

Monday. The survey was "However, a clear

# Library fines *Libraries - 1980 - 1989* may be increased

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HEEBNER-SWIFT

Borrowers from community libraries may see an increase in overdue book charges in the near future.

The Santa Cruz City and County Public Library Board considered a raise in the fines at its regular meeting Monday, but will wait for a staff report next month before a decision is made.

The discussion of the fine increase was initiated through a letter from library patron Dave Zerweck of Bonny Doon, who said he thought the present fine too low to cover inflation, and that higher fees would be an incentive to returning books on time.

Several library trustees then expressed surprise that the current fine is still only a nickel, with a maximum fine of \$1.

City-County Librarian Charles Atkins said library staff has been considering a possible increase for some time. But if fines are set too high, he said, people will be more discouraged than encouraged — and may not return the books at all.

It is the purpose of the five-cent fine to remind people of the importance of returning materials to the libraries within a specified time limit. Cuts in the budget and the rate for postage has made it more difficult to send letter reminders in recent years, he added, and the fines themselves bring no income to the libraries.

The question of increasing the fine is a delicate one, the director said, because there is the risk of losing more books. If the library allowed the fine to accumulate to the comparable price of the book itself, he added, there is little

chance it will be returned.

"It is necessary to remind people to bring back overdue books" Atkins said, "But there is a danger if the increase is too high. There is a point of no return, so to speak."

Trustee Al Reetz moved to direct the library staff to make a study of the fines, and report back to the board next month.

Library trustees also reviewed a list of donations received by the library system since last July. Among these were a donation of \$150 from Aptos Chamber of Commerce and \$50 from Ann Moye of County Bank, to be used for a pamphlet file for Aptos Library; \$300 from Aptos Lions Club for materials for the blind at all library branches; a donation of \$500 from Calvin S. Hall for books; a \$500 donation from the Leask family for "Project Listen," (cassettes); and a \$205 donation from the estate of Stella H. Finkelday for music materials.

Atkins drew the board's attention to the last four entries, totaling \$111 for a piano. The drive to raise funds for a piano stems from a program begun some time ago by three city employees who volunteered to perform and promote a series of small chamber concerts in the music and art room at the central library.

When these performers discovered the present piano is unsuitable, Atkins told trustees, they offered to arrange for a replacement. A trust fund has now been set up to purchase it.

"I hope we can generate enough funds and interest to have the piano at the library on a permanent basis," he added.