

Subject: RE: Responsible Use

Date: Wed, 21 Jan 2004 20:34:35 -0800

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "Corrie Kost" <kost@triumf.ca>, "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

CC: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

Dear Dr. Kost:

Thank you for this valuable information. I had an opportunity to do a great deal of research when Doug Collins from the NS NEWS was charged by the Canadian Jewish Congress for printing "offensive" (to the Canadian Jewish Congress) material. I did not necessarily agree with Mr. Collins on every issue; in fact very seldom I agreed, but I did submit in his defense a resolution and forwarded it to all BC Municipalities in support of Mr. Collin's right to voice his opinion and for the North Shore News the right to print such an opinion however offensive it may be to some people. I did so because I learned a long time ago that the alternatives to free speech are fraught with far more serious consequences than getting upset by a printed opinion we find objectionable. If today they can shut up Doug Collins I thought at the time, surely they will try to shut me up tomorrow and who will come to my defense unless I speak up now.

As it turned out the efforts against Collins were in violation not only of the Canadian Bill of Rights but also of the United Nations Declaration on the Freedom to Disseminate Information, the freedom to read, write and print opinions within the confines of none slanderous print and speech. This, by the way, is what our own Canadian Freedom of Information laws are based on.

This freedom of expression is reflected also in parliamentary procedure and in all democratic jurisdictions, including Federal and Provincial Parliaments. Imagine for a moment the instant chaos that would result if Federal or Provincial opposition parties were prevented from expressing an opinion because the Government in power finds it objectionable or offensive.

It is my opinion, based on the knowledge and information I have, that Council's decision re this issue was in clear violation not only of standard parliamentary procedure but also of the Canadian Constitution, (Bill of Rights) per se.

The comments made by various members of Council in support of this muzzling policy were truly astounding. The most astounding was undoubtedly the statement by one Councillor that the right of another Councillor (presumably Councillor Crist) to disseminate information via the District e-mail system should be curtailed since to read it all was too time consuming. Another gem was the statement that the right to use the District e-mail facilities should be curtailed since the opinions expressed by at least one member of Council (presumably Councillor Crist) were offensive. Clearly the word offensive in the political arena should be examined. I can assure you that any time a vote takes place in the District that is not in line with my own thinking, I find it offensive.

The same is true when Council censored me for exposing the Northlands fiasco to mention but one example. However, it is also true that despite this I have survived and lived to see another day of battle in the struggle for progress as I see it. The bottom line is that our democratic system cannot and will not work unless we do have the right to criticize. As it happens and judging by press headlines there is plenty to criticise in the District of North Vancouver. This has been confirmed time and time and time again. That the members of District Council do not understand this, is truly disconcerting if not tragic. And as far as slanderous statements are concerned, statements are either true or they are not true.

Ernie Crist

-----Original Message-----

From: Corrie Kost [<mailto:kost@triumf.ca>]

Sent: January 20, 2004 6:19 PM

To: Mayor and Council - DNV

Cc: James Ridge

Subject: Responsible Use


Your Worship & Members of Council,

The UBC policy, referred to by staff last night, may be of interest to you. Of course such policies cannot simply be transposed to a political arena and require careful consideration and consultation before actually being put in place (as was done at UBC). It's a pity that this seemed not to have been done in this case.

Why the rush on such a fundamental issue?

Yours truly,
Corrie Kost

<http://www.itservices.ubc.ca/rup/>

 winmail.dat	Name: winmail.dat Type: application/ms-tnef Encoding: base64
--	---