

Asbestos removal to close library

Library - 1990
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Sentinel correspondent

SANTA CRUZ — Asbestos removal will close the Central Branch of the Santa Cruz public library for three months, starting Feb. 28.

The library at Church Street is striving to minimize the inconvenience to patrons, especially for children. Library officials are considering setting up a home-work hot line.

"We know what a burden it will be on kids," said Anne Turner, director of the Santa Cruz City-County Library System.

The telephone reference staff will move one block to the Georgianna Bruce Kirby School, at 212 Locust St.

Central Branch staff will help out at the Aptos, Branciforte, Scotts Valley and Garfield Park branches, Turner said.

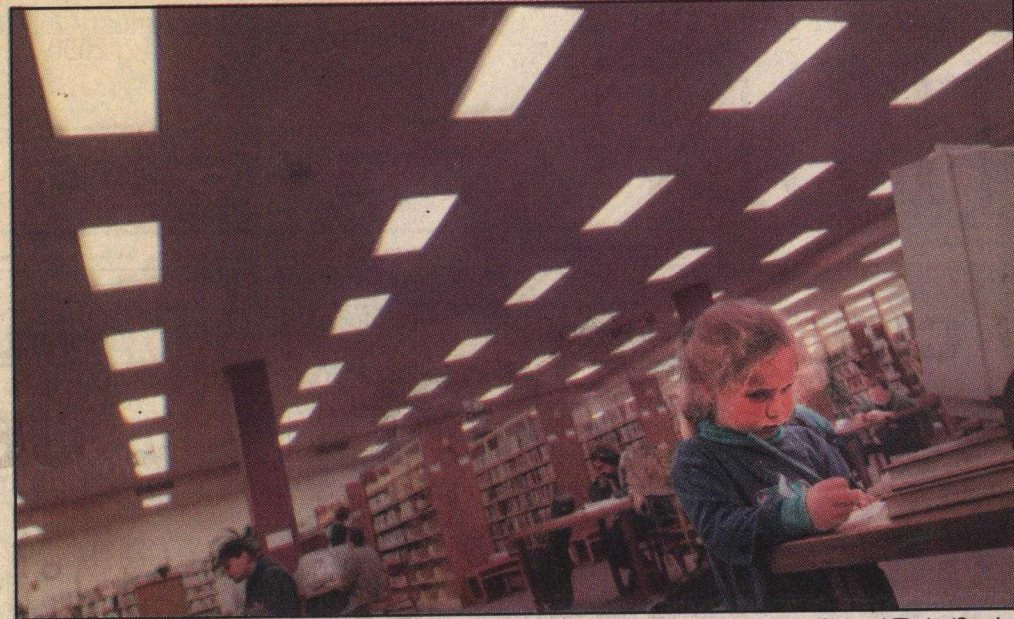
Asbestos, long linked to lung disease and cancer, was used to fireproof the downtown building when it was built in 1965. Over time, asbestos crumbles and falls onto the backside of false ceilings, pipes and power boxes. If dislodged during routine building maintenance, the fibers can be hazardous.

The Library Joint Powers Board had three options:

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Shay Astor spends her mornings in the Central Branch of the Santa Cruz public library, which will close for three months for asbestos removal.



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Asbestos

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ignore the problem; temporarily mitigate the danger by spraying sealant to contain the asbestos; or correct it.

Ignoring the problem was not possible since ongoing building repairs, mainly to do with the heating and ventilation system, meant disturbing ceiling tiles and pipes, which would stir up the asbestos fibers, Turner said.

Containment, while more economical at the moment, was regarded as a quick-fix, and would require continued monitoring. Also, earthquakes or any other untoward event could lead to unpredictable expenses for cleanup.

The board opted for abatement, or asbestos removal. Fowler Associates of Redwood City will oversee the project, which will cost an estimated \$750,000, Turner said.

That amount does not include costs for installing a new ceiling, a new energy-efficient lighting system and a renovated heating and ventilation system, estimates for which are not yet available, Turner said.

Turner is concerned about closing down the library

for three months. But library patrons seem to understand the problem.

"If they think it's needed, it should be done. There are other branch libraries to go to," said John Aiman of Soquel.

Tony Grant, a local resident who regularly uses the library for genealogical studies about his family, was also understanding.

"I'll be spending more time at the Mormon church for my studies, and it'll also give me an opportunity to explore other libraries," Grant said.

Tina Astor, however, was concerned for her 4-year-old daughter, Shay.

"Shay likes to come here the most, because of the children's room," Astor said. "... But I'm glad they are taking care of the problem."

To avoid inconveniencing school children, the board considered doing the project in summer.

"But we cannot abate asbestos in summer, because we cannot get good contractors," Tuner said.

Quality contractors are busy during summer months working on asbestos abatement in schools built during the same period as the library.

"We considered all the options, and painful as it is, we think this is the right thing to do at the right time," Turner said.