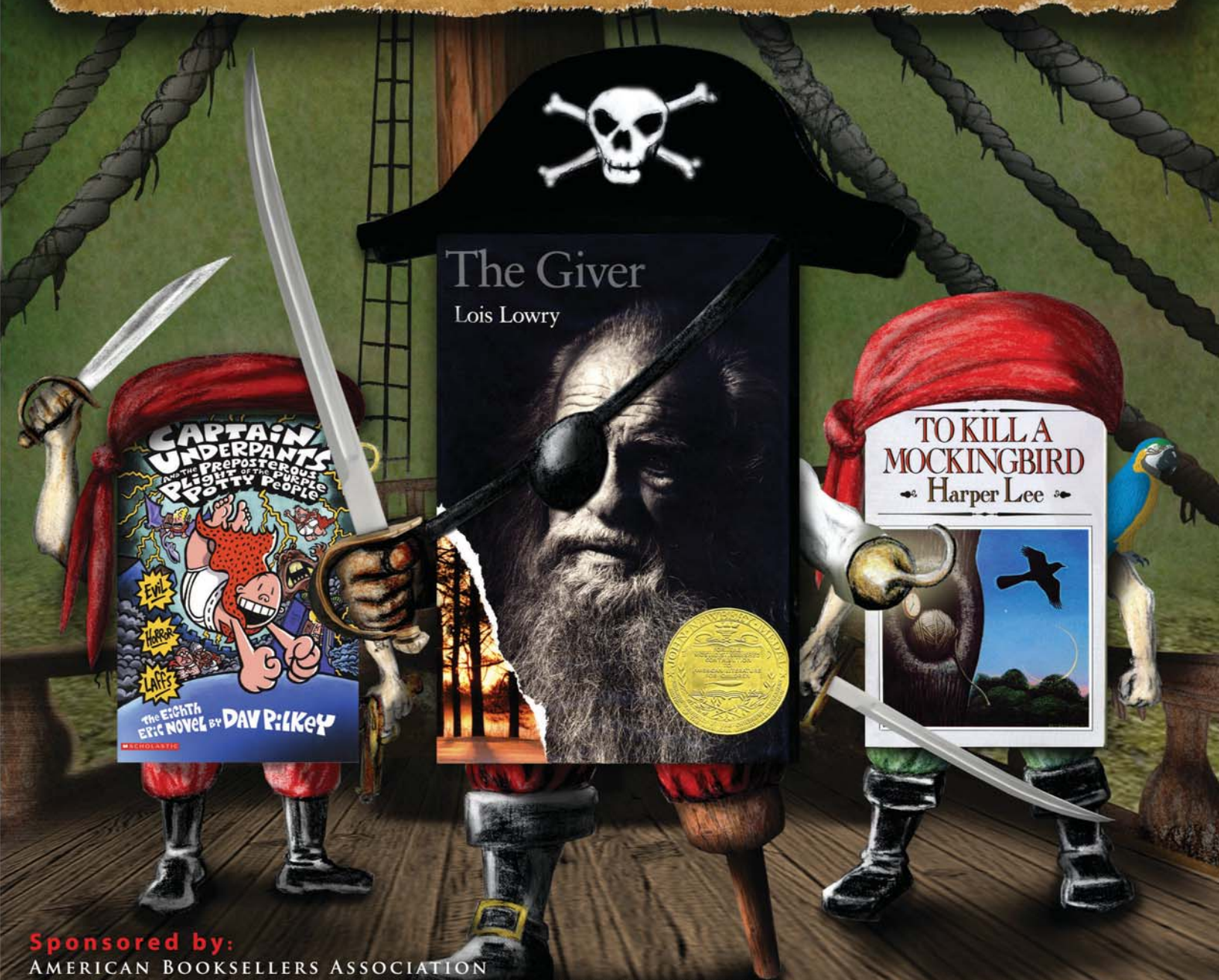


# BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED in 2006 - 2007

ROBERT P. DOYLE



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**BANNED BOOKS AHOY!**

TREASURE YOUR FREEDOM TO READ

# BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED IN 2006-2007

Banned Books Week 2007 is the twenty-sixth 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 their motivations for restrictions are 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 the protection 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 that these materials be removed 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.

We have reason to celebrate this year. Due to the commitment of parents, students, librarians, teachers, and other concerned citizens, more and more 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.



**T**his bibliography represents books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned in 2006–2007 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2006 through May 2007.

**Alvarez, Julia.** *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents.* Plume. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Ancona, George.** *Cuban Kids.* Marshall Cavendish. Banned in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (2006). The picture book shows a child with a rifle and children saluting the Cuban flag with the caption, "We will be like Che!" Source: Nov. 2006, p. 288.

**Angelou, Maya.** *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.* Bantam. Retained in the Fond du Lac, Wis. High School sophomore advanced English class (2006). Parents objected to teens reading Angelou's account of being brutally raped by her mother's boyfriend and an unwanted pregnancy later in life. Parents will receive notification and be allowed to decide whether or not they approve of its use by their children, according to recommendations agreed upon by a review committee and parents who objected to the use of the book. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 30-31.

