

## Comments on January 7, 2013 BLT Agenda Items

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees agenda items by:

Jim Mosher ([jimmosher@yahoo.com](mailto:jimmosher@yahoo.com)), 2210 Private Road, Newport Beach 92660 (949-548-6229)

### Item 4. Approval of Minutes (December 3, 2012)

In the final paragraph under "*Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items*," I respectfully ask for **deletion** of the sentence attributed to me stating "**He suggested that the discarded donations be put in an area away from public view.**" After bringing the problem of book donation dumping to the Board's attention, I may have said something like "A *bureaucratic* solution would be to simply continue doing this, but out of public sight," however, as one who values books, I cannot imagine myself ever endorsing such a solution. Indeed, I think the books staff and the Friends see no further value in should be placed on a *highly-visible* "free" cart.

### Item 5.A.1. Customer Comments

- **# 5 (11/30/2012):** Although I think the "*off-color characters that visit this library*" are mostly harmless, I agree that outdoor lighting is maintained in a less than systematic or predictable manner even during the hours the library facilities operate. This can be a special problem for patrons arriving by bike, who may need light to untie their bikes, and who may leave the building only to find that lights that were on when they arrived have been switched off before closing time. This is a frequent problem with the bike racks at Mariners, and I have also encountered it in the area near the bookdrops at Central. At Mariners I use the rack closest to the trash cans because if the library lighting is off, it is usually still lit by the lights on the adjacent tennis court.

An even worse problem, at Mariners was the reference librarians' past practice of encouraging patrons to leave the building at closing by turning off *all* interior lighting in the adult computer/reading area 3-5 minutes before the official time. On short moonless winter nights that not only made it difficult for patrons to gather up their belongings, but it created an unnecessarily dangerous situation in which, in leaving, patrons could easily trip over items on the floor of the unlit room. Fortunately, since the "Cassie" reservation system began to automatically shut down the computers at closing, the practice has generally been replaced by a polite verbal announcement and the lights have been left on.

- **# 11 (12/10/2012):** I agree that the \$1/day fine for non-rental videos is excessive. A related problem is that the email renewal reminder is sent out so soon after the checkout that I, at least, tend to ignore it. And then, as far as I know, no follow-up email is sent to remind the patron they have missed the due date, which can result in rapidly accumulating fines the patron is unaware of.

I would suggest:

- A more timely renewal reminder for short circulation time (and high fine) items (say the day before the item is due).

- A clearly captioned message sent out when a due date has been missed and fines are accruing.
- More generally, a policy of automatic, fine-free renewal when there is no hold on the item.
- **# 12 (12/16/2012):** I find unsatisfactory the response to this comment from a Girl Scout seeking discarded book donations to serve an underprivileged school. To me, it underscores that our library has not properly considered the problem of what to do with books that neither the library nor the Friends see a use for, but which may still be of value to others. Offering the remnants of the Friends' quarterly sales to the US military may seem laudable and patriotic, but there are clearly many other options that do not seem to have been adequately explored.

### **Item 5.A.2. Library Activities**

In the second section on page 1, I find disturbing the discussion of the recent addition to the library website of links promoting the Bilbary eBook purchasing service.

It is possible this is a wonderful idea, but it bothers me that staff should, in the absence of any clear Board policy, be unilaterally deciding to use public resources to promote what appear to be private commercial operations. It is great to know that Bilbary sells eBooks for less than Amazon and that they will give the library half the "profits" (whatever those may be) for eBook sales made via the links provided on the library website; but is it really appropriate for a public agency to be acting as a sales conduit for a commercial venture, and to be promoting one vendor over another? Does Amazon also offer a profit sharing arrangement, and are we offering their service as well, with a clear explanation of the pros and cons of selecting one vendor over another? And is our site open to all other comers? And for sale of commercial products of all sorts? If not, what standards do we use to decide what commercial offerings to provide?

It would seem to me Board direction is needed on this.

### **Item 5.B.1. Committee for Possible Art in Public Places**

In the absence of a staff report, I remain in the dark as to precisely how, or by whom, this committee is being created, what its charge is, and what rules it would operate under.

But by making appointments to it, the Library Board would seem to be giving it some official sanction, and expecting some kind of result from it, which, if it does not consist *solely* of less than a quorum of Trustees, means it will be subject to the Brown Act, requiring all its meetings to be publicly noticed.

### **Item 5.B.2. Give-Aways for the Civic Center / Library Expansion Opening**

Without having heard the report, I find the rationale for give-aways difficult to fathom.

## BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MONITORING LIST

Previously Scheduled Agenda Date	AGENDA ITEM	Suggested Scheduled Agenda Date
Feb 6, 2012	Annual Budget Update	Feb 4, 2013
Dec 5, 2011	MyiLibrary Review - Downloadable Materials	Mar 4, 2013
Apr 19, 2011	Marketing Update	Apr 1, 2013
Jun 4, 2012	Critical Review of Online Database Resources & Services / Database Usage Report	May 6, 2013
Aug 6, 2012	Review FY 2013/ 2014 Holidays / Meeting Schedule	Jun 3, 2013
May 7, 2012	Library Wish Lists (Friends of the Library & Foundation)	Jul 1, 2013
Aug 6, 2012	Election of Board of Library Trustees Officers	Jul 1, 2013
Jun 4, 2012	Newport Beach Public Library Website & Social Networking Update	Aug 5, 2013
May 7, 2012	Review / Possible Revisions to the City Council Policies for the Library (ongoing)	Sep 3, 2013
Nov 5, 2012	Literacy Program Update	Oct 7, 2013
Sep 4, 2012	Arts & Cultural Update	Nov 4, 2013
Nov 5, 2012	Review of Possible Library Expansion Naming Opportunities	TBD