CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 3

MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 23, 2009

AGENDA ITEM #: 9

ITEM: CORRESPONDENCE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
None
I'm not sure who to send this to. I hope you will pass this on to whoever chooses books.

I just read the Triple Crown Publications book "Mistress of the Game" by Sherrie Walker. I don't object to its violence, sex, or drugs. What I object to is the good protagonists raping, selling drugs, and murdering, and not thinking any of that is bad.

I do not want any books banned. However, unless you get a specific request from a library patron to buy more books by Triple Crown Publications, I recommend you don't buy any more books by this publisher or writer. Also, if a minor requests one of these books, if its possible, you might want to suggest that the minor's parent read this book first.

Again, please, do not ban the book. Just think twice about getting more books from this publisher.

Thank you.

Debbie Wiesenthal, email: sjwco2002@yahoo.com

6/23/2009

Contra Costa County Library e-mail regarding Mistress of the Game

Dear Ms. Wiesenthal,

I received your e-mail to the Contra Costa County Library Commission about the book Mistress of the Game, and would like to provide both some background information on the selection of materials at Contra Costa County Library, and the specifics about how we select adult fiction materials, including the book Mistress of the Game. I also want to let you know how much input like yours helps us refine our collections. Thank you!

Contra Costa County Library selects materials based upon principles of open access to all of its users. The library does not exclude items because of frank or controversial content. Please see the Library’s Policy for Collection Development and Access at http://ccclib.org/policies/CollectionDevelopmentAccess-1999-11-16.pdf. The Library’s Collection Development Plan is available at http://ccclib.org/aboutus/ThePlan2.pdf and it provides great detail about what guides selection of the broad range of materials we select for the diverse communities that we serve.

The book was selected for the library by Contra Costa County Library’s Fiction Planner, Librarian Heidi Dolamore. She had this to say about why she thinks that books like Mistress of the Game are important for the Library to purchase: "I think these books help develop critical thinking skills, in part by sparking discussions about the concerns and controversies that the patron mentions. For people who experience violence in their own communities or in their own lives, they can be cathartic or help people work through difficult issues. They may help readers step outside of their own experience and expand their understanding of other people. Or they might just be fun because they deal with subjects that are forbidden and dangerous. For better or worse, violence and immoral behavior are themes that appear in literature all the way back to antiquity. I think this is because there are issues that people have always struggled to understand."
It's certainly clear to me that your experience with the book was not one of enjoyment. I also understand that you are not asking that we remove it from the system, but rather that we carefully select such materials in the future. I have forwarded this input to Heidi Dolamore. I very much appreciate that input.

Here is some more information about the book selection process. The book, Mistress of the Game was selected as the direct result of patron requests for purchase for more copies of that title, along with multiple requests for a broader range of urban fiction books and, specifically, for those titles published by Triple Crown Books. We have recently boosted our holdings of popular established authors, while also broadening our collection to include a greater variety of lesser known authors within the Urban Fiction genre. Mistress of the Game is popular. It appears to get checked out about once a month at most locations. The author, Sherrie Walker, is an award winning playwright, having won the Best New Playwright award from the Karamu House Theater in Cleveland.

Mistress of the Game has received abundant praise in reviews on Amazon, with many readers stating they couldn't put it down. The book also spent three months on Essence magazine’s bestseller list.

Many urban fiction titles are self published, offered by small publishers, or produced in small print runs so that availability is limited. The popularity of these titles, combined with limited availability, means that members of our communities look to libraries in particular to access these types of books. In fact, several of the Amazon reviews mention borrowing the book from a library.

Thank you for taking an active and serious interest in the reading materials available in your community library. As I said, your input is very helpful and has been passed onto the staff members selecting fiction materials. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at the below number.

Elliot Warren
Collection Development/Technical Services Manager
925-927-3220

6/23/09

Mr. Warren,

Thank you for your complete and detailed response to my email. I am surprised that this author is award winning and surprised someone requested “Mistress of the Game”. However, I completely respect the right of others to enjoy and appreciate things that I don’t. So please, ignore my previous email complaint about the book. I would hate for someone to not be able to read a book just because someone with a limited outlook (me) made a complaint. And thank you for opening up my eyes. I still don’t like the book, but that doesn’t really matter. I think its great that people have different perspectives.