**Atwood, Margaret.** *The Handmaid's Tale.* Fawcett; Houghton; Simon; Hall. The Judson, Tex. school district board overruled (2006) Superintendent Ed Lyman's ban of the novel from an advanced placement English curriculum. Lyman had banned the book after a parent complained it was sexually explicit and offensive to Christians. In doing so, he overruled the recommendation of a committee of teachers, students, and parents. The committee appealed the decision to the school board. Source: May 2006, pp. 154-55.

**Baskin, Julia, Lindsey Newman, Sophie Pollitt-Cohen, and Courtney Toombs.** *The Notebook Girls.* Warner Bks. Challenged, but retained at the Cape May County, N.J. Library (2006). The book is comprised of the entries four New York City high-school students made in a shared journal in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Source: Jan. 2007, p. 29.

**Bechdel, Alison.** *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic.* Houghton. Challenged, but retained in the Marshall, Mo. Public Library (2006) despite being deemed "pornographic" by some members of the community. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 289; Jan. 2007, pp. 9-10; May 2007, p. 115.

**Birdseye, Tom.** *Attack of the Mutant Underwear.* Puffin. Removed from the Pinellas, Fla. school district's Battle of the Books program (2006), although the book is on the Sunshine State Young Reader's Award list of books for third- through fifth-graders. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 290-91.

**Bradbury, Ray.** *Fahrenheit 451.* Ballantine. Challenged at the Conroe, Tex. Independent School District (2006) because of the following: "discussion of being drunk, smoking cigarettes, violence, 'dirty talk,' references to the Bible, and using God's name in vain." The novel went against the complainants' "religious beliefs." Source: Nov. 2006, p. 293.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Veldt.* Dramatic Pub. Co.; Creative Ed. Retained on the Beaverton, Oreg. School District's reading list (2006). The short story was challenged by a middle school parent who thought its language and plot were inappropriate for students. Her biggest concern is that the story offers no consequences for the children's actions. The short story is part of Bradbury's *The Illustrated Man* anthology. It is twenty pages long and was published

in 1951 as the first in the collection of eighteen science fiction stories. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 319.

**Brown, Dan.** *The Da Vinci Code.* Doubleday. Banned in Egypt (2006). The culture minister told parliament, "We ban any book that insults any religion. We will confiscate this book." Parliament was debating the book at the request of several Coptic Christian members who demanded a ban because, "It's based on Zionist myth, and it contains insults towards Christ, and it insults the Christian religion and Islam." Banned in Iran (2006). Source: Sept. 2006, p. 232; Jan. 2007, p. 35.

**Burroughs, Augusten.** *Running with Scissors.* St. Martin. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) because of the book's strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: May 2007, p. 116.

**Chbosky, Stephen.** *The Perks of Being a Wallflower.* Pocket Bks. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Chbosky's novel, which contains references to masturbation, homosexuality, and bestiality, got the bulk of the criticism. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Chevalier, Tracy.** *Girl with a Pearl Earring.* Plume; HarperCollins. Banned in Iran (2006). "The new government intends to take positive steps for reviving neglected values and considering religious teachings in the cultural field." Source: Jan. 2007, p. 35.

