

# BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED IN 2001-2002

Robert P. Doyle



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Banned Books Week 2002 is the twenty-first 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 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 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. While the 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 by someone expressing a point of view regarding these materials; rather, the challengers have asked that these materials be removed from the school curriculum or library, thus

restricting access to them by others. Even when the eventual outcome allows the book to stay on the library shelves, for example, 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 lead to voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy, a situation as critical as 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 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 2001-2002 AS REPORTED IN THE NEWSLETTER ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM FROM MAY 2001 THROUGH MARCH 2002.

ATWOOD, MARGARET. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Fawcett; Houghton; Simon; Hall. Challenged, but retained in the Dripping Springs, Tex. senior Advanced Placement English courses (2001) as an optional reading assignment. Some parents were offended by the book's descriptions of sexual encounters. Source: July 2001, p. 174.

*The Bible*. Challenged, but retained in the Marion-Levy Public Library System (2001) in Ocala, Fla. Source: May 2001, p. 123.

BLUME, JUDY. *Forever*. Bradbury Pr. Banned from middle school libraries in the Elgin, Ill. School District U46 (1997) because of its sex scenes. The decision was upheld in June 1999 after an hour of emotional school board discussion. The book was returned (2002) to the shelves of the district's middle school libraries. Source: May 1997, pp. 60-61; Sept. 1997, p. 125; Sept. 1999, p. 119; Mar. 2002, p. 105.

CORMIER, ROBERT. *The Chocolate War*. Dell; Pantheon. Challenged, but retained at the Dunedin Highland Middle School in St. Petersburg, Fla. (2001) despite objections to profanity, scenes about masturbation and sexual fantasy, and segments of the book that were considered denigrating to girls. Source: Jan. 2002, pp. 49-50.

\_\_\_\_\_. *We All Fall Down*. Dell. Restricted in Arlington, Tex. middle and high schools (2000) to students who have written parental permission, due to concerns over violent content. Removed from the Carver Middle School library in Leesburg, Fla. (2000) after parents complained about the book's content and language. Challenged in the Tamaqua, Pa. Area School District (2001) because the book "might not be appropriate for younger schoolmates." The school board is considering the establishment of a restricted-materials section in the district's middle-school library for books deemed objectionable. Students would need parental permission to access any title placed there. Source: May 2000, p. 75; July 2000, p. 103; Mar. 2001, p. 54; July 2001, p. 145.

DRILL, ESTHER. *Deal with It! A Whole New Approach to Your Body, Brain, and Life As a Gurl*. Pocket Bks. Challenged, but retained at the Marion-Levy Public Library System in Ocala, Fla. (2001). Source: Nov. 2001, p. 246.

ESCOFFIER, JEFFREY. *John Maynard Keynes*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext

for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

EVANS, TABOR. *Longarm in Virginia City*. Jove. Challenged, but retained at the Springdale, Ark. Public Library (2001) along with all other "western" novels because the writings include "pornographic, sexual encounters." Source: Nov. 2001, p. 277.

HARRIS, ROBIE H. *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book about Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health*. Candlewick Pr. Restricted to elementary school pupils with parental permission at the Anchorage, Alaska elementary and middle schools (2001) due to objections to the book's "value statements" and because "marriage is mentioned once in the whole book, while homosexual relationships are allocated an entire section." Source: Nov. 2001, pp. 247, 278; Jan. 2002, p. 13.

# LETTERS

KEEFER, EDWARD C., ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-68, Volume XXVI, Indonesia, Malaysia-Singapore, Philippines*. U.S. State Department. The U.S. government recalled all copies of this U.S. State Department history book from hundreds of libraries in the U.S. and abroad (2001) because it details the U.S. role in Indonesia's deadly purge of communists in the 1960s. The prestigious series, which began in 1861, is often embattled. For example, the history dealing with Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey was printed in February 2000, but is locked up at the Government Printing Office under the label: "Embargo: This publication cannot be released." Officials declined to say why. Source: Nov. 2001, pp. 245-46.

KENAN, RANDALL. *James Baldwin*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material.

