

✓ LIBRARIES 1990 -

# No books

# for CYA <sup>SJM</sup> 3-8-91 1B

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## Library budget cuts to hurt Ben Lomond

By Paul Rogers  
Mercury News Staff Writer

Faced with too many programs and not enough money to pay for them, the financially strapped Santa Cruz County Library System says it no longer can afford to provide monthly book deliveries to offenders at the Ben Lomond California Youth Authority Camp.

Since 1973, librarians in the system's Outreach program have driven to the remote mountain facility with paperbacks and magazine articles to supplement the camp's tiny library. By all accounts, they have been eagerly received.

Many Youth Authority wards, who range in age from 17 to 25, have used the books in their work toward achieving a high school equivalency degree at the camp. Others have requested photocopies of newspaper and magazine articles on issues ranging from housing to AIDS.

But county library director Anne Turner, who in memos to her staff described this year's funding estimates as "painting a bleak picture indeed," said her budget can't continue to provide the \$2,300 a year needed for the Youth Authority deliveries.

"We've got kids who surprise us and really enjoy reading," Turner said Thursday. "For heaven's sake, let's try to meet their needs."

The \$3.9 million county library budget was cut last year by \$87,000. With state funding expected to be slashed, and prospects dim for local government funds again this year, the system is straining under a severe staff shortage and repeated cuts in its book budget. Some rooms in the main library have had the same wallpaper since 1965.

Three weeks ago, Turner wrote to Youth Authority administrators in Sacramento asking for funding to

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# New source of funds sought for CYA camp library service

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continue the program. But state officials say they have little money available.

"We have no money in our budgets anywhere for library acquisition. None. Zilch," said Bonnie Crell, principal librarian at the Youth Authority.

Crell, who noted the state is struggling under an estimated \$11 billion budget deficit, said she has made an emergency request to top Youth Authority administrators to keep the Ben Lomond book program running, but won't know the answer for several weeks.

Encouraging offenders to read is a benefit to society, she said, because they become better educated and are more easily able to find jobs after release.

It's the same story at the camp itself.

Camp Superintendent Bill Zannella said about 85 of the 100 people at the camp use its library facilities. He said the book deliveries bring in new material and keep inmates interested in reading.

But money woes have resulted in crowding, and the staff recently was cut by 25 percent, he added.

"The bookmobile would definitely be a loss," Zannella said. "But I don't have the money in my budget to pay for it."

The library's Outreach program also delivers books to elderly shut-ins, low-income housing projects and the San Andreas Migrant Farm Camp near La Selva Beach.

Providing books to the Ben Lomond camp is a small way to help inmates who worked on local earthquake recovery, and every year fight forest fires, clear trails and mop up after floods, said Catherine Steele, Outreach services coordinator.

"I would be really sad to see the end of it," she said.

## IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

Book donations for the library's Outreach program can be taken to the system's main branch at 224 Church St., Santa Cruz. To donate money or volunteer to work for Outreach, call (408) 429-3533.