

## SAVE OUR LIBRARIES

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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 1, 2001

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HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY "DUMBS DOWN"/ABANDONS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT  
"LIFELONG LEARNING," DIVERSITY, AND THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

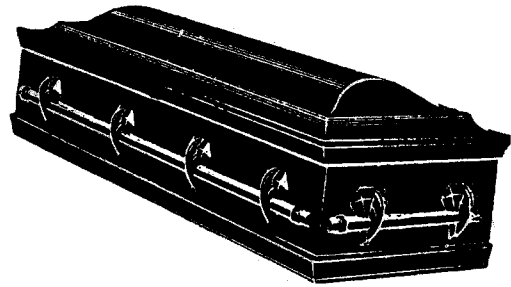
Although Hennepin County Library (HCL) has often touted itself as the "people's university" and a partner in "lifelong learning" for its relatively affluent and well-educated users, it now appears that the most intellectually and spiritually challenging materials available to suburban readers may soon be artificially-hyped "blockbusters" and the collected works of Martha Stewart.

Without first consulting frontline staff or library users, HCL's top management has decided to cancel some 1,120 current periodical subscriptions, the "savings" presumably to be expended on DVDs, "popular" materials, and ever-more electronic resources. About 500 titles are to be dropped from the hitherto-flagship Southdale collection alone. And overall, about 340 of the axed magazines are not available online, while approximately 170 are not even received by the neighboring Minneapolis Public Library system.

Among the journals and newspapers to be wrenched from HCL shelves are dozens of business, labor, technical, medical, cultural, consumer, and political titles whose absence will markedly shrink the breadth, depth, and vitality

\*Business/technology/consumers (continued)

Business and Health  
Business History Review  
Chemical & Engineering News  
Chemical Week  
Computer Graphics World  
Computer Shopper  
Convenience Store News  
Design News  
Dollars & Sense  
Farm Journal  
Finance & Development  
Food Technology  
Journal of Broadcasting  
Journal of Business  
Journal of Communication  
Journal of Consumer Affairs  
Journal of Consumer Research  
Journal of Finance  
Journal of Marketing  
Journal of World Business  
Logistics Management  
Metalsmith  
Monthly Review  
Multinational Monitor  
Music Trades  
National Tax Journal  
New Internationalist  
Pensions & Investments  
Progressive Grocer  
Public Relations Quarterly  
Pulp & Paper  
Real Estate Review  
Realtor Magazine  
Risk Management  
Successful Farming  
Supervision  
Taxes  
Technology & Learning  
Textile World  
Trusts & Estates  
U.S. Banker  
Vending Times  
Windpower Monthly



\*Culture/arts/literature

African Arts  
American Art Journal  
American Cinematographer

\*Culture/arts/literature (continued)

American Theatre  
Amusement Business  
Aperture  
Arts of Asia  
Ballet Review  
Design News  
Film Quarterly  
Index on Censorship  
Journal of American Culture  
Journal of American Folklore  
Journal of Negro History  
Journal of Popular Film & Television  
Journal of the West  
Landscape Architecture  
Modern Drama  
Modern Language Quarterly  
Musical Quarterly  
Partisan Review  
Poetry  
Public Art Review  
Rain Taxi  
Rock & Rap Confidential  
Sewanee Review  
Sing Out!  
Small Press Review  
Symphony Magazine  
Yale Review

\*Health/medicine

American Journal of Public Health  
American Journal on Mental Retardation  
Business & Health  
Journal of Learning Disabilities  
Journal of Studies on Alcohol  
Mental Retardation  
Nursing Outlook  
Nutrition Today

\*Politics/world affairs

Ad Busters  
Asian Survey  
Covert Action Quarterly  
Dissent  
Dollars & Sense  
Extra!  
Index on Censorship  
International Affairs  
Journal of Modern African Studies  
Journal of World Business

*What have I done!*



\*Politics/world affairs (continued)

Manchester Guardian Weekly  
Middle East Journal  
Militant  
Monthly Review  
Multinational Monitor  
New Internationalist  
Phyllis Schlafly Report  
Radical America  
Socialist Review  
Spotlight  
Z Magazine

\*Science/environment

American Forests  
American Journal of Botany  
American Naturalist  
Bioscience  
Canadian Geographic  
Journal of Soil and Water Conservation  
Journal of Wildlife Management  
New Scientist  
Physics Today  
Recycling Today  
Windpower Monthly

\*Social science/human services/education

American Anthropologist  
American Journal of Education  
American Psychologist  
Child Development  
Child Welfare  
Childhood Education  
Chronicle of Higher Education  
Contemporary Education  
Early Childhood Education Journal  
Journal of American Indian Education  
Journal of Counseling and Developmental Psychology  
Journal of Educational Research  
Journal of Family Issues  
Journal of Family Psychology  
Journal of Marriage & the Family  
Journal of Psychology  
Prison Mirror

\*Labor/work

Business & Health  
Dollars & Sense  
Labor's Heritage  
Militant  
Monthly Review  
NEA Today  
Pensions & Investments  
Public Employee  
Radical America  
Socialist Review  
Z Magazine

\*Women/feminism

BEW (Big Beautiful Woman)  
National NOW Times  
Off Our Backs  
Women's Review of Books



5-14-01

Dear Kristin,

More to-be-dropped mags:

+Business...