In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

KING, STEPHEN. *Different Seasons*. Doubleday. Accessible to West Hernando Middle School library students in Brooksville, Fla. (2001) only if they have a signed and verified permission slip from their parents. A student was offended by references to oral sex and prison rape scenes in the short story "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption," the basis for the 1994 movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. Source: Jan. 2002, p. 15.

KLAUSE, ANNETTE CURTIS. *Blood and Chocolate*. Delacorte. Temporarily pulled from the LaPorte, Tex. Independent School District school library shelves (2001) until the district can review and possibly amend its selection policies. Source: Nov. 2001, p. 247.

LEE, HARPER. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lippincott/Harper; Popular Library. Challenged by a Glynn County, Ga. (2001) school board member because of profanity. The novel was retained. Returned to the freshmen reading list at Muskogee, Okla. High School (2001) despite complaints over the years from black students and parents about racial slurs in the text. Source: Nov. 2001, pp. 277-78; Jan. 2002, p. 50.

LETTS, BILLIE. *Where the Heart Is*. G. K. Hall; Warner. Challenged in the Tamaqua, Pa. Area School District (2001) because the book "might not be appropriate for younger schoolmates." The school board is considering the establishment of a restricted-materials section in the district's middle-school library for books deemed objectionable. Students would need parental permission to access any title placed there. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 54; July 2001, p. 145.

LLYWELYN, MORGAN. *Druids*. Morrow. Removed from middle school libraries in Fairfax County, Va. (2001) due to its depictions of oral sex and rape. Source: Sept. 2000, pp. 145-46; May 2001, p. 96.

LOGAN, JAKE. *Slocum Series*. Berkley. Challenged, but retained at the Springdale, Ark. Public Library (2001) along with all other "western" novels because the writings include "pornographic, sexual encounters." Source: Nov. 2001, p. 277.

MACKLER, CAROLYN. *Love and Other Four Letter Words*. Delacorte. Removed from the Lincoln Junior High School in Naperville, Ill. (2001) because in addition to swear words and discussions about "getting wasted," the book contains graphic passages about masturbation and sexual intercourse. Source: Jan. 2002, pp. 15-16.

MARTIN, W. K. *Marlene Dietrich*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for

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middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

MARTINAC, PAULA. *k. d. lang*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult

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MCCULLERS, CARSON. *Member of the Wedding*. Houghton. Challenged in the Tamaqua, Pa. Area School District (2001) because the book "might not be appropriate for younger schoolmates." The school board is considering the establishment of a restricted-materials section in the district's middle-school library for books deemed objectionable. Students would need parental permission to access any title placed there. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 54; July 2001, p. 145.

MUNGO, RAYMOND. *Liberace*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even

though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

NIX, GARTH. *Shade's Children*. HarperCollins. Challenged, but retained at the Transit Middle School library in Williamsville, N. Y. (2001) after objections that the book "is vulgar, obscene, and educationally unsuitable." Source: May 2001, p. 124.

NUNOKAWA, JEFF. *Oscar Wilde*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school

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O'BRIEN, SHARON. *Willa Cather*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

RODGERS, MARY. *Freaky Friday*. Harper; ABC-CLIO. Pulled, but later returned to the

library shelves of Hernando County, Fla. schools (2001) after a parent's complaint about the book's references to drinking and smoking, characters who take God's name in vain, and the claim that it advocates violence. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 123.