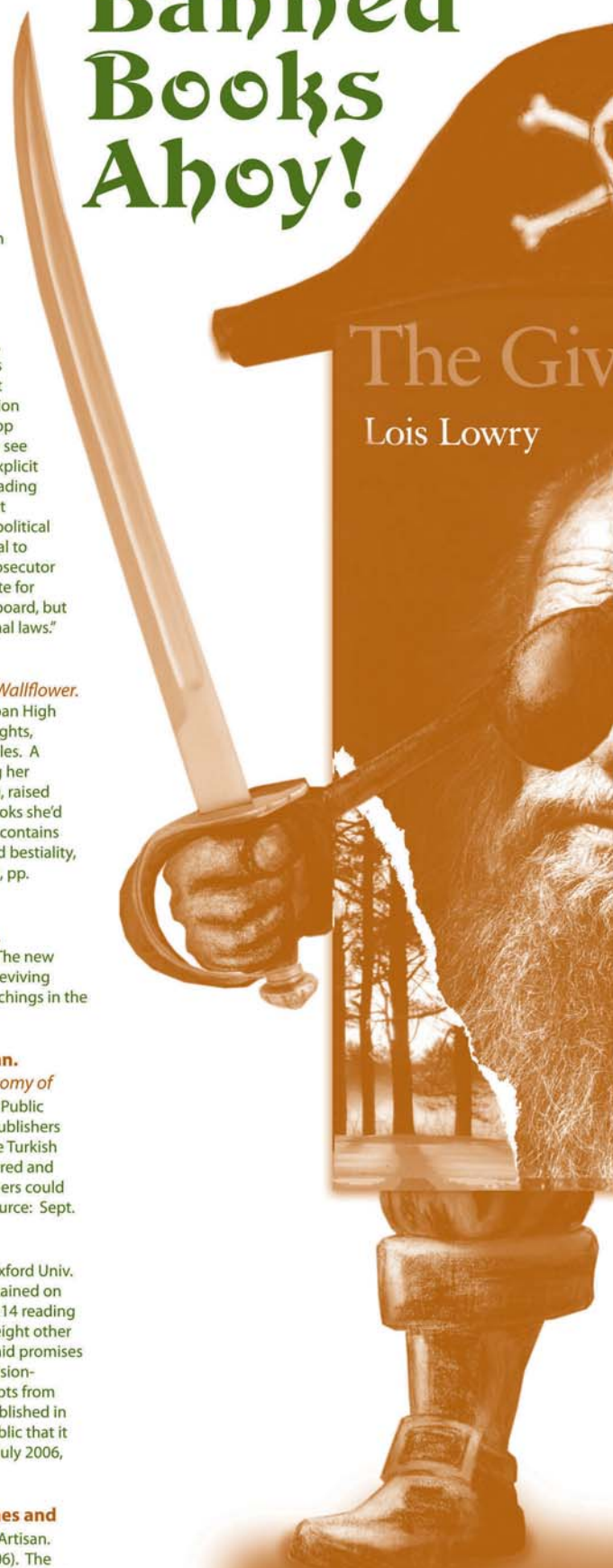
**Chomsky, Noam, and Edward S. Herman.** *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media.* Pantheon. The Turkish Chief Public Prosecution Office decided to prosecute two publishers that released the book because it "degrades the Turkish identity and the Turkish Republic, and fuels hatred and discrimination among the people." The publishers could face up to six years in prison if found guilty. Source: Sept. 2006, p. 234.

**Chopin, Kate.** *The Awakening.* Duffield; Oxford Univ. Pr.; Capricorn Bks.; Simon; Prometheus Bks. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. First published in 1899, this novel so disturbed critics and the public that it was banished for decades afterward. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Christensen, James C., Renwick St. James and Alan Dean Foster.** *Voyage of the Basset.* Artisan. Retained in the Davis County, Utah Library (2006). The complainant objected to the book after her five-year-old son borrowed it from the children's section and showed her the illustrations it contains of topless mermaids and other partially clothed mythical creatures. The author is a retired Brigham Young University art professor and cochair of the Mormon Arts Foundation. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 319.

# Banned Books Ahoy!

The Giving Tree  
Lois Lowry



**Cormier, Robert.** *The Chocolate War.* Dell; Pantheon. Challenged, but retained in the West Hartford, Conn. schools (2006). Parents of a King Philip Middle School eighth-grader thought the language, sexual content, and violence make the book PG-13. Challenged in the Wake County, N.C. schools (2006) because the book has "vulgar and sexually explicit language." Parents are getting help from Caled2Action, a Christian group that says its mission is to "promote and defend our shared family and social values." Source: July 2006, pp. 184-85, 187; Sept. 2006, p. 231.

**Crutcher, Chris.** *Whale Talk.* Greenwillow. Challenged at the Missouri Valley, Iowa High School (2007) because the book uses racial slurs and profanity. Source: May 2007, p. 98.

**de Haan, Linda and Stern Nijland.** *King & King.* Tricycle Pr. Parents of a Lexington, Mass. (2006) second-grader protested that their son's teacher read the fairy tale about gay marriage to the class without warning parents first. The book was used as part of a lesson about different types of weddings. "By presenting this kind of issue at such a young age, they're trying to indoctrinate our children," stated the parent. The incident renewed the efforts of Waltham-based Parents' Rights Coalition to rid the state's schools of books and lessons that advance the "homosexual agenda" in public schools. U.S. District Court Judge Mark Wolf ruled February 23, 2007, that public schools are "entitled to teach anything that is reasonably related to the goals of preparing students to become engaged and productive citizens in our democracy." Wolf said the courts had decided in other cases that parents' rights to exercise their religious beliefs were not violated when their children were exposed to contrary ideas in school. Source: July 2006, pp. 186-87; May 2007, pp. 103-4.

**Draper, Sharon M., and Adam Lowenbein.** *Romiette and Julio.* Simon Pulse. Challenged in the Albemarle County, Va., schools (2006), spurring a debate over the age-appropriateness of material with sexual innuendo and fictional online chat room chatter. The school board determined to move the book from the supplemental summer reading list after fifth grade to the sixth-grade second semester curriculum. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 15-16.

**Eleveled, Mark, ed.** *The Spoken Word Revolution: Slam, Hip Hop & the Poetry of a New Generation.* Sourcebooks. Challenged, but retained in the Sequim, Wash. School District (2006) despite complaints that the book contains "profanity and references to sex, drugs, and mistreatment of women that are inappropriate for young teens." Source: Sept. 2006, p. 257.

