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Letters to the Editor Jan. 8

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Letters to the Editor Jan. 8

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Letters to the Editor Jan. 8

11:41 am CST January 7, 2015

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Library board should cease lavish spending on food

Dear Editor,

At the Dec. 15 meeting of the Orland Park Public Library Board of Trustees, the OPPL was confronted with a receipt totaling \$473.24 for an extravagant dinner that the trustees treated themselves to on May 3, 2011. This receipt was uncovered recently in Freedom of Information Act production, along with numerous other receipts for lavish spending on food and treats for library staff and board members.

In Illinois, library board members are not allowed to be compensated, and cannot take food or drink in the form of expensive dinners as rewards for their time on the board. But that is what the OPPL has done.

The \$473.24 in tax dollars spent on a single dinner at the restaurant Bonfire included \$192 for the finest filets, \$23 for tilapia, \$35 for crab cakes and flaming saganaki (Greek cheese), and even more for strawberry cheesecake, creme brulee and decadent chocolate fudge cake. After the desserts [on the receipt], someone also put in an order for \$21 worth of prime rib and \$20 worth of veal Marsala. Since those were ordered after dessert, I asked the board at its December meeting if these entrees were taken home. The board didn't answer.

This spending in May of 2011 is concerning because, in March of that same year, library incident reports show that child pornography was accessed at the OPPL and staff did not call the police as they should have. Library Trustee Diane Jennings admitted in August 2014 that this happened. Now, I find a receipt for the Board treating itself to a lavish dinner at Bonfire that cost taxpayers almost \$500 at a time when the board should have been focused on taking measures to ensure that child pornography was never again accessed in this library.

The board's priorities are misplaced. The OPPL seems to view this board as a social club or other excuse to treat themselves to lavish meals on the public's dime. As the community looks toward the board elections in April 2015, I hope that candidates run for board seats who will be more serious-minded and less interested in eating filets and saganaki. We need good people to run for the board who will eliminate the wasteful spending and also make sure the library is a safe place for children and families.

Kevin DuJan

Letter makes good points, but what is the agenda?

Dear Editor,

This is in response to Letters to the Editor published Dec. 26, [one] entitled "New library trustees must be courageous."

The author appears, on the surface, to make some good points in regard to the management of the Orland Park Public Library. There are two issues that seem to be of concern to the author — 1) access to child pornographic sites, and 2) extravagant spending on food, travel and conferences attended by OPPL staff.

Issue 1 — It appears that the OPPL board has addressed this to a certain degree in their Public Access to Electronic Information Networks Policy (dated Aug. 18) by stating that "accessing with intent to view any material that contains an image of child pornography" is unacceptable and that "illegal acts involving library computer resources will be reported to the police and may be subject to prosecution by local, State and federal authorities." That being said, the author of the Dec. 26 article would like to take it one step further by blocking child pornography sites. That seems like a reasonable request.

Issue 2 — Expenditures on travel and conference — which would include food are not uncommon in this arena or any educational facility. The author insists that the spending is extravagant but does not present any facts to back up these accusations. If true, this type of spending should be corrected at once. If not, the author should not make such accusations. Perhaps the author is privy to information that I am not.

In any case, the author is very passionate and adamant about the issues mentioned previously. I believe that is great. However, it does beg the question of why the author is not running for this particular library board. You would think someone with this passion would want to be on the board. Or is there a hidden agenda here?

Roger Sanzenbacher

Orland Park resident

[Editor's Note: The aforementioned writer does not live within the boundaries of Orland Park and therefore would not be eligible to run for a position on the board of trustees.]

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