

Fate of Freedom branch library becomes supervisorial cliffhanger

Libraries - 1980 - 1989

By Bob Levy
Staff Writer

Mercury 2/27/80

SANTA CRUZ — The Freedom branch of the Santa Cruz city-county library system was given a two-day stay of execution by the board of supervisors Tuesday.

Scheduled to shut down Friday because of a lack of funds, the small facility will now stay open at least through next Tuesday.

Whether it remains in operation beyond that rests in the hands of two board members, Marilyn Liddicoat and chairman Pat Liberty.

Those two voted against the board's decision to have the county keep the library open through July 1. The county, because of Proposition 13 constraints, has cut off funding to most of the library system's branches. However, many of those have remained open by officially leaving the library system and using volunteers for staffing.

Supporters of the Freedom library do not want to leave the system, and do not want to have only volunteers running their facility.

They were before the board Tuesday asking that the county supply the \$5,900 necessary to keep the library open until July 1, and promising that in the interim they would make other operating arrangements to carry the library beyond that date.

While the supervisors voted 3-2 to keep the li-

brary open through June, they did not approve the funds to do so. That will take a transfer of money from the county's contingency funds — and, because contingency fund allocations take a four-fifths vote of the board, that will require either Mrs. Liberty or Mrs. Liddicoat to switch sides.

Supervisor Gary Patton's motion to keep the library open four more months called for consideration of the contingency transfer next week. If neither woman changes her vote on the issue, the library would have to close immediately.

Both Mrs. Liddicoat and Mrs. Liberty argued that giving the money to Freedom would be "discriminatory" against other county branches that were able to make the needed operational changes by the March 1 deadline set by the board last month.

Supervisor Dan Forbus, who sides with the two women on most issues, parted company with them on this one, pointing out, "In some areas these problems are easier to work out than in others."

He continued, "It is fundamentally correct to see that as many of these small libraries exist as can . . . Libraries are something that should exist."