**Fogelin, Adrian.** *My Brother's Hero.* Peachtree. Removed from the Hillsborough County, Fla. fourth-grade reading list (2006), although the book is on the Sunshine State Young Reader's Award list of books for third- through fifth-graders. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 290-91.

**Frank, E. R.** *America.* Atheneum. Challenged in the Ravenna, Ohio schools (2007) because, "What we kept finding and going over was sexual content and profanity," said the complainant. The novel has received several awards including the *New York Times* Notable Book Award. It also was a Garden State Teen Book Award nominee. Source: May 2007, p. 93.

**Freedom Writers.** *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them.* Doubleday. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) because of the book's strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in

violation of the criminal laws." The best-selling book has achieved national acclaim and was made into a hit movie. Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, p. 116.

**Gaines, Ernest J.** *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.* Bantam. Challenged as an eighth-grade district-wide reading assignment in the Puyallup, Wash. schools (2006) because "racial slurs and stereotyping are used throughout the book, as well as scenes of sex, rape, and implied incest." The Puyallup School Board voted to uphold an earlier decision by a district committee requiring eighth-graders to read the novel. In explaining their vote, each board member recounted the difficulty of balancing valid concerns on each side of the debate. "It wasn't a sole issue of dealing with racism or the 'n-word.'" "But it is our hope by giving them an explanation of the word and where it came from they'll understand it's inappropriate to use it in the future." Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 11-12; Mar. 2007, pp. 74-75.

**Going, K. L.** *Fat Kid Rules the World.* Putnam. Removed from the Pickens County, S.C. middle- and high-school library shelves (2007) because "the language, the sexual references, and drug use are not appropriate for middle school students." In 2004, the book was named a Michael Printz honor book for excellence in young adult literature by the Young Adult Library Services Association. Source: May 2007, pp. 93-94.

**Gordon, Sharon.** *Cuba.* Benchmark Bks. Removed from all Miami-Dade County school libraries (2006) because a parent's complaint that the book does not depict an accurate life in Cuba. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Florida filed a lawsuit challenging the decision to remove this book and the twenty-three other titles in the same series from the district school libraries. In granting a preliminary injunction in July 2006 against the removal, Judge Alan S. Gold of U.S. District Court in Miami characterized the matter as a "First Amendment issue" and ruled in favor of the ACLU of Florida, which argued that the books were generally factual and that the board should add to its collection, rather than removing books it disagreed with. Source: July 2006, p. 207; Sept. 2006, pp. 230-31; Nov. 2006, p. 288; Jan. 2007, p. 8; May 2007, pp. 91-92.

**Gravett, Paul.** *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics.* Collins Design. Removed from all branches of the San Bernardino County, Calif. Library (2006) because "there are a couple of pretty graphic scenes, especially one showing sex with a big hamster, that are not especially endearing to our community standards." Source: July 2006, pp. 181-82.

**Gray, Heather M., and Samantha Phillips.** *Real Girl/Real World: Tools for Finding Your True Self.* Seal Pr. Challenged, but retained at the Cape May County, N.J. Library (2006). The book explores issues such as body image, emerging sexuality, and feminism. Source: Jan. 2007, p. 29.

**Green, Jonathon, comp.** *Cassell Dictionary of Slang.* Cassell. Banned in the Wake County, N.C. schools (2006) under pressure from one of a growing number of conservative Christian groups using the Internet to encourage school book bans. Source: Sept. 2006, p. 231.

**Hedayat, Sadegh.** *The Blind Owl.* Grove Pr. The widely acclaimed Iranian classic, written in the 1930s, was banned in Iran (2006). "The new government intends to take positive steps for reviving neglected values and considering religious teachings in the cultural field." Source: Jan. 2007, p. 35.

**Hedges, Peter.** *What's Eating Gilbert Grape.* Simon. Banned by the superintendent at the Carroll, Iowa High School (2006) because of parental concerns about an oral sex scene. In response, students started an Internet protest on the social network Facebook. Hundreds joined the group—"Un-ban Gilbert Grape! Censorship is Wrong"—and organizers say they plan to collect signatures calling for a formal review. "Parents were already notified of its content, and had to sign a permission slip for their child to read it." Later, the Carroll school board voted to overturn Superintendent Rob Cordes' decision to ban the book from the high school's literature-to-film class. The author said,

"the district shouldn't let those larger themes be obscured by the relatively few pages with sexual content that he intended to drive plot." Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 12-13; Mar. 2007, p. 73.

**Jukes, Mavis.** *The Guy Book: An Owner's Manual.* Crown Pub. Challenged in the Lockwood, Mont. Middle School library (2006) by parents who objected to what they believe to be misleading, sexually explicit material in the book. The book was retained. The challenge came on the heels of a December decision by the board to pull three books from the middle-school library. Those books were *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends*, by Jan Brunvand, and *Urban Legends and Alligators in the Sewer*, both by Thomas Craughwell. The same parent brought those titles—and their content—to the attention of the librarian and superintendent. Source: May 2006, pp. 129-30.

