

BOOKS

CHALLENGED or BANNED in 2010–2011

• Robert P. Doyle •



BANNED BOOKS WEEK

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BOOKS

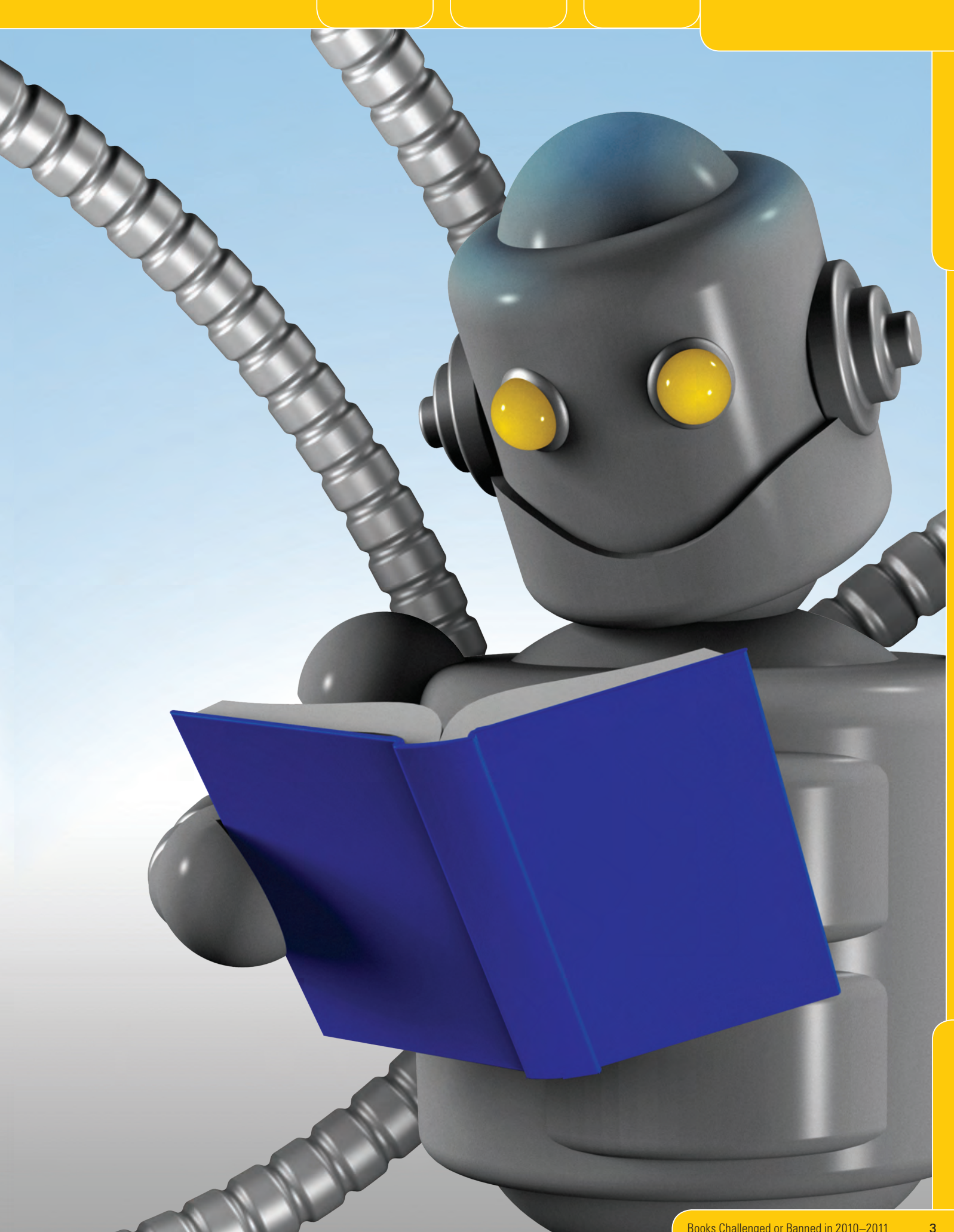
CHALLENGED or BANNED in 2010–2011

Banned Books Week 2011 is the thirtieth annual celebration of the freedom to read. This freedom, not only to choose what we read, but also to select from a full array of possibilities, is firmly rooted in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Although we enjoy an increasing quantity and availability of information and reading material, we must remain vigilant to ensure that access to this material is preserved; would-be censors who continue to threaten the freedom to read come from all quarters and all political persuasions. Even if well intentioned, censors try to limit the freedom of others to choose what they read, see, or hear.

Sex, profanity, and racism remain the primary categories of objections, and most occur in schools and school libraries. Frequently, challenges are motivated by the desire to protect children. While the intent is commendable, this method of protection contains hazards far greater than exposure to the “evil” against which it is leveled. U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, in *Texas v. Johnson*, said, “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.” Individuals may restrict what they themselves or their children read, but they must not call on governmental or public agencies to prevent others from reading or seeing that material.

