened, it's not what it was four or five years ago."

For these reasons, officials may stand firm on their decision to close the Ben Lomond library, even if the proposed reorganization plan is not adopted in its entirety. Nevertheless, some Ben Lomond residents aren't about to give up their library.

Julia Gotthold is one of these. A member of the county Board of Education and the most active

member of the town library committee, she says ways of keeping the library

"If the closing does happen, Ben Lomond could do that's being proposed for library; withdraw from the form a free public library county Parks and Department responsible and the operation taken volunteers from the Ben Lomond Association.

"With this kind of a we'd hope to keep the books presently allocated to make up for the money Lomond residents have in system," she says.

Mrs. Gotthold notes that the library's supporters have run the small lending library Alba Schoolhouse, operate the Alba Road Recreation

"We've already recruited persons that have agreed a few hours each week, and considerable library experience," Gotthold says. "We have about undertaking such a

Another possibility is (Continued on Page 2)

...but same proposal advocates new library in Boulder Creek

While many Ben Lomond residents are dismayed at the proposed closing of the town's library, Boulder Creek residents are viewing the same proposal with hope for the future.

Not that Boulder Creek residents want the Ben Lomond library to close, but because the proposal advocates building two new libraries in the county—and most observers agree Boulder Creek is first in line for a new facility

The proposal, which calls for a complete reorganization of the library system, plans for the development of new libraries "in the San Lorenzo Valley and in mid-county as construction funds become available"

Where in the Valley?

"Boulder Creek—that's definitely the decision," says head librarian Charles Atkins. Both the county Board of Supervisors and the library Board of Trustees have approved building a

library there, Atkins notes, and coupled with Boulder Creek developer Robert Kuerzel's offer of a free site in Boulder Creek, that's where the new facility would be.

As to which area—Boulder Creek or mid-county—has first priority, logic pretty much spells out the answer, Atkins notes.

A mid-county library site, Live Oak to be specific, would be (Continued on Page 2)

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The Valley Press

Jan 9, 1980
Serving the San Lorenzo Valley and nearby

✓ New Boulder Creek library

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prohibitively expensive, Atkins says. The one Live Oak site previously surveyed would cost around \$300,000, far more money than the library system has or anticipates receiving in the near future.

The library system should have

✓ Library may close

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money from new sources.

"I have hopes we will be able to bring about state legislation that would alter the funding of libraries in general," she says. "We're not the only ones in these dire straits."

And she has doubts if the county administrative office's proposal would do that much good.

"Closing the branch doesn't really solve their budget problems," she says. "We do question the viability of the proposal. I think most everyone realizes that the arrangement between the city and the county is not adequate for the 1980s. This has to be faced up to."

just under \$200,000 in its capital improvement fund by the end of this fiscal year, and that's just about what it would cost to build a library in Boulder Creek.

"We're anticipating a 3000 square foot facility there, and estimating building costs at \$60 a square foot, that that would be pretty close," Atkins says.

That news is well received by Boulder Creek residents.

"We need a new library; there's certainly been enough interest and support," says Anne Gulliver, a board member of Santa Cruz County Friends of the Library, and founding member of the Boulder Creek Friends. "We have the greatest projected demand, the greatest need, and we have the land."

Jim Lee, local realtor and long an advocate of library services, agrees.

"Everything I've seen points to a new library in Boulder Creek, because of the population increase and the present use of the library," Lee says.

"Though my whole thrust has been for a new library somewhere in the Valley, logic says Boulder Creek is where it should be."

The only obstacle is the un-

certainty of library funding. Even though nearly \$200,000 will be left in the capital improvement fund this year, "the question arises: will we need to dip into this next year to keep the system running?" Atkins says.

Until funding is resolved, Boulder Creek residents will have to make do with their present 800 square-foot facility.

"When I see the walls going up," says Boulder Creek librarian June Brusa, "then I'll shout hooray."

Chainsaws pop with local thie

Stereo equipment and clothing worth an estimated \$230 were taken from the Camp Joy Road home in Boulder Creek of Mark Traugott Sunday, according to sheriff's reports.

Burglars ransacked the Hillhouse Road home in Boulder Creek of Spencer Wilder last Thursday and took a handgun, according to sheriff's reports.

A \$200 chain saw was taken from the home of Hazel Marie McFee Thursday in Boulder Creek. McFee told sheriff's deputies her car parked in front of her home for a few minutes was missing.

Burglars entered the home of Irwin Bunch Tuesday in Boulder Creek and took a chain saw.

A stereo system, two