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Allan Nilson
43686 145th Ave Way
Zumbrota MN 55992
September 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Nilson,

I found your comments of September 15, 2008 on our Structure Study blog and hope I can clarify a few items. I was present at the Structure Committee meeting of August 25, 2008 and was allowed to speak for a few minutes in public comment at the end of the meeting.

I am the librarian who asked why the affirmations were omitted from the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee's document of questions to the Structure Committee. I was one of the document's authors. At the August 5, 2008 Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting, I suggested that the document contain affirmations of support for SELCO and our work. I believed, and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee concurred, that the affirmations set a positive tone and a positive context for the questions we believed to be pertinent.

At the Structure Committee's meeting of August 25, 2008, I was surprised to see the affirmations stripped from the document before the Committee. Board President Teri Hill opened the meeting with an update featuring comment on the "rudeness" of some of the library directors at the June 10, 2008 Advisory Committee meeting. This set a far different tone and context for the discussion to come, and set the Structure Committee apart from the three attending guest librarians, who were by implication, "rude" and "unprofessional." The Structure Committee undoubtedly viewed us three visitors as representatives of the Advisory Committee; we were described as representative of large, medium and small libraries. As I listened to the ensuing discussion, I heard "we" and "they" used many times. The discussion did seem to be divisive. In fact, we are all working to improve our libraries and our region.

I am aware the Structure Committee is seeking discussion and information in these public meetings. I also seek information by asking questions; my intent is not to accuse.

Thank you for the information that the Structure Committee received the complete document before the meeting. I will ask you to acknowledge that the tone of the document is changed when it is presented and discussed without context. The affirmations were included to show our participation, interest and willingness to listen and discuss.

If you would like to discuss the remaining points in your comments, I will be available. My office number is 507-774-7002. I will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you,

Yours truly,
Mary Kay Feltes
Mary Kay Feltes

Mary Kay Feltes, Director