



**2011 – 2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Citizen Complaint Regarding
Nuisances on Oakhurst Library Grounds**

2011 – 2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Citizen Complaint Regarding
Nuisances on Oakhurst Library Grounds

Introduction:

The Grand Jury received a Citizen Complaint on November 15, 2011, concerning nuisances by persons on the Oakhurst Library grounds. Disturbances alleged in the complaint include:

- loitering;
- use of loud, verbal obscenities;
- abhorrent and obnoxious behavior;
- urinating in the parking lot;
- apparent use and sharing of illegal drugs;
- apparent drinking of alcoholic beverages from paper bags; and
- intimidating and threatening behavior to Library patrons and staff.

The Grand Jury investigated the issues by conducting interviews with Oakhurst Library staff and law enforcement officials. Direct observation was conducted at numerous times by Grand Jury members.

Findings:

1. The Grand Jury found that the allegations outlined in the complaint were valid.
2. The Grand Jury found that there have been numerous incidents reported to the Sheriff's Office including dog bites, attempted assault, fires set to storage area, fighting, theft of property, accumulation of trash, public drunkenness, destruction of public property, panhandling, and drug dealing.
3. The Grand Jury found that the Library grounds are patrolled by law enforcement infrequently.
4. The Grand Jury found that law enforcement generally responds in a timely manner when called.
5. The Grand Jury found that four or more persons were loitering on and around the Library grounds on each of several visits.
6. The Grand Jury found that Friends of the Oakhurst Library provided security services at the Library for approximately one month, making patrons and staff feel more secure.

7. The Grand Jury found that on February 14, 2012, the Board of Supervisors, at the request of the County Sheriff, adopted Ordinance No. 653 which prohibits loitering on County Library property and possessing or consuming alcohol on such property.
8. The Grand Jury found that the ordinance specifies signs to be posted as follows: “Trespassing and Loitering Prohibited” and “Alcoholic Beverages Prohibited”.

Conclusions:

1. The Grand Jury concluded that the activities on the Library grounds are a major nuisance to library patrons and staff.
2. The Grand Jury concluded that Library patrons and staff felt more protected when security services were active.
3. The Grand Jury concluded that the County Sheriff responded proactively to address citizens' complaints by proposing the new ordinance.
4. The Grand Jury concluded that the new County Ordinance No. 653 will provide a helpful tool for law enforcement in dealing with the on-going problems on the Library grounds.

Recommendations:

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Library patrons and staff immediately contact the Sheriff's Office when violations of the ordinance are observed.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Madera County Sheriff be recognized and commended for taking action to address this issue.

Respondents: written response required pursuant to PC933(c)

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W. Fourth St.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Sheriff-Coroner
14143 Road 28
Madera, CA 93638

Informational: response optional

Madera County Librarian
121 North G St.
Madera, CA 93637