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March 6, 2006

Ms. Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian's Office  
Toronto Public Library  
789 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ont.  
M4W-2G8

Dear Ms. Bryant:

On Saturday, 4 March, I picked up a copy of "Extra", the queer periodical, in the entrance of the Spadina Public Library. It was one of about 30-40 in a pile conspicuously placed. I looked at the front cover and was immediately struck by the headline at the foot of the page: "My Fuckable Brother". I was upset to see such material in a public library. I spoke to the librarian, Ms. Tara Stadius about it.

In the resulting dialogue with her came the refrain, "inclusive". Time and time again. As though I was objecting to queers' material, per se. I was not.

I was taking objection to the display of a large amount of material featuring the word "fuckable". Not just fuckable but referring to a "Fuckable Brother".

I am in no way a prude. The language used here is what I use from time to time. Maybe too often. There would be no cause for complaint if it was contained in a book on the shelves (I'm sure it is). It arguably might have acceptance in a narrow literary sense. But to have 40 copies displayed of a queer magazine featuring the word in a public library is not warranted.

It is graffiti when it is placed on a wall. It is mephistic judgment on the part of the TPLB to permit its display and distribution in the public libraries.

On that last point. I have yet to see copies of "Extra" in Deer Park, Lillian H. Smith, Palmerston, and the Central Reference Library. Come to think of it I have not seen them in Yorkville, either. I realize this is not to say they are never hawked in those libraries. However, I can state with certitude, it is rare when I do not see them in Spadina.

Why is this so? Is it something that is left to the discretion of the librarian? If so, it were better removed.

I wrote you a letter on this matter some months back. It met the bureaucratic brickwall.

To sound out the thinking of the board on this it might be reasonable to place a copy of "Extra" before each member at the next board meeting to take home and then discuss it at the next meeting. Even Kyle Rae should not take objection to that. It would be nice to have something like this on record. Why not?

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "E. T. Gilbert".

E. T. Gilbert

cc: Mayor David Miller; Councillor Rob Ford.