



OPEN LETTER

Leonard Asper, President
CanWest Global Communications Group
3100 CanWest Global Place, 201 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3L7

May 7, 2008

Dear Mr. Asper,

At its annual general meeting on April 19, 2008, the British Columbia Library Association passed the attached resolution calling for CanWest to withdraw its legal suit against Mordecai Briemberg and the others charged with having produced a parody of The Vancouver Sun in June 2007.

The British Columbia Library Association is a non-profit, independent, voluntary association established in 1911. Our nearly 850 members include librarians, library personnel, library trustees and other interested individuals; corporate, government, school and academic libraries; publishers, and library supply companies.

Intellectual freedom is a central tenet of librarianship; librarians have fought for generations for freedom of expression and access to information. Journalism, at its best, shares a commitment to these principles. The role of the media in a democracy is to provide a forum for open discussion and debate, not to stifle dissent. We are therefore especially disappointed that CanWest has sought to use its corporate resources to intimidate its critics and silence those with political positions different from its own.

Satire and parody have important intellectual traditions. Well-known satirists include Aristophanes, Horace, Chaucer, Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe, and Mark Twain – all people who were able to use hyperbole and humour to make their points without being sued by the objects of their parodies. CanWest's suit is an attack on a crucial tool of free expression and threatens to have having a chilling effect on public discourse.

We urge CanWest to drop its suit against Mordecai Briemberg and the six Jane and John Does named in your writ. The free exchange of ideas (including ideas with which we may disagree) is a critical component of a democratic society, and ought not to be undermined by the very institutions that make such exchange possible.

Sincerely,

Lynne Jordon, President
British Columbia Library Association

cc: David P. Church, Church and Company
Gail Asper, National Campaign Chair, Canadian Museum of Human Rights
Rob Holmes, President, BC Civil Liberties Association
Toni Samek, Chair, Canadian Library Association's Advisory Committee on Intellectual Freedom
Alvin M. Schrader, President, Canadian Library Association
Karla Palichuk, President, Library Association of Alberta
Amy Rankin, President, Saskatchewan Library Association
H. Rainer Schira, President, Manitoba Library Association
Sam Coghlan, President, Ontario Library Association
Lynn Somers, President, Nova Scotia Library Association
Donna Bourne-Tyson, President, Atlantic Provinces Library Association

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