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Other than the usual suspects, there was a sense of optimism among
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In order for me to better understand the conference and the issues that were
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I am interested in incorporating any thoughts you have concerning the
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If you have any comments or questions about the conference, please
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The Case of the Cross-Dressing Librarian
by Jon Winegarner

Ex-librarian and ex-moderator of the Challis Community Church

For a $20.00 Apple Anywhere, the condom on one page was the concern. Paris Almond, a Chal­lis artist and friend, received a call from the library board chair, Jon Light, regarding the book. The sign was then placed next to the price asking those with questions or comments on the book exhibit to call Paris. The concerns between Almond and Light was the very thing that began to approach a public dialogue. There was never an article about the book in the paper, other than mention in the library columns of the exhibit and an upcoming presentation on the concept and process of artist-made books so given by Paris Almond and another artist, Nadine Chaffin. This presentation was attended by myself and three or four friends of Paris. This event was also published in my library column in the newspaper. No one ever said anything negative to me about the exhibit. All board were positive, enthusiastic comments. No letter to the editor appeared on or before. I nega­tive comments were spoken "behind my back" and then confirmed against me as further evidence that was using the library to promote the unusual perversion and immor­ality of homosexuality. One comment that came back to me, overheard by a friend, was that I was bringing the books with promoting the "gay agenda" of world­wide domination.

I did write to both the Idaho and American Library Associations. I also talked to Gaildresser Hanks at the Idaho State Library in Boise and to the State Library of eastern Idaho field office representative, Frank Nelson. Both Frank and Gaildresser agreed that Challis was choosing another librarian they had seen it done in Challis on at least two other occasions with previous librarians before in the past six years. They wished they could do something, recognize my competence, and were very sorry to see me getting such a load of grief. Ultimately, they were unable to do anything about the situation and were really weary of getting into it. The Idaho Library Association was much the same. The American Library Association's response was to offer funds to cover legal expenses from a special account set up to defend those working in libraries that did not support intellectual freedom. But first I had to prove my case to them.

I don't know that I could have proved to anyone that I was being harassed as the board never specifically harassed me, it was written at least, and only vaguely, otherwise. The board chair said she was being harassed by members of the public because of what I was doing (or supposedly doing) in the library. What they did offer as evidence was someone on how I did disagree with them on occasion, threatened them with law suits, and in general did not show a willing­ness to work with or for them.

Really, I didn't care to take it any further at the time. Though I was in contact with a civil rights attorney interested in the case who said the burden of proof rest­ed with me, since the board gave other reasons, though vague and spurious, for fir­ing me. Though done unfairly, it is still very obvious that they had two versions of events.

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