**Kehret, Peg.** *Abduction!* Dutton. Challenged, but retained at the two Apple Valley, Mass. middle- and eight elementary-school libraries (2006) despite the complaint that the book was too violent. Source: July 2006, p. 208.

**Langley, Andrew.** *100 Greatest Tyrants.* Grolier. Challenged at the Mount Isa, Queensland, Australia, high school (2006) by a legislator who described the book as offensive and inappropriate for history studies in any Australian school. The school principal refused to remove the book from the library, describing it as a useful resource for generating debate and critical-thinking skills among students. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 33-34.

**LeGuin, Ursula K.** *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea.* HarperPrism. Removed from the West Brazoria, Tex. Junior High School library (2006) because of inappropriate language. Books on "sensitive topics such as death, suicide, physical or sexual abuse, and teenage dating relationships" were moved to a restricted "young adult" section from which students can borrow only with written parental permission. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 289-90.

**Levitt, Steven D., and Stephen J. Dubner.** *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything.* Morrow. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Lowry, Lois.** *The Giver.* Dell; Houghton. Challenged, but retained at the Seaman, Kans. Unified School District 345 elementary school library (2006). Source: May 2006, p. 153.

**Mackler, Carolyn.** *Vegan Virgin Valentine.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged in the Mandarin High School library in Jacksonville, Fla. (2007) because of inappropriate language. Source: May 2007, p. 91.

**Mathabane, Mark.** *Kaffir Boy.* NAL. Retained at the East Union High School in Manteca, Calif. (2006) senior English class. The controversial autobiography was challenged as inappropriate because a passage uses the words "penis" and "anus" to describe a scene in which a group of young boys are about to prostitute themselves to a group of men for food. Source: July 2006, pp. 209-10.

**McBain, Ed.** *Alice in Jeopardy.* Pocket. Challenged at the Sno-Isle Libraries in Arlington, Wash. (2006) because of "curse words and graphic sex scenes." Source: Jan. 2007, p. 11.

**Mitchell, Stephen.** *Gilgamesh: A New English Version.* Free Pr. Challenged in the Clearview Regional High School in Harrison Township, N.J. (2006) because the modern translation of one of the oldest known pieces of literature was considered sexually descriptive and unnecessarily explicit. The work itself dates back to about 1700 B.C., some one thousand years before the writings of Homer. Source: Jan. 2007, p. 10.

**Mochizuki, Ken.** *Baseball Saved Us.* Lee & Low Bks. Challenged, but retained on the second-grade reading list in the New Milford, Conn. schools (2006) despite the fact the word "Jap" is used to taunt the main character in the book. The children's story is about the World War II Japanese-American internment. Source: July 2006, pp. 183-84.

**Morgan, Melissa J.** *TTYL.* Grosset & Dunlap. Challenged at the William Floyd Middle School library in Mastic, N.Y. (2007) because the book includes "curse words, crude references to the male and female anatomy, sex acts and adult situations like drinking alcohol and flirtation with a teacher that almost goes too far." A spokesman for the William Floyd School District said the book will remain in the library, and that the book is very popular with students across the country. The spokesperson also said unlike many books that young people read, the book deals with controversial subjects without glorifying negative behaviors. Source: May 2007, p. 92.

**Morrison, Toni.** *Beloved.* Knopf; NAL. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Pulled from the senior Advanced Placement English class at Eastern High School in Louisville, Ky. (2007) because two parents complained that the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about antebellum slavery depicted the inappropriate topics of bestiality, racism, and sex. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11; May 2007, pp. 98, 121.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Bluest Eye.* NAL. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) because of the book's strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, p. 116.

**Myers, Walter Dean.** *Fallen Angels.* Scholastic. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds.** *Reluctantly Alice.* Atheneum. Challenged in the Wake County, N.C. schools (2006). Parents are getting help from Called2Action, a Christian group that says its mission is to "promote and defend our shared family and social values." Source: Sept. 2006, p. 231.

**O'Brien, Tim.** *The Things They Carried.* Broadway Bks.; Houghton. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Opie, Iona Archibald, and Peter Opie, eds.** *I Saw Esau: The Schoolchild's Pocket Book.* Candlewick Pr. Challenged at the Cedar Grove Elementary School in Murfreesboro, Tenn. (2007). The complainant stated, "I understand that it is a book of poetry, but there is a fine line between poetry art and porn and this book's illustrations are absolutely offensive in every way." The book is a collection of schoolyard jokes, riddles, insults and jump-rope rhymes and is illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Source: May 2007, p. 94.

**Park, Barbara.** *Junie B. Jones and Some Sneaky, Pecky Spying.* Random. Challenged in the Wake County, N.C. schools (2006). Parents are getting help from Called2Action, a Christian group that says its mission is to "promote and defend our shared family and social values." Source: Sept. 2006, p. 231.

