

Censorship is a Dead End. Find Your Freedom to Read

Mechanicsburg, PA: Censorship is a dead end. We encourage readers to find their freedom to read. The American Library Association (ALA) has designated September 27-October 3, 2020 as Banned Books Week.



Banned Books Week spotlights current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools. It brings together the entire book community — librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types — in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular.

Carolyn Blatchley, executive director of the Cumberland County Library System, comments, "During this annual effort to spotlight the risk and dangers of censorship, the importance of free access to information, and our fundamental freedom to read, we reaffirm the commitment of the System and all of our member library locations to continue providing our patrons with uncensored access to library materials."

In 2019, the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 377 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services. Of the 566 books that were targeted, here are the most challenged, along with the reasons cited for censoring the books:

"George" by Alex Gino

Reasons: challenged, banned, restricted, and hidden to avoid controversy; for LGBTQIA+ content and a transgender character; because schools and libraries should not "put books in a child's hand that require discussion"; for sexual references; and for conflicting with a religious viewpoint and "traditional family structure"

"Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out" by Susan Kuklin

Reasons: challenged for LGBTQIA+ content, for "its effect on any young people who would read it," and for concerns that it was sexually explicit and biased

"A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo" by Jill Twiss, illustrated by EG Keller

Reasons: Challenged and vandalized for LGBTQIA+ content and political viewpoints, for concerns that it is "designed to pollute the morals of its readers," and for not including a content warning

"Sex is a Funny Word" by Cory Silverberg, illustrated by Fiona Smyth

Reasons: Challenged, banned, and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content; for discussing gender identity and sex education; and for concerns that the title and illustrations were "inappropriate"

"Prince & Knight" by Daniel Haack, illustrated by Stevie Lewis

Reasons: Challenged and restricted for featuring a gay marriage and LGBTQIA+ content; for being "a deliberate attempt to indoctrinate young children" with the potential to cause confusion, curiosity, and gender dysphoria; and for conflicting with a religious viewpoint

NEWS FOR YOU!

Amelia Givin Library | Bosler Memorial Library
Coy Public Library of Shippensburg | East Pennsboro Branch Library
Fredricksen Library | John Graham Library
New Cumberland Public Library | Simpson Library
www.cumberlandcountylibraries.org

Censorship is a Dead End. Find Your Freedom to Read—Page 2

“I Am Jazz” by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings, illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas

Reasons: Challenged and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content, for a transgender character, and for confronting a topic that is “sensitive, controversial, and politically charged”

“The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood

Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity and for “vulgarity and sexual overtones”

“Drama” written and illustrated by Raina Telgemeier

Reasons: Challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and for concerns that it goes against “family values/morals”

Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling

Reasons: Banned and forbidden from discussion for referring to magic and witchcraft, for containing actual curses and spells, and for characters that use “nefarious means” to attain goals

“And Tango Makes Three” by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson illustrated by Henry Cole

Reason: Challenged and relocated for LGBTQIA+ content

The Cumberland County Library System consists of seven federated local libraries, one branch facility, a system headquarters office, and an associated non-profit Foundation. The Library System provides support to its member libraries through information technology, securing library materials, older adult services, training opportunities, and administrative and financial services. More information on the Cumberland County Library System can be found at www.cumberlandcountylibraries.org.

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