Banned Books Week 2000 is the nineteenth annual celebration of the freedom to read. This freedom, not only to choose what we read but also to be able 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 press. Even as we revel in the increasing quantity and availability of information and reading material, we must maintain vigilance to assure that access to this material is preserved. Threats against the freedom to read still exist and come from all quarters and from all political persuasions. Quite simply, censors are those who try to limit the freedom of others to choose what they read, see, or hear, even if the motivation for the restriction is well intentioned.

Sex, profanity, and racism remain the primary categories of objections, and most incidents occur in schools and school libraries. Frequently, challenges are motivated by the desire to protect children. And, while this cause is noble and commendable, this method of protection contains hazards far greater than exposure to the “evil” against which the protection is leveled. 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 just someone expressing a point of view regarding these materials; rather, the challengers have asked that the material be removed from the school curriculum or library, thus restricting its access by others. Even when the eventual outcome allows the book to stay on the library shelves, and even when the incident is a lone protester, the censorship attempt is real. Someone has tried to restrict another person’s ability to choose. These incidents are as important to document as actual bannings, where a book is removed from the shelves of a library or bookstore or from the curriculum at a school. Attempts to censor lead to voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy, a situation far more critical than an actual banning, since in these cases the material may not be published or may not be purchased by a bookstore, library, or school district.

We have reason to be especially celebratory this year. Due to the commitment of parents, students, librarians, teachers, and other concerned citizens, more and more of the challenges are unsuccessful and the reading material remains available.

It should be noted that this bibliography is incomplete because many prohibitions against free speech and expression remain undocumented. Surveys indicate 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 1999-2000 as reported in the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom from May 1999 through March 2000.

**Banned Books: 2000 Resource Book** has an entire section devoted to ideas, activities, and resources to help educate the public and protect our fragile First Amendment rights.

See the back cover for details.

Anaya, Rudolfo A. Bless Me, Ultima. T.Q.S Pubns. Removed from the Laton, Calif. Unified School District (1999) because it contains violence and profanity that might harm students. The novel is considered by many critics to be the finest work by the New Mexico writer, widely respected as one of the leading Hispanic writers in the U.S. It was chosen by teachers who thought it would be welcomed by the district's students, who are 80 percent Hispanic. Challenged at the John Jay High School in Wappingers Falls, N.Y. (2000) because the book is "full of sex and cursing." Source: Sept. 1999, pp. 120-21; Mar. 2000, p. 51.


Removed from the Barron, W is. School District (1998) because the 1992 data is outdated. The ACLU of Wisconsin filed suit against the school district on Feb. 16, 1999. The books were then removed to the library while a federal court considered the lawsuit. On October 8, 1999, it was agreed that the book will remain available to students as part of the school district’s settlement of the federal lawsuit. Source: Jan. 1999, p. 9; Mar. 1999, p. 37; May 1999, p. 68; Jan. 2000, p. 28.


Doyle, Robert P. Banned Books American Library Association. Banned from a display at Spotswood High School in Harrisonburg, Va. (1999) after a parent determined that some materials listed in the publication were inappropriate for students. Students were not required to read or even look at the publication, nor were they required to read any of the books listed in the publication. Source: Jan. 2000, p. 16; Mar. 2000, p. 39.


Glewire, Mel. Who Killed Mr. Chippendale? Lodestar Bks. Removed from the Central School library in Huntsville, Ala. (1999) as inappropriate for fourth graders. After the book’s removal, the complainant called for the formation of a group of parents to go through all the library’s books, as well as monitor new books. The school’s principal stated, “If a book is sexual, if it is racial, if it’s violent, we’ll pull it off the shelves.” Source: July 1999, p. 93.


Greene, Bette. The Drowning of Stephan Jones. Bantam. Removed from the Barron, W is. School District (1998) because of the book’s homosexual theme. The ACLU of Wisconsin filed suit against the school district on Feb. 16, 1999. The books were then returned to the library while a federal court considered the lawsuit. On October 8, 1999, it was agreed that the book will remain available to students as part of the school district’s settlement of the federal lawsuit. Source: Jan. 1999, p. 9; Mar. 1999, p. 37; May 1999, p. 68; Jan. 2000, p. 28.

Groom, W inston. Forrest Gump. Doubleday; Pocket Bks. Challenged at the Bay Point School in South Dade County Fla. (1999) because the novel “pokes fun at blacks, makes numerous references to sex, and uses foul language inappropriate for tenth-graders.” First-year teacher Michael W ells was fired over the incident and another instructor was placed on probation. Source: July 1999, p. 95.