**Parks, Gordon.** *The Learning Tree.* Fawcett; Harper. Challenged on the summer reading list at LeFlore High School in Mobile, Ala. (2006) because the author frequently used inappropriate words, such as "nigga," "bitch," "bastard," and "ass." Source: Nov. 2006, p. 290.

**Paulsen, Gary.** *Zero to Sixty: The Motorcycle Journey of a Lifetime.* Harvest Bks. Removed from the West Brazoria, Tex. Junior High School library (2006) because of depictions of sex acts and profanity. Books on "sensitive topics such as death, suicide, physical or sexual abuse, and teenage dating relationships" were moved to a restricted "young adult" section from which students can borrow only with written parental permission. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 289-90.

**Peters, Lisa Westberg.** *Our Family Tree: An Evolution Story.* Harcourt. Retained in the Seaman, Kans. Unified School District 345 elementary school library (2006). Objections were raised because the book is about the scientific theory of evolution. Source: May 2006, p. 153.

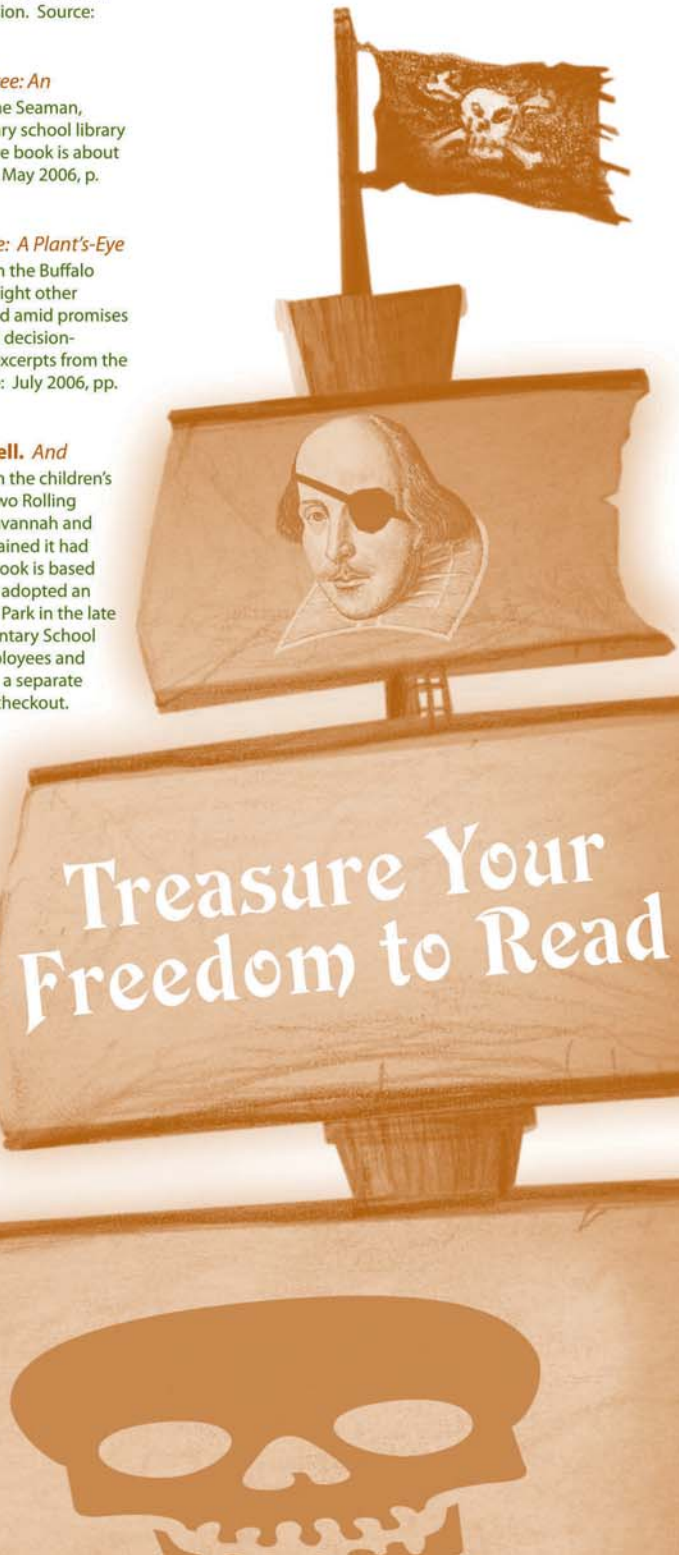
**Pollan, Michael.** *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World.* Random. Retained on the Buffalo Grove, Ill. High School (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11.