The challenges documented in this list are not brought by people merely expressing a point of view; rather, they represent requests to remove materials from schools or libraries, thus restricting access to them by others. Even when the eventual outcome allows the book to stay on the library shelves and even when the person is a lone protester, the censorship attempt is real. Someone has tried to restrict another person’s ability to choose. Challenges are as important to document as actual bannings, in which a book is removed from the shelves of a library or bookstore or from the curriculum at a school. Attempts to censor can lead to voluntary restriction of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy; in these cases, material may not be published at all or may not be purchased by a bookstore, library, or school district.

It should be noted that this bibliography is incomplete because many prohibitions against free speech and expression remain undocumented. Surveys indicate that approximately 85 percent of the challenges to library materials receive no media attention and remain unreported. Moreover, this list is limited to books and does not include challenges to magazines, newspapers, films, broadcasts, plays, performances, electronic publications, or exhibits.



This bibliography represents books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned in 2010 and 2011 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2010—May 2011. (A date prior to May 2010 indicates the controversy began earlier, but continues into 2011.)

Alexie, Sherman
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian

Thorndike Press; Little, Brown
Banned in the Stockton, Mo. School District (2010) because of violence, language, and some sexual content. Retained in the Helena, Mont. School District (2011) despite a parent's objection that the book contained "obscene, vulgar and pornographic language." This *New York Times* bestseller won the National Book Award in 2007 in the "Young People's Literature" category, and is on many recommended book lists.
Source: July 2010, p. 156; Sept. 2010, pp. 198–99; Nov. 2010, pp. 241, 243–44; Mar. 2011, pp. 73–74.

Anderson, Laurie Halse
Speak

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux
Challenged in the Republic, Mo. schools (2010) because it is "soft-pornography" and "glorifies drinking, cursing, and premarital sex."
Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243–44.

Baker, Larry
The Flamingo Rising

Ballantine
Challenged on the Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, Ill. summer reading list (2010) because a parent complained that "a sexual encounter depicted in the novel was definitely something you could consider X-rated."
Source: Mar. 2011, p. 53.

Baskin, Julia; Lindsey Newman,
Sophie Pollitt-Cohen, and
Courtney Toombs
***The Notebook Girls: Four Friends,
One Diary, Real Life***

Warner
Reclassified from the young adult section to the adult nonfiction section at the Waukee, Iowa Public Library (2011) because of a complaint citing "foul language" and "cussing." The book includes frank discussions about adolescent sex, drinking, and drug use. Body image, sexual orientation, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks are also addressed.
Source: Jan. 2011, p. 7.

Brashares, Ann
***Forever in Blue, the Fourth
Summer of the Sisterhood***
Delacorte

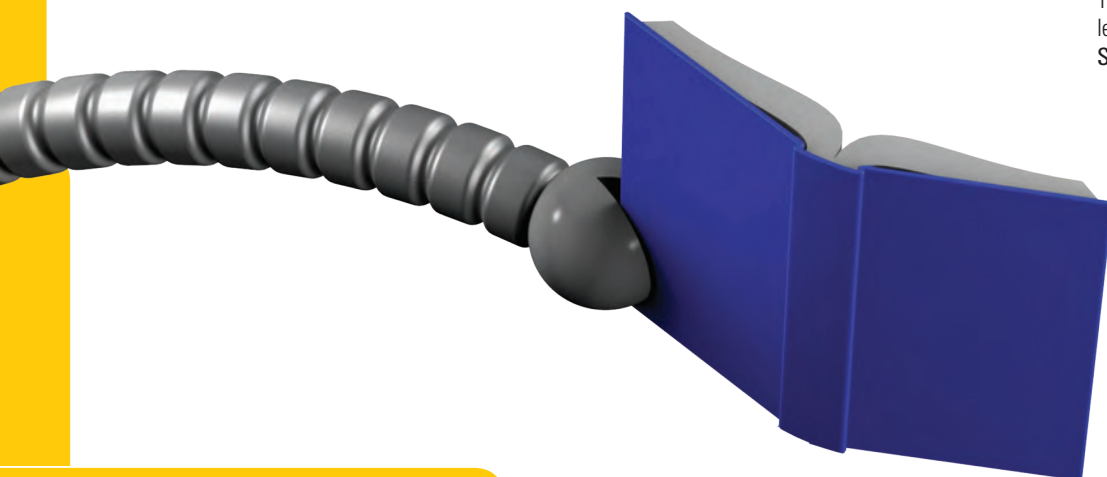
Challenged at the Theisen Middle School in Fond du Lac, Wis. (2010) by a parent who believes that the book has inappropriate subject matter for children. "Some (of the characters in the book) are sexually active, and alcohol is part of their recreation."
Source: July 2010, pp. 156, 176.

Burroughs, Augusten
Running with Scissors
St. Martin

Challenged as a suggested reading in a class where juniors and seniors earn college credit in Hillsborough County, Fla. (2010). Four high schools — Plant, Middleton, Hillsborough, and Bloomingdale — voted to keep the book and place a "Mature Reader" label on the front cover. Three high schools — Sickles, Robinson, and Lennard — will require parental consent. Gaither High School and Riverview High School voted to ban the book. Riverview's report stated: "This book has extremely inappropriate content for a high school media center collection. The book contained explicit homosexual and heterosexual situations, profanity, underage drinking and smoking, extreme moral shortcomings, child molesters, graphic pedophile situations and total lack of negative consequences throughout the book."
Source: May 2010, pp. 103–4.