Thank you,
Debbie Wiesenthal
This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

emailmessage: This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

subject: Commission mail, EBooks and Tumblebooks

to: ccclibcommission@ccclib.org

comments: We so enjoy EBooks and our kids listen to Tumblebooks and many ebooks. This is a valuable resource for our kids and we hope to continue enjoying this resource for a long time.

Thanks so much,
Susan Kumar

Name: Susan Kumar
email: ksusan05@gmail.com
spambegone: library
Phone: n/a

v1.1
June 17, 2009

Lloyd McGrady
521 Norvell St
El Cerrito, CA 94530

Dear Mr. McGrady,

The Commission asked that I convey our thanks to you for volunteering your time to the County Library Commission and representing City of El Cerrito from March 1, 1998 to May 27, 2009. Your dedication to the Commission and commitment to the Library and the community of El Cerrito have greatly assisted the work of the Commission. We thank you for your eleven years of service and wish you a speedy recovery.

Sincerely,

Chris Tang, Chair
Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Sandia Potter, Mayor, City of El Cerrito
Anne Cain, County Librarian
Library Commissioners
Commissioners invited Supervisor Bonilla to offer an update and discuss with her recent issues facing Contra Costa County and California.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Susan A. Bonilla was sworn-in as the Contra Costa County Supervisor for District IV in January 2007. She was previously elected to the Concord City Council in 2002, serving as Vice Mayor in 2005 and Mayor in 2006.

In her time on the Concord City Council, she initiated the Literacy Coalition which serves as a network of literacy providers dedicated to raising the awareness of literacy needs and mobilizing volunteers to meet these needs.

In 2006, Susan, as Mayor of Concord, organized and led the local coalition in negotiations and discussions with the Department of the Navy regarding the reuse of the Concord Naval Weapons Station.

On January 6, 2009, Susan was elected as Chair of the Board of Supervisors, by her colleagues, for 2009. Among Susan's priorities as Chair will be to work with her colleagues to protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Contra Costa County. She will work with the Board of Supervisors to help Contra Costa County meet its core purpose by maintaining safe and caring communities, practicing environmental stewardship, creating a culture of engagement, and supporting healthy economies. In order to meet these goals, Susan believes the county budget must be a plan that matches projected revenue with projected expenditures in order to support the organization's strategic vision, goals, and objectives.

Susan has been a resident of Concord since 1989. Her community participation has included many years with the neighborhood swim team, AYSO soccer, and involvement with parent-faculty clubs. She has worked in various capacities in the Mt Diablo Unified School District as a teacher in the Gifted and Talented Program, as a teacher of English as a Second Language in the adult program and as an English teacher at Concord High School. She also taught British Literature at Berean Christian High School in Walnut Creek. Susan received a B.A. in English from Azusa Pacific University in 1982 and completed a teaching credential program at California State University at Los Angeles in 1987. She and her husband John have four daughters.
Hello, and welcome to my official website for District IV of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. It is an honor and privilege to serve the residents of District IV. Thank you for visiting my website. Please stay awhile to learn more about what we are accomplishing today in order to build a brighter future for tomorrow.

I hope to be a catalyst for innovation, opportunity, and excellent service delivery in Contra Costa County. To build a stronger and more vibrant community, I plan to focus on the development of economic opportunity, educational access, and meeting the health care needs of residents.

It is a privilege to live in Central Contra Costa County District IV where we can enjoy a unique blend of elements that improve our quality of life. Businesses continue to grow thereby providing jobs and services, smart planning is giving new vitality to Buchanan Airport, California State University East Bay is expanding their college curriculum, and beautiful open space is being protected surrounding Mt. Diablo. This is an exciting time to live in District IV as the reuse of the 5,000 acre Concord Naval Weapons Station is currently in a collaborative community planning process.

Our strong commitment to continue to build this community that we value will advance the opportunity for a better quality of life to more of our residents. Partnerships between local government, businesses, and the nonprofit and faith communities will create a bright future for our children, economic prosperity for our workforce, and a willingness to continue to serve one another.

Please feel free to contact me or my office to request assistance or express your concerns or opinions on issues.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Bonilla

Susan A. Bonilla, Chair
Contra Costa County Supervisor, District IV

Contact Information
Susan A. Bonilla