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Letter to the Editor for Publication in the West Bend News

Dan Kleinman

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From: Safe Libraries [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Saturday, April 04, 2009 10:02 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] Peterson, Mark; [REDACTED] mtyree@west-bendlibrary.org; mayor@ci.west-bend.wi.us; [REDACTED]
Subject: Letter to the Editor for Publication in the West Bend News

Dear Editor,

I submit the following letter for publication in the West Bend News. Please try to include the two hyperlinks. One goes to a preview page at tinyurl.com<<http://tinyurl.com>> so not one will be surprised.

Feel free to contact me at 908-672-3511. My address is below.

FYI, I have already written on matters related to this topic here:
<http://safelibraries.blogspot.com/search/label/WestBendWI>

I doubt it, but should you wish to publish a picture of me, please find one here, with my permission to use the picture:
http://www.metrovoice.net/www.metrovoice.net/2008/0908_stlweb/0908_articles/whos_controlling_county_libraries.html

Thank you very much.

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=====FOR PUBLICATION=====

Responding to Mark Peterson in "West Bend Society for the Suppression of Vice Battles On," West Bend News, 4 April 2009, allow me to say Mr. Peterson has missed the entire point. Further, his comparison of certain West Bend residents to the Taliban only shows he has no argument he is willing to make publicly for allowing children access to inappropriate material in public libraries despite the law.

The issue in West Bend is not pornography. People on both sides of the matter have made the mistake of thinking it is. The issue is inappropriate material for minors in public libraries.

In a US Supreme Court case the ACLU and the American Library Association [ALA] lost big in 2003, US v. ALA, the Court said, "The interest in protecting young library users from material inappropriate for minors is legitimate, and even compelling, as all Members of the Court appear to agree." <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/539/194.html> Legitimate, and even compelling. Protecting young library users. Material inappropriate for minors. Library. All Members of the Court appear to agree.

Mr. Peterson's long opinion addressing pornography, who's to judge what's what, and which members of the West Bend community are similar to the Taliban is totally irrelevant. The guy is even excited a public meeting on the topic was cancelled by the Fire Department. As Dan Gerstein said, "The ... elites have convinced themselves that they are taking a stand against cultural tyranny. [T]he reality is that it is those who cry 'Censorship!' the loudest who are the ones trying to stifle speech and force their moral world-view on others." <http://preview.tinyurl.com/gerstein>

Despite how inartfully the issues may have been phrased by all involved, religion, morality, or politics, let alone pornography, has little to do with this matter. Instead, cases like US v. ALA, various local laws, and perhaps even the very language of the legal instrument that created the West Bend library in the first place all allow West Bend citizens to decide to protect children from inappropriate material in the public library. Besides, it's common sense.

So if the citizens can just get past the rhetoric of the likes of Mr. Peterson, or get deprogrammed from the misinformation of those following ALA/ACLU policy, they might legally act to protect those who are too young to protect themselves.