

RECEIVED

August 20, 2009

AUG 25 2009

CITY OF BURIEN

To: Joan McGilton, Mayor
Burien City Hall
15811 Ambaum Blvd. SW
Burien, WA 98166

Re: "New Library Needs Pay Phone", Letters to Editor, (Article in Highline Times, August 19th, 2009)

Honorable Mayor,

The recent Letters to Editor, "New Library Needs Pay Phone", is outrageous and shows how selfish and petty our society has become. The library is one of the centers for community gathering in Burien and now with City Hall above it, it should espouse the clear and rational thinking of a thriving community.

So when a youngster of eleven asks to use a phone as assurance that he has arrived to his destination safely, as would have been possible at the previous library location, he should not be told to go blocks away in the hopes of finding a public phone.

But never should the concerned mother of the boy have been told that "the library was not a baby sitter....", and that "the library never claimed to be a safe place". This public announcement is now know around the community and speaks as to the type of community Burien has become, that the Burien library will not lend help to anyone, least of all children, and that it is not a safe place to be.

Is this the image you as Mayor are sending to every mother in our city? I hope not. I believe the librarian should be reprimanded, and advised she has a duty to be civil and helpful to the community.

Secondly, the library needs a public phone in the lobby, or a sign which says there is public telephone service on the third floor were it is safe. Thirdly, the elevator needs a permanent sign along side the number three button telling people which floor city hall resides on.

Respectfully,



Fredrick G. Novota

Enclosed: Highline Times Article.....

CFTR: 9/14/09
CC: City Manager for response
Ltr: 8/27/09



New library needs pay phone

I am a mother of an 11-year-old boy. Our family lives in the Three Tree Point/Seahurst area.

Our son loved to ride his bike into Old Burien and visit the Farmer's Market. We've been trying to build up responsibility and trust for our son.

This last Thursday our son asked if he could ride his bike to the NEW library to use the computer and then get a hot dog at the new Farmer's Market before heading home. I told him he had 15 minutes to get to the library and call home and let us know he got there. (This was a big deal, it was the furthest he'd ever rode alone on his bike, and he was earning our trust.)

Twenty-five minutes later (10 minutes late) as I was backing out of my driveway, scared, to go search for him, he called nearly crying. There was no pay phone at the library, and the librarian wouldn't let him use the facility phone. When he told the librarian why he had to call home she sent him to Staples, which is even further from where he was supposed to be.

When he got to Staples, there was no phone there, either. Luck-

ily, he saw a stranger holding a phone as he walked into Staples, so my son in a panic asked if he could use the person's phone to call me, having to disregard "don't talk to strangers."

I am extremely upset, as are most of our peers that we've shared this story with and are also parents in the Burien area.

I called the library and spoke to a librarian. While I was trying to share with her my dismay that a child wouldn't be allowed to call home to check in, for safety sake, she told me that the library wasn't a baby sitter and that parents need to monitor their own children.

I was highly dismayed and outraged, and reminded her that the library promotes a safe environment for youth to come in with its after-school and summer programs to which her response was "the library never claimed to be a safe place." Wow.

I don't understand how a public facility that encourages and mainly draws in youth, from young teens to college bound, cannot have telephone access.

I understand that phones get abused. But the young people going to the library are not there to

cause a disturbance, but are there scholastically, in one way or another.

A public phone is needed for rides home, checking in, and emergency purposes!

Heather D. Malo
Burien

Make your piano a star

Burien Little Theatre is looking for a baby grand piano to star in "Christmas with the Crawfords." The piano would be on-stage from November 22 through December 20, 2009.

This season BLT is doing two musical productions, "Christmas with the Crawford" and a 1950's rock 'n roll "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Theater fans will recognize the latter as Arne Zasllove's adaptation that ran for years at the Bathhouse and at the Moore. In 2008 Arne updated the show with a few "new '50s songs.)

BLT audiences seem to love musicals. They are great fun and a great escape, but they are very expensive to produce. They can eas-

—See LETTERS, page 7



Burien

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19

August 27, 2009

Mr. Fredrick Novota
1612 SW 140th Street
Burien, WA 98166

Dear Mr. Novota:

Thank you for your letter of August 20, 2009, wherein you state your concern over an incident that occurred in the Burien Library.

The response to this incident was not one that the City condones. We understand from the King County Library System that staff has been reminded that they do, in fact, have the authority to allow a child to call home. This was an unfortunate incident, and we hope that it was an isolated one that won't happen in the future.

I have noted that the King County Library System's Director, Bill Ptacek, has responded in this week's edition of the Highline Times, and one of the issues that he brings up is that there are no pay phone providers in Burien. The City of Burien does not have a "public phone" either, but it is our policy to make a phone call for a child (or an adult) in an emergency situation.

Thank you for raising your concern in this matter. Public safety is very important to the City of Burien.

We are still putting finishing touches on our new building more than three months after moving in, and appreciate your suggestion for permanent signage in the elevator. We will look into doing so.

Thank you for being an involved Burien resident.

Sincerely,

Mike Martin
City Manager

Cc: City Council