ROWLING, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Scholastic. Challenged in the Owen J. Roberts School District classrooms in Bucktown, Pa. (2001) because the "books are telling children over and over again that lying, cheating, and stealing are not only acceptable, but that they're cool and cute." Burned in Alamogordo, N. Mex. (2001) outside Christ Community Church because the Potter series is "a masterpiece of satanic deception." Challenged, but retained in the Duval County, Fla. school libraries (2001) despite a complaint about witchcraft depicted in the book. Source: July 2001, p. 146; Jan. 2002, p. 49; Mar. 2002, p. 61.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Scholastic. Challenged in the Owen J. Roberts School District classrooms in Bucktown, Pa. (2001) because the "books are telling children over and over again that lying, cheating, and stealing are not only acceptable, but that they're cool and cute." Burned in Alamogordo, N. Mex. (2001) outside Christ Community Church because the Potter series is "a masterpiece of satanic deception." Challenged, but retained in the Duval County, Fla. school libraries (2001) despite a complaint about witchcraft depicted in the book. Source: July 2001, p. 146; Jan. 2002, p. 49; Mar. 2002, p. 61.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Scholastic. Challenged in the Owen J. Roberts School District classrooms in Bucktown, Pa. (2001) because the "books are telling children over and over again that lying, cheating, and stealing are not only acceptable, but that they're cool and cute." Burned in Alamogordo, N. Mex. (2001) outside Christ Community Church because the Potter series is "a masterpiece of satanic deception." Challenged, but retained in the Duval County, Fla. school libraries (2001) despite a complaint about witchcraft depicted in the book. Source: July 2001, p. 146; Jan. 2002, p. 49; Mar. 2002, p. 61.

SALINGER, J. D. *Catcher in the Rye*. Bantam; Little. Removed by a Dorchester District 2 school board member in Summerville, S.C. (2001) because it "is a filthy, filthy book." Challenged by a Glynn County, Ga. (2001) school board member because of profanity. The novel was retained. Source: Nov. 2001, pp. 246-47; 277-78.

SHARPE, JON. *Trailsmen Series*. NAL; Penguin. Challenged, but retained at the Springdale, Ark. Public Library (2001) along

with all other "western" novels because the writings include "pornographic, sexual encounters." Source: Nov. 2001, p. 277.

SNYDER, JANE MCINTOSH. *Sappho*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

STARHAWK AND HILARY VALENTINE. *The Twelve Wild Swans: A Journey to the Realm of Magic, Healing, and Action: Rituals, Exercises and Magical Training in the Reclaiming Tradition*. Harper. Challenged, but retained at the Springdale, Ark. Public Library (2001) despite a complaint that the book is a "witchcraft manual" and "turns people away from God and Bible scriptures." Source: Nov. 2001, p. 277.

STYRON, WILLIAM. *Sophie's Choice*. Bantam; Random. Returned to La Mirada, Calif. High School library (2002) after a complaint about its sexual content prompted the school to pull the award-winning novel about a tormented Holocaust survivor. Source: Mar. 2002, p. 105.

TAYLOR, MILDRED D. *Mississippi Bridge*. Dial. Challenged, but retained at the Donahoe Elementary School library in Sandston, Va. (2001) despite objections of its "negative content and [that] it's riddled with prejudice." The novel by the Newbery Medal-winning author tells the story of a young black man who tries to save white passengers in a bus accident, despite being ordered earlier to give up his seat to "white folks." Source: May 2001, p. 97; July 2001, p. 174.

TOLKIEN, J. R. R. (JOHN RONALD REUEL) *Lord of the Rings*. Ballantine; Houghton. Burned in Alamogordo, N. Mex. (2001) outside Christ Community Church along with other Tolkien novels as satanic. Source: Mar. 2002, p. 61.

WOLFE, DANIEL. *T. E. Lawrence*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult

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ZWERMAN, GILDA. *Martina Navratilova*. Chelsea House Pubs. Removed from the Anaheim, Calif. school district (2000) because school officials said the book is too difficult for middle school students and that it could cause harassment against students seen with it. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California filed suit in *Doe v. Anaheim Union High School District* alleging that the removal is "a pretext for viewpoint-based censorship." The ACLU claims no other books have been removed from the junior high library for similar reasons, even though several, such as works by Shakespeare and Dickens, are more difficult reading. The ACLU contends that the school officials engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by removing the book because it contains gay and lesbian material. In March 2001, the school board approved a settlement that restored the book to the high school shelves and amended the district's policy to prohibit the removal of books for subject matter involving sexual orientation, but the book will not be returned to the middle school. Source: Mar. 2001, p. 53; May 2001, p. 95; July 2001, p. 173.

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