Computer Reseller News  
Constructor  
Finance & Commerce  
Land Economics

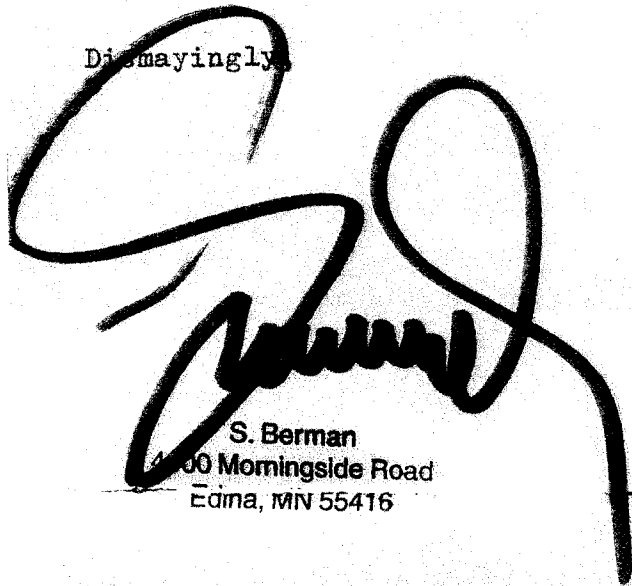
+Health/medicine

Lancet

+Science/environment

Science  
Science and Children

Disemayingly,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Berman', is written over the typed name and address below.

S. Berman  
400 Morningside Road  
Edina, MN 55416

# OPINION

## Hennepin County Library 'dumbs down' lifelong learning

By Sanford Berman  
Guest Columnist

Although Hennepin County Library (HCL) has often touted itself as the "people's university" and a partner in lifelong learning for its relatively affluent and well-educated users, it now appears that the most intellectually and spiritually challenging materials available to suburban readers may soon be artificially-hyped "blockbusters" and the collected works of Martha Stewart.

Without first consulting frontline staff or library users, HCL's top management has decided to cancel some 1,120 current periodical subscriptions; the savings presumably to be

expanded on DVDs, "popular" materials, and ever-more electronic resources. Some 500 titles are to be dropped from the hitherto-flagship Southdale-Hennepin Area Library collection alone.

And overall, about 340 of the axed magazines are not available online, while approximately 170 are not even received by the neighboring Minneapolis Public Library system.

Among the journals and newspapers to be wrenched from HCL shelves are dozens of business, labor, technical, medical, cultural, consumer and political titles whose absences will markedly shrink the breadth, depth and vitality of the library's resources, seriously

eroding its adherence to the Library Bill of Rights' strictures to provide materials "for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all the people of the community" and present "all points of view on current and historical issues."

Unfortunately, HCL's impending mag-extirpation coincides with a nationwide trend to dumb down library collections, a development spawned partly by the profession's mindless embrace of purely digital resources on the one hand and a desire to impress funders with big circulation numbers on the other. What gets lost, of course, is the public library's traditional commitment to unfettered access to a wide variety of ideas,

activities and information – to being a genuine, non-commercial alternative to profit-driven bookstores chains, dot-com vendors and conglomerate-owned mass media.

Also increasingly lost is the importance of the library as a place, a physical space for browsing, reading and socializing. Current managers don't seem to grasp that turning the pages of *Advertising Age* in comfortable, mouseless surroundings is not the same as "accessing" the full-text version online.

Citizens irate about HCL's coming magazine massacre and its growing emphasis on fluff should contact Charles Brown, Library Director (12601

Ridgedale Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55305-1909; 952-847-8580) and Mike Opat, Chair of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners (A-2400 Government Center, 300 S. Sixth St., Minneapolis, MN 55487; 612-348-7881).

*Edina resident Sanford Berman was the Hennepin County Library's head cataloger from 1973 to 1999. He currently writes a column for the Unabashed Librarian, and co-edits Alternative Library Literature: a Biennial Anthology. A partial list of the periodicals slated for removal – such as Lancet, The New Scientist and Finance and Commerce – is available from Berman by calling him at 952-925-5738.*