Guterson, David. Snow Falling on Cedars. Harcourt;Thordike Pr; Vintage. Pulled from the Boerne, Tex. Independent High School library and barred from the curriculum (1999) after several parents and students...
complained about its racial epithets and sexually graphic passages. The book was later returned to the library. Source: Nov. 1999, p. 163; Jan. 2000, pp. 8, 12.


Heron, Ann. Two Teenagers in Twenty: A lyson Pubns. Removed from the Barron, W is. School District (1998) because of the book's homosexual theme and because it contains outdated information about A I D S. The ACLU of W isconsin filed suit against the school district on Feb. 16, 1999. The book was then returned to the library while a federal court considered the lawsuit. O n October 8, 1999, it was agreed that the book will remain available to students as part of the school district's settlement of the federal lawsuit. Source: Jan. 1999, p. 9; Mar. 1999, p. 37; May 1999, p. 68; Jan. 2000, p. 28.


Holiday, Laurel. Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries. Pocket Bks. Limited to students in the seventh grade or higher at the C anal W inchester M iddle School in Columbus, O hio (1999) because of references to sex, a self-induced abortion, and drug use. Source: July 1999, p. 94; Nov. 1999, pp. 171-72.

Jukes, Mavis. It's a Girl Thing: How to Stay Healthy, Safe and in Charge. Knopf. Witten parental permission is required to see the book at the Palm Beach, Fla. elementary and middle schools (1999) because of concerns that the book — written for preteen girls — is more explicit than some parents would find acceptable. Source: May 1999, p. 66.

Klein, N orma. Beginners’ Love. H illside B ks. Challenged, but retained in the Chester, S.C. High School library (1999) with the provision that parents can instruct the school not to let their own children borrow it. The book's graphic description of sex, discussions of abortion, and the character's use of marijuana were considered objectionable by some parents. S outh Carolina Attorney G eneral C harlie C ondon ruled that the school board could reasonably conclude that the novel was “pervasively vulgar” and “educationally unsuitable” and, thus, removal by the board would not violate the First Amendment. Source: Mar. 1999, p. 36; May 1999, p. 84; N ov. 1999, p. 163.


Moe, Barbara A. E verything You Need to Know About Sexual Abstinence. Rosen. Pulled from the O uachita Parish School Library in Monroe, La. (1996) because of sexual content. The Louisiana chapter of the ACLU filed a lawsuit in the federal courts on October 3, 1996, claiming that the principal and the school superintendent violated First Amendment free speech rights and also failed to follow established procedure when they removed the book. The three-year-old school library censorship case headed to court after the O uachita Parish School


Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. Scholastic. Challenged in South Carolina schools (1999) because "the book has a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect, and sheer evil." Parents have also objected to the book's use in the Douglas County, Colo. schools (1999); two Moorpark, Calif. elementary schools (1999); and in suburban Buffalo, N.Y. (1999), among other districts. Restricted to fifth- through eighth-graders who have written parental permission in the Zeeland, Mich. schools (2000). No future installments can be purchased and teachers are prohibited from reading the books aloud in class. The book was considered objectionable because of the intense story line, the violence, the wizardry and the sucking of animal blood. Challenged, but retained in Franklin, Ill. School District 157-C (2000). Parents were concerned that the book contains lying and smart-aleck retorts to adults. Source: Jan. 2000, pp. 1, 26; Mar. 2000, pp. 46, 48, 50, 63.

Reaving. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. Scholastic. Challenged in South Carolina schools (1999) because "the book has a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect, and sheer evil." Parents have also objected to the book's use in the Douglas County, Colo. schools (1999); two Moorpark, Calif. elementary schools (1999); and in suburban Buffalo, N.Y. (1999), among other districts. Restricted to fifth- through eighth-graders who have written parental permission in the Zeeland, Mich. schools (2000). No future installments can be purchased and teachers are prohibited from reading the books aloud in class. The book was considered objectionable because of the intense story line, the violence, the wizardry and the sucking of animal blood. Challenged, but retained in Franklin, Ill. School District 157-C (2000). Parents were concerned that the book contains lying and smart-aleck retorts to adults. Source: Jan. 2000, pp. 1, 26; Mar. 2000, pp. 46, 48, 50, 63.

Rowling, J. K. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Scholastic. Challenged in South Carolina schools (1999) because "the book has a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect, and sheer evil." Parents have also objected to the book's use in the Douglas County, Colo. schools (1999); two Moorpark, Calif. elementary schools (1999);


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