Butler, Dori Hillestad
My Mom's Having a Baby
Albert Whitman & Co.

Challenged in the Carrollton, Tex. Library (2011) because it is inappropriate for children. The book won an Editor's Choice award from *Booklist* in 2005 and was named a Top Ten Sci-Tech book for Youth by *Booklist*. Retained at the Hillsborough County, Fla. Public Library System (2011). Published in 2005, the book tells of a little girl named Elizabeth who is curious about childbirth and how her mother became pregnant. Throughout the book's thirty pages, little Elizabeth learns about these topics in great detail.
Source: May 2011, pp. 95, 116.



Cast, P. C., and Kristin Cast

Betrayed

St. Martin's Griffin

Challenged in the North Star Borough School District, Fairbanks, Alaska high school libraries (2011) because, "It simply causes kids to think even more of things sexual." The teenage vampire novel is part two of the "House of Night" series. Source: May 2011, p. 93.

Chbosky, Stephen

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Pocket Books

Challenged, but retained, at the Clarkstown, N.Y. North High School (2011) despite a parent's complaint about the teen coming-of-age novel, which deals graphically with teenage sex, homosexuality, and bestiality. Source: May 2011, pp. 97–98; July 2011.

Chopin, Kate

The Awakening

Duffield; Oxford University Press;

Capricorn Books; Simon;

Prometheus Books

Challenged at the Oconee County, Ga. Library (2011) because the cover of the book — a novel about a woman whose desires run against the family structure of the 1890s — shows a painting of a woman's bare chest and upset the patron. The novel was first published in 1899. Source: Jan. 2011, p. 7.

Collins, Suzanne

The Hunger Games

Scholastic

Challenged and presented to the Goffstown, N.H. school board (2010) by a parent claiming that it gave her eleven-year-old nightmares and could numb other students to the effects of violence. Source: Jan. 2011, pp. 10–11.

Crutcher, Chris

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes

Greenwillow

The Belleville, Wis. School Board (2011) decided to keep a book that's required reading for high school freshmen in the curriculum despite a parent's complaint that the book was "pornography" and its language was "pervasively vulgar." Published in 1993, the novel has been read by ninth-grade students at Belleville High School for eight years. The book deals with topics of abortion, sexuality, and the power of religion. Source: Jan. 2011, p. 13; Mar. 2011, p. 75.

Ehrenreich, Barbara

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not)

Getting by in America

Holt

Challenged at the Easton, Penn. School District (2010), but retained despite a parent's claim the book promotes "economic fallacies" and socialist ideas, as well as advocating the use of illegal drugs and belittling Christians. Removed from the Bedford, N.H. School District's required Personal Finance course (2010) after two parents complained about the "book's profanity, offensive references to Christianity, and biased portrayal of capitalism." The nonfiction account is about Ehrenreich's struggles to make a living on multiple minimum-wage jobs in America. A checklist has been proposed that Bedford school officials would use to rate books and other instructional materials. Source: May 2010, p. 107; Mar. 2011, pp. 53–54; May 2011, pp. 96–97.

Foer, Jonathan Safran

Extremely Loud

and Incredibly Close

Houghton

Challenged in the Richland, Wash. School District (2010). Used in a tenth-grade honors language arts class at Hanford High, the book tells the story of Oskar Schell, a young boy whose father died in the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. The book contains profanity, sex, and descriptions of violence. Source: July 2010, pp. 156–57.

Frank, Anne

Anne Frank: The Diary

of a Young Girl

Doubleday

Challenged at the Culpeper County, Va. public schools (2010) by a parent requesting that her daughter not be required to read the book aloud. Initially, it was reported that officials decided to stop assigning a version of Anne Frank's diary, one of the most enduring symbols of the atrocities of the Nazi regime, due to the complaint that the book includes sexual material and homosexual themes. The director of instruction announced the edition published on the fiftieth anniversary of Frank's death in a concentration camp will not be used in the future despite the fact the school system did not follow its own policy for handling complaints. The remarks set off a hailstorm of criticism online and brought international attention to the 7,600-student school system in rural Virginia. The superintendent said, however, that the book will remain a part of English classes, although it may be taught at a different grade level. Source: Mar. 2010, pp. 57–58; May 2010, p. 107.

Gruen, Sara

Water for Elephants

Algonquin Books

Removed from a spring break elective course at the Bedford, N.H. School District (2010) after a parent complained about the novel's sexual content. The complainant further suggested that the school only allow "youth versions" of particular books or organize a parental review system over the summer that would look at books that students need parental permission to read. A checklist has been proposed that Bedford school officials would use to rate books and other instructional materials. Source: May 2011, pp. 96–97.

Guterson, David
Snow Falling on Cedars
Harcourt

Retained in college-level classes at Richland, Wash. high schools (2011). Teachers said the book was selected for the curriculum twelve years ago because it deals with prejudice against Japanese-Americans in the Pacific Northwest during and shortly after World War II.
Source: Mar. 2011, p. 74.

