

2012.02.24

Re: Vagisil® Is Proud to Present... Advertising at the Toronto Public Library

To the TPL Board:

In response to the report entitled “Advertising Policy and Program,” the Board needs to be clear on a few things. Precisely no library users *want* advertising in or around the library. By far a large majority of library users, if legitimately polled, would, I predict, disapprove of advertising. I suspect a large minority would strongly disapprove. The library also doesn’t need the pittance of revenue this plan would bring in.

The library cannot be a “neutral” place for citizens, as the stated policy purports, if advertising has invaded it. Acceptance of advertising is indistinguishable from *endorsement of the items advertised* and represents piecemeal privatization of the Toronto Public Library. Not even the curiously numerous lobbyists on your Board were appointed to sell out the library to the private sector. Your mandate does not and never did include privatization.

Freedom of conscience and freedom to read cannot be guaranteed when private enterprise plasters its message over library space. Advertising is antithetical to a *public library*.

The Board also needs to understand what will happen if it passes this measure. My friends and I will protest using all lawful methods available, including boycotting the advertisers involved and relentlessly informing them that their intrusion is unwanted. We will *name and shame*. We’ll use all civil methods at our disposal to poison the chalice of advertising at the library. We will scare off every advertiser and undermine the program from without. And we will protest against *you*.