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13 January 2004

**LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE
 Oakland City Council**

Subject: Semi-Annual Report of the Library Advisory Commission

Chairperson Chang and Members of the Committee:

The Library Advisory Commission (LAC) hereby reports on its activities covering the period from February 1, 2003 to December 15, 2003.

Commission Activities:

The Library Commission is pleased that the City Council, the Mayor, and the City Manager maintained funding for the Libraries, especially preserving the branch library system and materials budget. While the branch libraries will remain open for now, with the current state budget crisis, the LAC is concerned about the future of our library system. We learned through the budget crisis that the public loves their local branches and is willing to support them through donations and financially. However, the public did not feel that they have been included sufficiently in the planning process. The Library Advisory Commission will continue to work with the Library Director and through our meeting process to ensure that the public has a voice in how decisions are made about the future of public libraries in Oakland.

In February Commissioner Victoria Kelly helped organize a community party to celebrate Saving the Libraries. Hosted at the Melrose branch, participants ranged in ages from infants to seniors, from the surrounding neighborhood and schools, from moms to politicians. Additionally, the Friends of the Oakland Public Library (FOPL) held a book drive.

Commissioner Scott participated in a panel discussion hosted by the Green Party. Councilmember Nancy Nadel and the fire chief were part of the panel to discuss the effects of local budget cuts on citizens.

Also in February, the Commission (jointly with FOPL) hosted the annual workshop of the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO). Over 80 library commissioners and trustees from Northern

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California attended this one-day event. State Librarian Kevin Starr was the keynote speaker, and Mayor Brown offered a welcome in which he emphasized the importance of libraries as a community treasure. Commissioner Scott, FOPL Board President Winifred Walters, and Foundation Executive Director Duff Axsom made a joint presentation about how the library support groups work together. The Commission was excited to host this event as a showcase for AAMLO and Oakland libraries.

In March, Commissioner Scott was a guest speaker for the Library's Youth Leadership Council's (YLC) monthly meeting. This was an opportunity for the YLC members to learn more about the Library Commission and the importance of volunteering.

In April, the Commission held the regular monthly meeting at the West Oakland branch. This was an opportunity for Commissioners as well as members of the public to discuss the concept of libraries as part of a community center/meeting facility.

In April, the Library Advisory Commission joined a 15-person contingent from Oakland library groups (staff, Youth Leadership Council, Friends, Save Our Libraries Coalition) to attend the California Association of Library Trustees and Commissioners' annual Legislative Day in Sacramento. Completely filling every office we entered, the Oakland contingent made a very favorable impression on State Representatives Wilma Chan and Lonnie Hancock and State Senator Don Perata's chief aide. The youth members of the Youth Leadership Council made concise and persuasive presentations, and everyone was excited to see high school students participating in the legislative process. Later, State Representative Wilma Chan wrote about Oakland's participation and the youth in her newsletter to her constituents.

In June, Commissioners Scott and Wesley attended the African American Museum and Library at Oakland opening of their "Reflections in Black" exhibit. In November, Commissioner Evelyn Wesley attended the opening reception for the Long Walk Home exhibit at AAMLO.

Since July, Commissioners Scott and Kelly have been active participants in the Citizens Action Committee (CAC) that was created as part of the Master Facilities Plan process. With meetings held about twice a month, the Citizens Action Committee has provided feedback and guidance to the Library Staff and the architectural consultants Group 4 in developing the messages and content of the Master Facilities Plan. Much of the work as presented to the Life Enrichment Committee and later to the City Council in November and December had been reviewed and revised per the CAC. In October, Commissioners Scott and Kelly spoke before the Life Enrichment Committee in support of the Master Facilities Plan process and the Library Commission's support to move forward with the 81st Ave/Woodland joint library/school application for Proposition 14 funds.

In August, Commissioner Rica Azarcon worked closely with the Youth Leadership Council to organize a teen program "Teens Make a Global Impact" in which teens talked about their experiences traveling to Cambodia and Thailand. 85 people attended the event.

Continuing the tradition of holding the Commission's regular meetings in different branches, in September the LAC met at AAMLO. This was an opportunity to see changes that have been made and discuss ways to raise the visibility of this most important community resource.

Commissioner Lottie Rose has actively worked with the Friends of the Golden Gate Branch to organize and publicize events as well as to provide input and feedback to the Commission and Library about issues such as the new Measure O ballot and the Master Facilities Plan.

Our writer-in-residence, Commissioner Victoria Kelly, has written several letters and columns. In April as part of National Library Week, she wrote a My Word column titled "Reader Nation" which appeared in the Oakland Tribune. In November, she wrote a response to dispel misinformation published in an online column by Jeannette Sherman. Continuing our printed advocacy, Commissioner Scott's letter to the editor was published in the Oakland Tribune. This letter highlighted the fact the Oakland's Library Advisory Commission was the first to oppose the Patriot Act's infringement on library patrons rights.

Throughout the year Commissioners have continued their advocacy and advisory roles by meeting with Council members, City staff, Library staff and individual members of the public. Our visibility has risen considerably, and the public has begun to see the Library Advisory Commission as a resource and advocate for their interests in maintaining and expanding library services throughout our Oakland community. Specifically, meetings have been held between Commissioners and Oakland Council members Brunner, Brooks, De La Fuente and Quan. Additionally, Commissioner Rose maintains relationships with members of the Emeryville City Council. In May, Commissioner Scott wrote a letter to the City Council regarding the need for continued diligence in expanding the library budget.

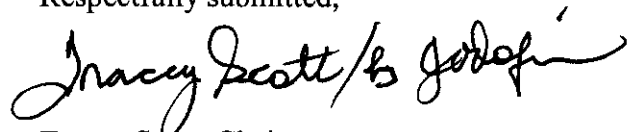
Future Issues and Activities:

The long-term budget planning process (including our concerns about the update of Measure O funds) will be the Commission's main focus over the next six months.

The Library Advisory Commission will continue to monitor the progress of the Master Facilities Plan and identify ways to gather more public input.

The Library Advisory Commission will continue to work closely with the Library Director, the City Manager and Council to develop a long-term plan that incorporates and addresses the needs of the community.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracey Scott, Chairperson
Library Advisory Commission