Haddon, Mark
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time
Doubleday

Removed from the Lake Fenton, Mich. summer reading program (2010) after parents complained about its "foul language." The book is about an autistic child who investigates the death of a neighborhood dog. It was a joint winner of the 2004 Boeke Prize and won the 2003 Whitbread Book of the Year award.
Source: Sept. 2010, p. 200.

Hahn, Mary Downing
The Dead Man in Indian Creek
Clarion Books; Sandpiper

Challenged at the Salem-Keizer School District, Oreg. elementary schools (2010) because of the drugs and drug smuggling activities in the book. The book was previously challenged in 1994 in the same school district because of graphic violence, examples of inappropriate parenting, and because it was too frightening for elementary students. The book has won awards from the International Reading Association, the Children's Book Council, and the American Library Association.
Source: May 2010, pp. 105–6.

Halpern, Julie
Get Well Soon
Square Fish

Challenged at the Theisen Middle School in Fond du Lac, Wis. (2010) by a parent who believes that the book contains inappropriate subject matter for children.
Source: May 2010, p. 127; July 2010, pp. 156, 176.

Horowitz, Anthony
Snakehead
Philomel Books

Challenged at the Westside Elementary School library in Brooksville, Fla. (2011) because "drug and weapons smuggling and gang violence is too much for any child to have access to at that age."
Source: Mar. 2011, p. 52.

Huxley, Aldous
Brave New World
Harper

Challenged at North County High School in Glen Burnie, Md. (2010) by a small group of parents who circulated a petition to have the book removed from use by county schools over concerns about explicit sexual content. The 1932 novel depicts a dystopian future where science and technology have run amok resulting in a morally bankrupt society. Retained on the list of approved materials that Seattle, Wash. high school teachers may use in their language arts curriculum (2011). A parent had complained that the book has a "high volume of racially offensive derogatory language and misinformation on Native Americans. In addition to the inaccurate imagery, and stereotype views, the text lacks literary value which is relevant to today's contemporary multicultural society."
Source: Jan. 2011, pp. 10, 12–13; Mar. 2011, pp. 74–75.

Kehret, Peg
Stolen Children
Dutton

Challenged, but retained at the Central York, Pa. School District (2011) despite a parental concern that the book "was too violent." The book centers on the kidnapping of thirteen-year-old Amy and her three-year-old babysitting charge. The kidnappers videotape the pair and send the DVDs to their parents for ransom. Amy works to send clues through the videos to help police find them.
Source: Mar. 2011, p. 52; May 2011, p. 116.

The Koran

Burned (2011) by Evangelical pastor Terry Jones at his Gainesville, Fla. church, the Dove World Outreach Center. In response, thousands of protesters overran the United Nations compound in Mazar-I-Sharif, Afghanistan, killing at least twelve people.
Source: July 2011.

Lelveld, Joseph
Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle With India
Knopf

Banned in parts of India (2011). A Santa Cruz, Calif. educational organization, Foundation for Excellence, canceled an event planned in honor of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author (2011). The foundation provides scholarships for students in India and canceled the event after the biography hinted a homosexual relationship between Gandhi and a German named Hermann Kallenbach.
Source: July 2011.

Mackler, Carolyn
Vegan Virgin Valentine
Candlewick Press

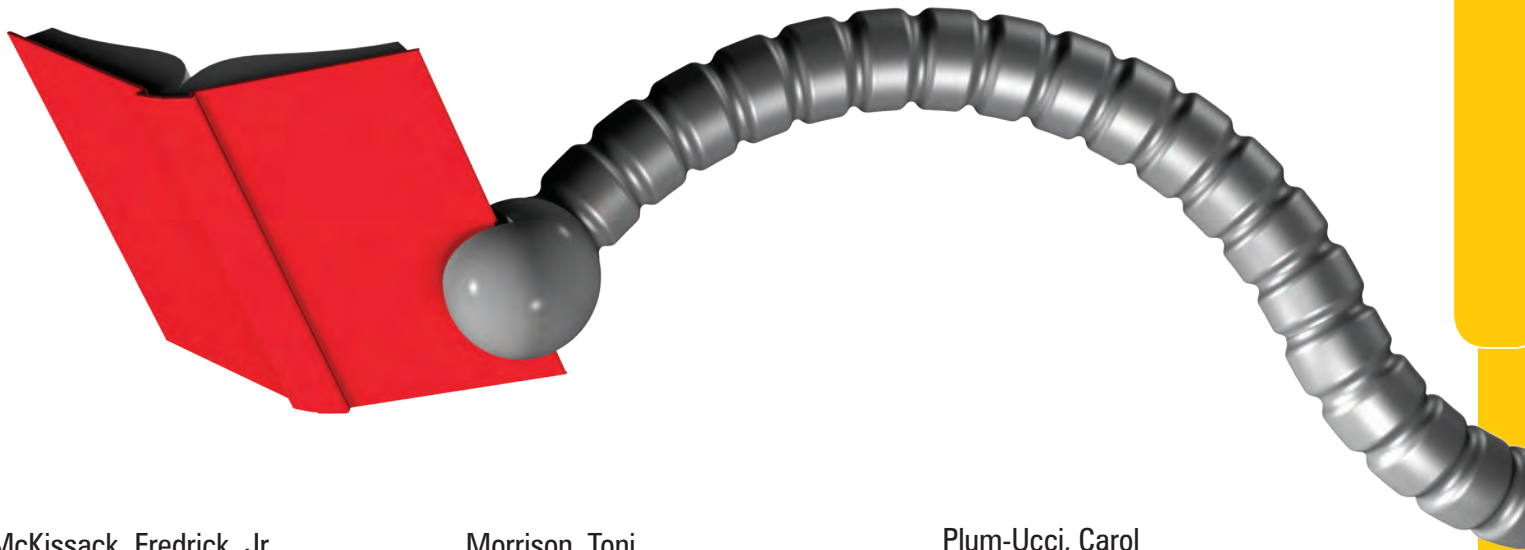
Challenged at the Quitman, Tex. Junior High library (2011) by a parent who described one scene as "on the verge of pornography."
Source: Jan. 2011, p. 8.