**Richardson, Justin, and Peter Parnell.** *And Tango Makes Three.* Simon. Moved from the children's fiction section to children's nonfiction at two Rolling Hill's Consolidated Library's branches in Savannah and St. Joseph, Mo. (2006) after parents complained it had homosexual undertones. The illustrated book is based on a true story of two male penguins who adopted an abandoned egg at New York City's Central Park in the late 1990s. Challenged at the Shiloh, Ill. Elementary School library (2006). A committee of school employees and a parent suggested the book be moved to a separate shelf, requiring parent permission before checkout. The school's superintendent, however, rejected the proposal and the book remained on the library shelf. Pulled from four elementary-school libraries in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C. (2007) after a few parents and Mecklenburg County Commissioner Bill James questioned the controversial but true story. The books were returned after the local paper questioned the ban. It should be noted that there was no formal request for the book's removal. Source: May 2006, p. 129; Jan. 2007, p. 9; Mar. 2007, pp. 71-72.

**Rowling, J. K.** *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and

therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-08; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.* Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-08; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73.



# BANNED BOOKS AHoy!

TREASURE YOUR FREEDOM TO READ

\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Scholastic. Removed by the Wilsona School District trustees from a list recommended by a parent-teacher committee for the Vista San Gabriel, Calif. Elementary School library (2006) along with twenty-three other books. Trustees said one rejected book contained an unsavory hero who made a bad role model for children; another was about a warlock, which they said was inappropriate; and others were books with which they were unfamiliar and didn't know whether they promoted good character or conflicted with textbooks. Rejected titles included three bilingual Clifford the *Big Red Dog* books, Disney's *Christmas Storybook*, two books from the Artemis Fowl series, *Beauty is a Beast*, *California (Welcome to the USA)*, and *The Eye of the Warlock*. The Wilsona School District board approved new library book-selection guidelines in wake of the trustees' controversial decision. Books now cannot depict drinking alcohol, smoking, drugs, sex, including "negative sexuality, implied or explicit nudity, cursing, violent crime or weapons, gambling, foul humor, and dark content." The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-08; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-08; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Scholastic. The Gwinnett County, Ga. school board (2006) rejected a parent's pleas to take Harry Potter books out of school libraries, based on the claim they promote witchcraft. The Georgia Board of Education ruled December 14 that the parent had failed to prove her contention that the series "promote[s] the Wicca religion," and therefore that the book's availability in public schools does not constitute advocacy of a religion. Source: July 2006, pp. 207-08; Sept. 2006, p. 231; Nov. 2006, p. 289; Mar. 2007, pp. 72-73.

**Ruby, Laura.** *Lily's Ghosts*. HarperCollins. Removed from the Pinellas, Fla. school district and Hillsborough County, Fla. fourth-grade reading list (2006), although the book is on the Sunshine State Young Reader's Award list of books for third- through fifth-graders. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 290-91.

**Sanchez, Alex.** *Rainbow Boys*. Simon. Removed from the Webster, N.Y. Central School District summer reading list for high-school students (2006) after receiving complaints from parents. The book won the International Reading Association's 2003 Young Adults' Choice Award, and the American Library Association selected it as a Best Book for Young Adults. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 291-92.

**Schreier, Alta.** *Vamos a Cuba (A Visit to Cuba)*. Heinemann. Removed from all Miami-Dade County school libraries (2006) because a parent's complaint that the book does not depict an accurate life in Cuba. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Florida filed a lawsuit

challenging the decision to remove this book and the twenty-three other titles in the same series from the district school libraries. In granting a preliminary injunction in July 2006 against the removal, Judge Alan S. Gold of U.S. District Court in Miami characterized the matter as a "First Amendment issue" and ruled in favor of the ACLU of Florida, which argued that the books were generally factual and that the board should add to its collection, rather than removing books it disagreed with. Source: July 2006, p. 207; Sept. 2006, pp. 230-31; Nov. 2006, p. 288; Jan. 2007, p. 8; May 2007, pp. 91-92.

**Schwartz, Alvin.** *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. Harper; Lippincott. Retained in the Greater Clark County, Ky. elementary school libraries (2006) despite a grandmother's request to ban the Scary Stories books written by Alvin Schwartz. She wanted all four or five volumes in the series banned because, she said, they depict cannibalism, murder, witchcraft and ghosts, and include a story about somebody being skinned. Source: Nov. 2006, pp. 317-18.

**Sebold, Alice.** *The Lovely Bones*. Little. Challenged at the Coleytown Middle School library in Westport, Conn. (2007). The school superintendent acknowledged that the book is "for mature readers" and also acknowledged that "the book is appropriate to be part of a middle-school library collection serving students from ages 11-14, many of whom possess the maturity level to read this book." Source: Mar. 2007, p. 71.

**Sendak, Maurice.** *In the Night Kitchen*. Harper. Challenged in the Wake County, N.C. schools (2006). Parents are getting help from Called2Action, a Christian group that says its mission is to "promote and defend our shared family and social values." Source: Sept. 2006, p. 231.

