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Censorship Revisited

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Censorship Revisited

Why are the parents and taxpayers who are asking (still asking) for a balance of information and simple identification of sexually explicit books for minors suffering the accusation of censorship? **The inherent answer is a need for education.**

While some would believe censorship is the protestation of certain groups in accordance with a personal belief system, this definition is clearly inaccurate. Webster defines censorship as "to examine in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable." In essence, censorship is the deletion of materials, ideas or information; therefore, when put in proper perspective, every time a librarian makes a decision about what books to buy, keep and throw, they are part of the editorial decision-making, i.e., censorship, process.

The label of censor clearly does not apply to citizen input. In fact, crying censorship creates a separate issue that is a distraction from the complaint of the West Bend citizens.

People should oppose censorship, but if "censorship" is being used as a **political bludgeon in a case where it does not, in reality, exist**, that only weakens efforts to oppose **real** censorship.

Now that censorship has been clarified, let's go to the real issue in our local library, that being, **inappropriate material for minors**. Citizens are requesting parental assistance in identifying and appropriately placing sexually explicit materials. In asking for balance on controversial issues, MORE information is being asked for, not less. All books will still be available to all people. No books will be removed. No books will be banned. No books will be burned.

In a US Supreme Court case, the ACLU and the American Library Association [ALA] lost monumentally. 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."**

Religion, morality, politics, even pornography, have 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.

Accountability is the hallmark of democracy; therefore, we are holding our library accountable for the choices it is making for our youth and our community.