Madaras, Lynda, and Dane Saavedra
What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys: A Growing-up Guide for Parents & Sons
Newmarket Press

Banned from twenty-one school libraries in Buda, Tex. (2011) after a parent's complaint. The book includes definitions of rape, incest, sexual assault, and intercourse.
Source: Jan. 2011, p. 8.

Mathabane, Mark
Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa
Macmillan

Challenged, but retained, at the San Luis Obispo, Calif. High School (2010) despite containing a passage that graphically details sexual assault. The book had been taught at the school for more than a decade without controversy.
Source: Jan. 2011, p. 29.



McKissack, Fredrick, Jr.

Shooting Star

Atheneum

Retained in the Broken Arrow, Okla. Sequoyah Middle School library (2010) despite a parent's concern about several swear words in the text. The book is about a high school football player who, after becoming discouraged about his size, starts using steroids to bulk up, resulting in negative effects on his life and personality. Source: Nov. 2010, p. 257.

Monette, Paul

Writers' Voice: Selected from Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir
Signal Hill Publications

Pulled from circulation at the Cheatham, Tenn. Middle School (2011). The anthology contains a selection from Paul Monette's *Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir*, chronicling how Monette coped with a lover's death from AIDS. The book talks frankly about past promiscuity and uses profanity. School policy was changed after the complaint. The previous policy kept challenged books available in the library until two weeks after the review process was complete. Now the book is removed and a decision is made within forty-eight hours. Source: May 2011, p. 95.

Moore, Patrick

Tweaked: A Crystal Meth Memoir
Kensington Books

Removed from the North Middlesex, Mass. Regional High School (2010) because the book contains "'F' words and instructions on how to make certain types of illegal drugs." Source: Nov. 2010, p. 243.

Morrison, Toni

Song of Solomon

Knopf; NAL

Retained in the Franklin Central High School's Advanced Placement English curriculum in Indianapolis, Ind. (2010), despite some parents' concerns about the novel's language and sexual content.

Source: July 2010, p. 177.

Myracle, Lauren

ttyl

Amulet Books

Retained in the Ponus Ridge Middle School library in Norwalk, Conn. (2010). While some critics decry its style as "grammatically incorrect," most who take exception point to its "foul language," sexual content, and questionable sexual behavior. It is the first book written entirely in the format of instant messaging — the title itself is a shorthand reference to "talk to you later."

Source: May 2010, p. 127.

Ockler, Sarah

Twenty Boy Summer

Little, Brown

Challenged in the Republic, Mo. schools (2010) because it is "soft-pornography" and "glorifies drinking, cursing, and premarital sex."

Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243–44.

Plum-Ucci, Carol

The Body of Christopher Creed

Harcourt

Challenged, but retained, in the Appleton, Wis. Area School District ninth-grade curriculum (2010) despite concerns about its age appropriateness.

Source: Jan. 2011, pp. 30–31.

Salinger, J. D.

The Catcher in the Rye

Bantam; Little, Brown

Challenged, but retained, in the Martin County, Fla. School District (2010) despite a parent's concern about inappropriate language.

Source: Nov. 2010, p. 243; Mar. 2011, p. 73.

Sapphire (Ramona Lofton)

Push

Vintage

Challenged on an extracurricular reading list in the Horry County, S.C. school library (2011). The 1996 novel is based on the story of Precious Jones, an illiterate sixteen-year-old, who grows up in poverty. Precious is raped by her father, battered by her mother, and dismissed by social workers. The story follows Precious, pregnant with a second child by her father, through her journey of learning how to read and be on her own. The novel was made into a critically acclaimed movie, *Precious*, in 2009, which received six Oscar nominations, including Best Picture, for the 82nd Academy Awards and Sundance Film Festival praise.

Source: May 2011, pp. 94–95.

