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SALEM LEGAL DEPT

760 Breys Ave. NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
July 8, 2019

Salem City Council  
555 Liberty St. SE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Members of the Salem City Council,

As I am unable to attend the meeting on July 8, at which the "Big Weed" at the Salem Public Library will be discussed, I wish to offer my comments on the subject.

Over the years, Salem's public library has been a wonderful resource. There was a wealth of reference materials, non-fiction on a wide variety of subjects, a large fiction collection, and excellent children's holdings. Almost any topic that I took an interest in, or author I wanted to read, was as close as a trip to the library. Generally I went every week, and in addition to whatever I was actually looking for, I always came away a few extras -- intriguing titles from nearby shelves and excursions down other aisles. To my dismay, these holdings have been dwindling.

I attended the open meeting at which many members of the public expressed their dismay at the decimation of the library. One rationale given by the library board was that the collection should be current. It is indeed important to have current books, and granted, there is not space to keep everything, but it is obvious that space is not the problem now, given the empty floor space and empty shelves.

As to retaining books past a certain age. Member of the public can't discover nor read every read every fiction book we might like to in a window of time deemed "current." As to non-fiction books, there are books which have become classics in their field and have remained the top resource on their topic long after publication. A number of books in that category which I have used and wanted to consult again have left the shelves. A couple of them I was lucky enough to spot at the Friends book sale and buy, but surely people shouldn't be expected to buy every book we've used. Isn't that the purpose of having a library?

The library has been my go-to place for most major events in my life since I moved to Salem in 1977. Its holdings provided stacks of books for every craft phase, every health crisis, every science question, legal questions, sheet music resources for music programs, children's books I missed when growing up, and fiction of all kinds. It was a candy store where I could have anything I wanted. Because of the pleasure and help it brought me, I went so far as to make the library the beneficiary of several investment accounts to pay back the favor in time. It is saddening to see this wonderful place being drained down to nothing. It's too depressing to go to now.

Please note my little protest about "The Big Weed," and consider that for every one person who actually speaks up, there are probably 10 (or more?) other people who intended to and didn't get it done.

Sincerely yours,

*Marcia Hauff*