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Board rejects restricting books

Community members debate moving titles on teenage sex, homosexuality

By DON BEHM
dbehm@journal-sentinel.com

West Bend — The Library Board last week unanimously rejected a local citizen group's push to restrict access of young adults to books depicting sex among teenagers or those describing teenage homosexual relationships.

Such books already are separated from children's books, either in a young adult fiction section on the first floor of the library or shelved as young adult nonfiction alongside similar adult texts on the second floor, board members said.

The nine-member board listened for 2½ hours Tuesday night as nearly 60 people discussed the appropriateness of the library providing the books to the public. Then

the board voted to maintain current policies.

Speakers were evenly divided between those offended by graphic details of teenage sexual encounters contained in some books and those opposing censorship.

Several people said parents should take responsibility for reviewing what their middle school and high school students were reading from the library and avoid materials they consider inappropriate.

The meeting was held in the gymnasium at McLane Elementary

School with seating for 600 people; a crowd of about 200 showed up for the debate.

A representative of the American Library Association opened the meeting with an explanation of obscenity law. None of the challenged books at the library meets legal definitions of obscenity or child pornography, said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, acting director of the association's office for intellectual freedom in Chicago.

Ginny and Jim Maziarka of West Bend earlier this year asked the community board to remove books

that the couple consider to be obscene or child pornography from a section of the library designated "Young Adults." The couple formed an organization, West Bend Citizens for Safe Libraries, to promote their views.

The Maziarkas requested such books to be reclassified and placed in a restricted area requiring parental approval before being released to a child. The books also should be labeled with a warning about content, the couple said.

Ginny Maziarka in past interviews described two of the targeted books — "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" and "The Geography Club" — as explicitly sexual. She

Please see **LIBRARY, 2Z**



Opinion A man's hope for one lucky drunken driver

There are some lucky sons-a-s. Allen J. Sweeting, 28, didn't die. Not himself, not the car, not even his 4-year-old son with him in the midair May 29, though all had injuries. With two prior driving convictions, the man is facing a third — this one a felony — because, police say, he was drunk when he drove his Honda across a Town of Oconomowoc road's centerline and crashed into a truck trying to avoid his oncoming vehicle.

Robert J. Hickey, a Town of Grafton man who turns 51 next week, has been busted seven times for drunken driving, the last after he was stopped a year ago in the Village of Grafton. He got a five-year prison sentence last week from a Milwaukee County judge, but he could earn his way out in 3½ years. When, the court-ordered license revocation in will be behind him, too. As I guess, he'll be sure the system once he's back driving again. M. Metcalf, 26, of the Village of Merton says she's an "empty shell" full of regret and remorse.



JEFFREY PHELPS / JPHELPS@JOURNALSENTINEL.COM

Life recorded

lant, is t the 60- plan ntrol of id. The nually on the ide out said. to en- ng con- nd stu- iversi- d local e inva- ; garlic il by its thorn.

here, but there are nearly mature red oaks, probably from the 1850s. They are on- ly half-way through their li- fespan."

"Fawn. There's a fawn," Leitner announced. The small, spotted deer rests amid maple seedlings and garlic mustard at the base of a sugar maple. It watches the biologists as they walk slowly away.

Leitner quickly returns to his list.

"Squaw root. That is a par- asite of oak roots," he said. "Wide-leaved panic grass. That is a native woodland grass and that is nice to see here."

Don Reed, chief biologist at the commission, walked a separate segment of the for- est.

Reed spots morel mush- rooms adjacent to a slippery elm.

Patches of spring-beauty are still in bloom. Their white-pink petals have pink veins.

"Ideally, we will make three trips here in different seasons, to identify all the plants here and add any plant species that may not be up in the spring," Reed said.

The first visit confirms the forest deserves its earli- er designation within a high-quality natural area that stretches from Murphy and McConville lakes down- stream along the Little Oconomowoc River to the camp, Reed said.

"If deer, garlic mustard and buckthorn are con- trolled," Reed said, "this woods will be in this good of shape for years and years."

and added treatment — will bring more problem drink- ers to the realization that Metcalf says she's come to.

Ultimately, that's needed.

Call Laurel Walker at (262) 650-3183 or e-mail lwalker@journal sentinel .com.



GARY PORTER / GPORTER@JOURNALSENTINEL.COM

About 200 people attend a hearing last week on a request to relocate some books dealing with sexual issues from the Young Adult section of the West Bend Library.

LIBRARY Board rejects move

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considers a third book, "Deal With It! a whole new ap- proach to your body, brain and life as a gURL" to be por- nographic.

"Sexually explicit content should not be on the teen shelf in the West Bend Library," Ginny Maziarka said.

On Tuesday, the Maziarkas submitted names of about 700 citizens on petitions support- ing their requests. In April, the couple had submitted about 400 names on petitions.

The petition also asks the Library Board to balance its collection of books about ho- mosexuality with books "af- firming traditional hetero- sexual perspectives" that are faith-based or written by "ex- gay" authors.

On Tuesday night, Ginny Maziarka told board mem- bers that if they rejected her petition, she would not con- sider the library a safe place for children.

Dan Arneson of West Bend, speaking in support of keep- ing the books as Young Adult selections, told the crowd that American society "was born in tolerance."

West Bend resident Maria Hanrahan started a group, West Bend Parents for Free Speech, to oppose the Maziar- kas' requests.

Hanrahan circulated a sep- arate petition. On Tuesday, she submitted 1,068 signa- tures supporting existing li- brary policies.

This petition asks the Li- brary Board to protect the li- brary's collection from at- tempts at censorship, to re- ject requests to reclassify or move materials on the basis that some patrons find the content objectionable and to reject requests to label cer- tain books based on sexual content.

"We believe that library pa-



Ginny Maziarka, who with her husband, Jim, started the drive to relocate books that deal with homosexuality and other topics, speaks during Tuesday night's meeting.



Maria Hanrahan, who circulated a petition to stop the proposal to relocate some books, addresses officials.



Robert Deters defends his wife, Barbara, a member of the West Bend Library Board, and other board mem- bers against what he con- sidered at- tacks against them.

trons are fully responsible for making their own determina- tions about what materials are appropriate for them- selves or their children," Hanrahan told a Journal Sen- tinel reporter in explaining why she took the action.

Russell Quaas of West Bend said the Library Board should remove books about witchcraft and the "Harry Potter" books, and burn them. He suggested that Li- brary Director Michael Tyree "should have been tarred and feathered" for allowing those

texts in the library.

Appointments of four of the nine members of the Library Board expired this year. Those members were not re- appointed by the Common Council and will serve until replacements are named. The four are Ald. Nick Dobber- stein, Tom Fitz, James Pou- ros and Mary Reilly-Kliss.

Tuesday was the deadline for city residents to apply for a seat on the board. Mayor Kristine Deiss expects to re- commend four people for coun- cil approval June 15.