Semencic, Carl
***Pit Bulls and Tenacious
Guard Dogs***

Thomasson Grant & Howell

Banned at the Logan, Australia West Library (2011) because it contains information on restricted dog breeds. In 2001, under Local Law 4 (Animal Management) the Logan City Council placed a ban on, among others, pit bull terriers and American pit bulls. Therefore, Logan City Council libraries do not stock literature on any of the prohibited breeds.
Source: May 2011, p. 120.

Shaffer, Paul
***We'll Be Here for the Rest
of Our Lives***

Anchor

Challenged, but retained, at the Mitchell, S. Dak. Public Library (2010) despite a resident's concern that the book was objectionable with its "too frank depictions and discussions of sex and sexual matters." Written by the longtime leader of David Letterman's band, the book is filled with show business stories and tales of Schaffer's upbringing in Canada.
Source: Sept. 2010, p. 218.

Sixx, Nikki
***The Heroin Diaries: A Year in the
Life of a Shattered Rock Star***
VH1

Pulled from an optional, supplemental reading list in an Advanced Placement psychology course in Brooksville, Fla. Hernando High School (2010) because of complains about explicit language, descriptions of drug use, and photos. Written by the former bassist for the heavy metal band Mötley Crüe, it is a cautionary tale about the dangers of drug use.
Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 242–43.

Smith, Jeff
Bone

Scholastic

Retained in the Rosemount, Minn. elementary school libraries (2010) despite a parent's concern that the series includes smoking, drinking, and gambling in its graphics and storyline. The series is rated suitable for fourth grade and up, has won several awards, and received positive reviews from national publications, including *Time*, which touted the series as the "best all-ages graphic novel ever published."
Source: July 2010, p. 175.

Sones, Sonya
***One of Those Hideous Books
Where the Mother Dies***

Simon & Schuster

Challenged, but retained, at the Theisen Middle School in Fond du Lac, Wis. (2010) despite a parent's belief that the book's "sexual content was too mature for eleven- to fourteen-year-olds." The book has won several awards, including being named a 2005 Best Book for Young Adults by the American Library Association.
Source: Mar. 2010, p. 54; May 2010, pp. 127–28; July 2010, pp. 156, 176.

Sonnie, Amy, ed
***Revolutionary Voices:
A Multicultural Queer
Youth Anthology***

Alyson Books

Banned by the Rancocas Valley Board of Education from the Mount Holly, N.J. High School library shelves (2010) after a local conservative group expressed concern that the book was too graphic and obscene. The local group, part of the 9/12 Project, a nationwide government watchdog network launched by the talk-radio and television personality Glenn Beck, called for the banning of three books, all dealing with teenage sexuality and issues of homosexuality. The two other titles challenged, but retained were: *Love and Sex: Ten Stories of Truth* edited by Michael Cart, and *The Full Spectrum: A New Generation of Writing about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Other Identities* edited by David Levithan and Billy Merrell. Removed from the Burlington County, N.J. public library (2010) after a member of Glenn Beck's 9/12 Project complained about Sonnie's book. Named as one of the best adult books for high school students by *School Library Journal* in 2001, the book was called "pervasively vulgar, obscene, and inappropriate."
Source: July 2010, pp. 154–56; Sept. 2010, pp. 199–200.

Vonnegut, Kurt
Slaughterhouse-Five
Dell; Dial

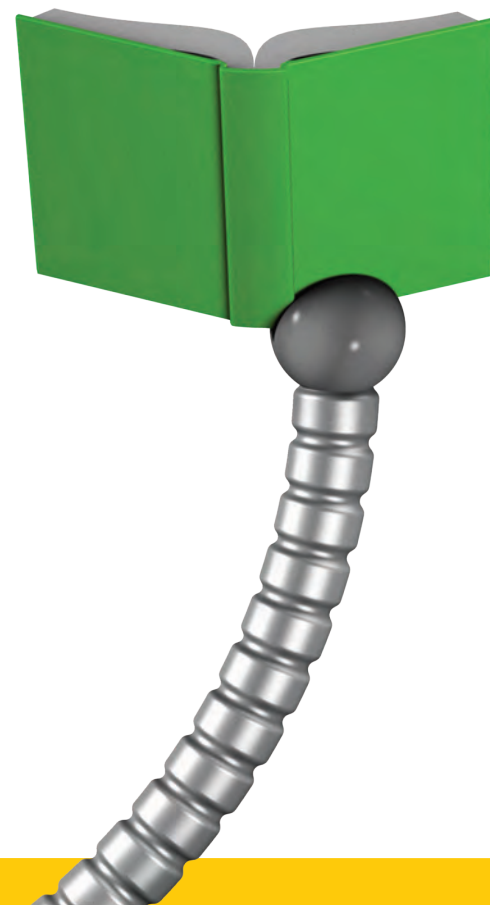
Challenged in the Republic, Mo. schools (2010) because it is "soft-pornography" and "glorifies drinking, cursing, and premarital sex."
Source: Nov. 2010, pp. 243–44.

Walker, Margaret
Jubilee
Houghton

Challenged at the Jacksonville, Ill. High School (2010) by a pastor who said he found the fictionalized story of the author's grandmother, who was born as a slave in Georgia an "offensive" and "trashy" novel about the way of life in the Old South. "We believe it is to promote superiority for white people and to step on black people and make them feel inferior." The Ku Klux Klan challenged the novel in South Carolina in 1977 because it produces "racial strife and hatred."
Source: May 2010, pp. 104–5.

