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Saturday, June 6, 2009

ALA Gets It Right Again; American Libraries Magazine First to Get West Bend Story Straight



For the second post in a row, I have to congratulate the American Library Association [ALA]. **Beverly Goldberg** of [American Libraries](#), the ALA's monthly membership magazine, accurately reported crucial information in [the West Bend, WI, library matter](#), and the truth makes all the difference. See "[Milwaukee Group Seeks Fiery Alternative to Materials Challenge](#)," by **Beverly Goldberg**, *American Libraries Online*, 3 June 2009.

There is the significant issue of whether or not a materials reconsideration request was dropped by the complainant or by the library. The complainant says it was not and the library says it was because of various public statements made by the complainant. Four library board members were not reappointed precisely because they failed to respond to the request, so the question of whether the request was dropped and by whom is important. The complainant has not dropped her request that was accepted and already under review by the library. After many months, she still awaits an answer.

The library was able to use the *School Library Journal* to tell a different story:

"These were four very qualified people who collectively have a lot of experience on these issues," says library director **Michael Tyree** about the board members who were up for reappointment. "They were doing what they were supposed to do—wait for **the Maziarkas** to resubmit their reconsideration for library materials."

....

The couple ... is also asking the library to place warning labels on the books, as well as install Internet filters.

As a result of that change, Tyree says the library was advised by the city attorney to have the Maziarkas re-file their complaint. They have yet to do so—and instead, they've launched an [online petition](#) outlining their new demands.

Now in a perfect example of [projection](#), listen to what the library says next:

"They're very skillful at playing the political game," says Tyree, referring to the fact that the book challenge has ended up pitting city council members against library supporters—and has gained nationwide attention, with the [American Library Association](#), the [American Bookseller Foundation for Free Expression](#), the [National Coalition Against Censorship](#), and the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee weighing in their support for the library board members.

Source: "[West Bend City Council Fails to Reinstate Library Board Members](#)," by **Debra Lau Whelan**, *School Library Journal*, 20 May 2009.

Regarding playing the political game, Tyree attempts to claim the complainant dropped the request, as shown above. But Beverly Goldberg of the ALA gets it right:

Ironically, four of the trustees were [denied reappointment](#) in April by the city council because they did not comply with the Maziarkas' reconsideration requests and are serving until their successors are appointed.

"[T]hey did not comply with the Maziarkas' reconsideration requests...." Exactly. The ALA gets it right.

Do you see what else makes the Beverly Goldberg article accurate? It does not raise the LGBT issues dropped long ago but raised again and again to distract people from the actual issues involved. What a breath of fresh air. I look forward to reading more of Beverly Goldberg's articles.

Having been critical of [American Libraries whitewashing rape](#) in the past, I am today giving credit where credit is due. Congratulations to the ALA for getting the West Bend story straight. The library dropped the matter, the complainant did not, and the ALA says so.

[I just congratulated Deborah Caldwell-Stone](#) of the ALA, and now I'm congratulating Beverly Goldberg. This is starting to become a pattern.