**Shafak, Elif.** *The Bastard of Istanbul*. Viking. Prize-winning novelist went on trial in Istanbul, Turkey (2006), accused of belittling Turkishness. The novel had been at the top of Turkish bestsellers lists since its publication, but its treatment of the mass murder of Ottoman Armenians in 1915 angered government officials. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 35-36.

**Silverstein, Charles, and Edmund White.** *The Joy of Gay Sex*. Crown; Simon & Schuster/Fireside. Challenged, but retained at the Nampa, Idaho Public Library (2006) along with seven other books, including *The Joy of Sex* despite the complaint that, "they are very pornographic in nature and they have very explicit and detailed illustrations and photographs which we feel doesn't belong in a library." Source: July 2006, p. 183.

**Steer, Dugald.** *Wizardology: The Book of the Secrets of Merlin*. Candlewick Pr. Challenged at the West Haven's, Conn. Molloy Elementary School library (2007) because the book exposes children to the occult. Source: May 2007, p. 91.

**Steinbeck, John.** *Of Mice and Men*. Bantam; Penguin; Viking. Retained in the Greencastle-Antrim, Pa. tenth-grade English classes (2006). A complaint was filed because of "racial slurs" and profanity used throughout the novel. The book has been used in the high school for more than thirty years, and those who object to its content have the option of reading an alternative reading. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 29-30.

**Thompson, Craig.** *Blankets*. Top Shelf. Challenged in the Marshall, Mo. Public Library (2006) because the book was deemed "pornographic" by some members of the community. The book was moved to the adult book section, rather than the young-adult area where it had been shelved before. Source: Nov. 2006, p. 289; Jan. 2007, pp. 9-10; May 2007, p. 115.

**Twain, Mark [Samuel L. Clemens].** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Bantam; Bobbs-Merrill; Grosset; Harper; Holt; Houghton; Longman; Macmillan; NAL;

Norton; Penguin; Pocket Bks. Pulled from classes in Taylor, Mich., schools (2006) because of complaints about its liberal use of common racial slurs. Challenged as required reading at Cactus High in Peoria, Ariz. (2006). The student and mother have threatened to file a civil-rights complaints because of alleged racial treatment, the segregation of the student, and the use of a racial slur in the classroom. Challenged in the Lakeville, Minn. High School (2007) and St. Louis Park High School in Minneapolis, Minn. (2007) as required reading for sophomores. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 14-15; Mar. 2007, pp. 50-52; May 2007, pp. 121-22.

**Vonnegut, Kurt.** *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Dell; Dial. Retained on the Northwest Suburban High School District 214 reading list in Arlington Heights, Ill. (2006), along with eight other challenged titles. A board member, elected amid promises to bring her Christian beliefs into all board decision-making, raised the controversy based on excerpts from the books she'd found on the Internet. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) because of the book's strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: July 2006, pp. 210-11; May 2007, p. 116.

**Watkins, Yoko Kawashima.** *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. HarperTeen. Removed from the sixth-grade English curriculum at Dover-Sherborn, Mass. Middle School (2006) due to scenes hinting at rape, violence against women by Korean men, and a distorted presentation of history. It is part of the state's recommended reading list for the grade level. The book is based on the real-life experiences of Watkins, whose father was a Japanese government official. In a reversal of its decision made, the Dover-Sherborn Regional School committee voted unanimously to keep the book as part of a sixth-grade language arts unit on survival. The school is exploring other texts to bring balance to the unit in response to the criticism leveled against the book by some parents and community members. Source: Jan. 2007, pp. 13-14; Mar. 2007, pp. 73-74.

**Wood, Maryrose.** *Sex Kittens and Horn Dawgs Fall in Love*. Delacorte. Removed along with nine other titles from a library order at the Hernando County, Fla. (2006) schools. Among the other books culled from Nature Coast Technical High School's order were Barbara Kingsolver's first novel, *The Bean Trees*; *The Clan of the Cave Bears*, by Jean Auel; *Boy's Life*, by Robert McCammon; and the abridged young-adult version of *The Power of One*, by Bryce Courtenay. A board member led the charge against those books, reading profanity-laced passages and castigating the school officials who placed the order. Other books the school system wants to have reviewed are: *Are You in the House Alone?*; *Rainbow Boys*; *Rats Saw God*; and *The King Must Die*. Source: July 2006, p. 182.

**Wright, Richard.** *Black Boy*. Harper. Challenged in the Howell, Mich. High School (2007) because of the book's strong sexual content. In response to a request from the president of the Livingston Organization for Values in Education, or LOVE, the county's top law enforcement official reviewed the books to see whether laws against distribution of sexually explicit materials to minors had been broken. "After reading the books in question, it is clear that the explicit passages illustrated a larger literary, artistic or political message and were not included solely to appeal to the prurient interests of minors," the county prosecutor wrote. "Whether these materials are appropriate for minors is a decision to be made by the school board, but I find that they are not in violation of the criminal laws." Source: Mar. 2007, pp. 51-52; May 2007, p. 116.

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