WritersCorps
Paint Me Like I Am: Teen Poems
HarperTempest

Retained in the combined middle and high school library in the North Fond du Lac, Wis. School District (2010), provided it has a label designating it as appropriate for high school students. Younger students could also access the book with prior parental permission. A parent asked the school district to reconsider the book due to mature language.
Source: May 2010, pp. 128–29.



TAKE ACTION!

PROTECT YOUR RIGHT to READ

Each day, all across the country, one of our most basic freedoms — the right to read — is in danger. In communities large and small, censorship attempts threaten to undermine our freedom to read. Without our constant support, the First Amendment freedoms that we so often take for granted — the right to read, explore ideas, and express ourselves freely — are at risk.

The First Amendment guarantees that each of us has the right to express our views, including opinions about particular books. At the same time, the First Amendment also ensures that none of us has the right to control or limit another person's ability to read or access information. Yet, when individuals or groups file formal written requests demanding that libraries and schools remove specific books from the shelves, they are doing just that — attempting to restrict the rights of other individuals to access those books.

The rights and protections of the First Amendment extend to children and teens as well as adults. While parents have the right — and the responsibility — to guide their own children's reading, that right does not extend to other people's children. Similarly, each adult has the right to choose their own reading materials, along with the responsibility to acknowledge and respect the right of others to do the same.

When we speak up to protect the right to read, we not only defend our individual right to free expression, we demonstrate tolerance and respect for opposing points of view. And when we take action to preserve our precious freedoms, we become participants in the ongoing evolution of our democratic society.



Act now to protect your right to read. Here's how you can get involved:

STAY INFORMED

Be aware of what's happening

The best way to fight censorship is to be aware that it's happening. When you encounter it, be prepared to speak up or let others know.

Ask the people on the front lines — librarians, teachers, and school principals — if there are any current attempts to challenge or ban books or other materials. If they have support groups or information lists, ask to join them.

Legislators and public officials often introduce legislation to restrict access to books and other materials in libraries, schools, and bookstores. Let officials know that there are citizens actively opposed to demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries.

Attend school board, library board, and PTA meetings

You can speak up about the importance of free speech to education in a democratic society.

As a regular participant in gatherings, you have the opportunity to learn about policies governing access to books and materials. You can witness firsthand when someone demands that a school or library remove a book or restrict access to books.

Subscribe to print and online news publications

You can stay current on First Amendment rights and censorship issues.

The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (www.ala.org/oif) publishes the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* (www.ala.org/nif) and provides regular news updates via the OIF blog (www.oif.ala.org/oif), Twitter (twitter.com/oif) and the IFACTION mailing list (lists.ala.org/sympa/info/ifaction).

The First Amendment Center (www.firstamendmentcenter.org) maintains an online First Amendment library (www.firstamendmentcenter.org/research-articles/) and provides breaking news about First Amendment issues via its RSS newsfeed.

The McCormick Foundation's Post-Exchange (freedomproject.us/post-exchange) has original reporting and commentary on First Amendment and intellectual freedom-related news. It also sends out an electronic newsletter that aggregates news from around the country and world on these issues.

Join groups committed to preserving the right to read

You can participate by joining these nonprofit organizations.

The Freedom to Read Foundation (www.ftrf.org) is the only organization in the United States whose primary goal is to protect and promote the First Amendment in libraries by participating in litigation dealing with free expression in libraries and other venues. Members receive a quarterly newsletter, *The FTRF News*.

The American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression

(www.abffe.org) promotes and protects the free exchange of ideas, particularly those contained in books, by opposing restrictions on the freedom of speech.

