

Library patrons take advantage of silent way to let off steam

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There's a four-sided column in the Santa Cruz Main Library that could be called a true "pillar of the community."

Below an "Ask the Staff" sign on each side are numerous notes scrawled, typed and scribbled by library patrons seemingly intent on proving that people will complain about just about anything.

"It is the function and duty of the public library to provide the means through which all persons have access to all sides of all ideas."

Furthermore, she added, "In this town, of all places, we believe in the right of free speech and in the people's right to know."

Someone else got into the act with a query as to why the library does not then offer pornography. "Think about hypo-

library. Well as a 'street person,' I use the library to read, quietly."

"Every day some LOUD-MOUTHED YUPPIE ruins my concentration by talking in a loud voice!"

Other patrons are more concerned with sight than with hearing. "Redesign the front clock for your myopic patrons," someone wrote.

"We will be glad to accept donations for a new clock ..." Elgin answered.

To that, patrons suggested, "Paint the hands black," and "Move the clock."

A number of complaints dealt with the physical atmosphere of the library. Couldn't something be done about the car exhaust seeping from the street into the building? someone wondered.

One patron complained about the temperature, another asked if a larger waste basket could be installed outside, and a third, fleabitten reader suggested staff members "bomb" the building.

A woman named Alice praised the library staff's use of the "he/she" terminology. "It's good to see a government institution challenging the traditional policy of always giving wimmin (sic) second-billing," she wrote.

People even complained about the condition of the bathrooms. "Hey Men:" one man pleaded, "why do you insist on urinating all over the toilet seat?"

Last but not least, someone complained about the complaints. Someone signing the initials G.S. wrote, "It upsets me to have the staff here addressing all these meaningless gripes."

One censorious patron wrote: "What on earth is this staff doing buying books by Jerry Falwell?!"

There are memos on the ever-contentious topics of sex, politics and religion, questions and comments on the library's computer system, and suggestions to improve the building's ambiance.

Since a copy machine is located at one side of the pillar, there are also comments like "15¢ for copies is horrendous!" and "Cheaper copies! 15¢ is too much! 5¢ is more like it."

Attached to most of the patrons' queries are answers from either library Director Anne M. Turner or branch Manager Susan Elgin.

One censorious patron wrote: "What on earth is this staff doing buying books by Jerry Falwell?!"

"In this town, of all places?!"

"I am outraged!"

Turner answered by quoting the library's policy, adopted in accordance with the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights," which states,

cracy (sic)," the note admonishes.

"You define pornography and we'll think about hypocrisy," Turner responded.

Some patrons are obviously less than enthralled with the library's new computer system, which has replaced the card catalogue.

"Try a Human!" is scrawled over Elgin's description of the computer's limitations regarding its inability to print a new-book list.

Another patron disturbed at the computer's intrusion into his reverie wrote, "Can you reduce the volume of the incessant BEEPing from the front desk? It's EXTREMELY ANNOYING ..."

No answer yet on that one, but a computer printout might be fitting.

A note from a self-described 'street person' complains about noise of a different sort: "I hear complaints about 'street people' disrupting others at the

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