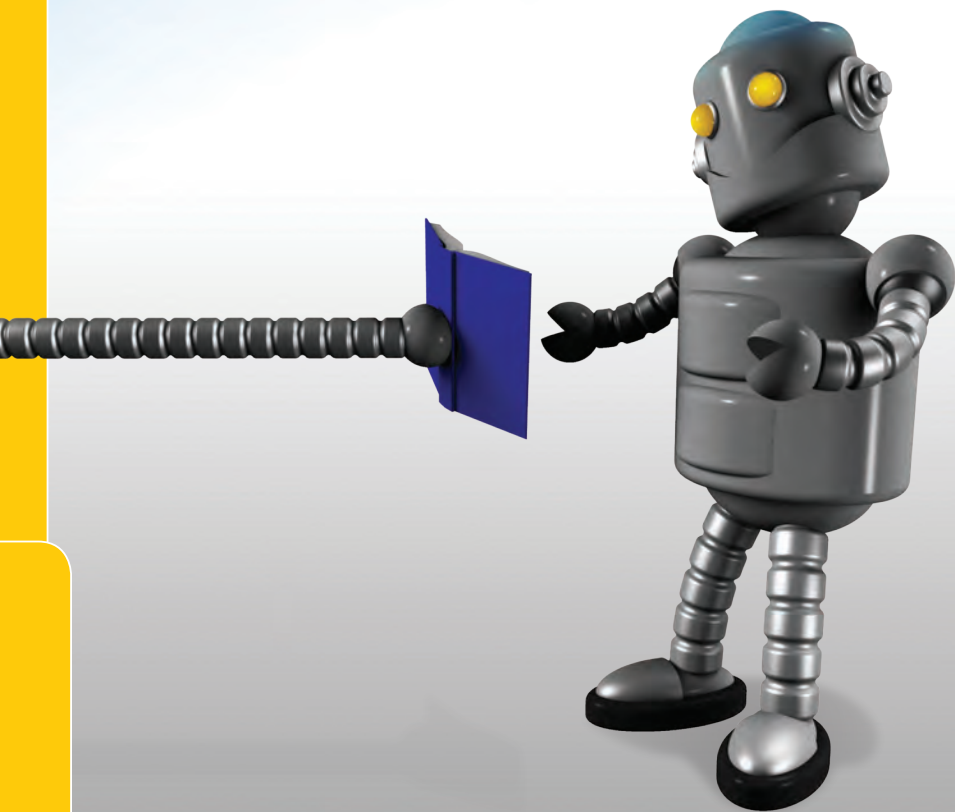
The National Coalition Against Censorship (www.ncac.org) is an alliance of fifty national non-profit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups that works to educate both members and the public at large about the dangers of censorship and how to oppose it.

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

(www.cbldf.org) works to protect free speech in comics by supporting First Amendment rights for members of the comics community, fans, and professionals alike.

The American Civil Liberties Union

(www.aclu.org) works daily to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution, including the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Local chapters and affiliates (www.aclu.org/affiliates) provide assistance to local communities.



CHALLENGE CENSORSHIP

Report censorship to ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom

You can help raise awareness of censorship in your local community.

ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracks attempts to remove or restrict books across the country. By reporting censorship incidents, you can help to identify trends in censorship cases and document responses and solutions to censorship. All identifying information is kept strictly confidential. You can file reports online by going to www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/challengeslibrarymaterials/challengereporting/index.cfm.

Attend and participate in public hearings

You can inform public officials that censorship won't be tolerated in the community.

By attending hearings, you can speak out in support of free expression and the right to read freely. You can let officials know that there are citizens actively opposed to demands to restrict or remove books in schools and libraries. Such attempts seldom succeed when concerned citizens speak out against censorship.



Write letters to public officials

You can write to public officials encouraging them to preserve the freedom to read.

Let them know that your rights and your views are entitled to the same respect as those who seek to censor books. Write to any public official you believe can prevent the suppression of books in your community: your mayor, city council, other city officials, library board members, school board members, superintendent of schools, etc.

Send a letter or an op-ed article to local news organizations

You can update community news outlets with information and opinion.

Make sure you let reporters and editors know that there are members of the community who oppose censorship and the official suppression of ideas. Like letters to public officials, letters sent to local news outlets and comments posted on Web sites and blogs are effective ways to raise awareness.

Work with community groups

You can network with local organizations for support.

Inform professional associations, civic organizations, and religious groups about attempts to remove books from the community's library or school. You can ask to speak to their membership about the importance of preserving First Amendment freedoms. Or ask if you can contribute an article to the group's newsletter or Web site. You can speak with the group's leaders and ask them to lend public support to efforts to protect the right to read in the community.

Form a coalition to oppose censorship in your community

You can partner with others who support the right to read freely.

Even a small number of persons can form an effective group to oppose censorship. Such groups allow members to share responsibility for attending meetings and conducting outreach efforts. By joining together you can become a resource for the community as a whole. To read the story of one exemplary community coalition, visit their Web site at www.westbendparentsforreespeech.webs.com.

Seek assistance from national groups

You can get guidance and support from experienced organizations.

Get started by researching existing groups so that you can benefit from their expertise. Check out the national organizations listed on page 10 for assistance, resources, and referrals whenever you or your organization address demands to remove books from libraries or schools.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

Join Friends of the Libraries and PTAs

You can become an advocate for community education groups.

Libraries and schools rely on volunteers and advocates to accomplish their mission of educating young people. These groups also provide information and lifelong learning opportunities to adults in the community. You can contribute by participating in Friends groups, PTAs, or volunteering directly where your help will strengthen these vital institutions.

Participate in Banned Books Week

You can promote the right to read by joining in the celebration.

Each year, libraries, schools, and bookstores across the nation celebrate the freedom to read by observing Banned Books Week. This public event in September features author visits and readings from banned books. You can show your support for the freedom to read by attending these events. Please visit www.ala.org/bbooks for more resources and information.

SUPPORT BANNED BOOKS WEEK

Banned Books Week merchandise to help celebrate the freedom to read — such as posters, t-shirts, buttons, and bookmarks — is available for purchase at the ALA Store Online at www.alastore.ala.org, or by calling toll-free at 1-866-SHOP ALA (1-866-746-7252). This year's merchandise features robots (see below) and the slogan "Free Your Mind." For more information on Banned Books Week, please visit www.ala.org/bbooks.



FREE YOUR MIND