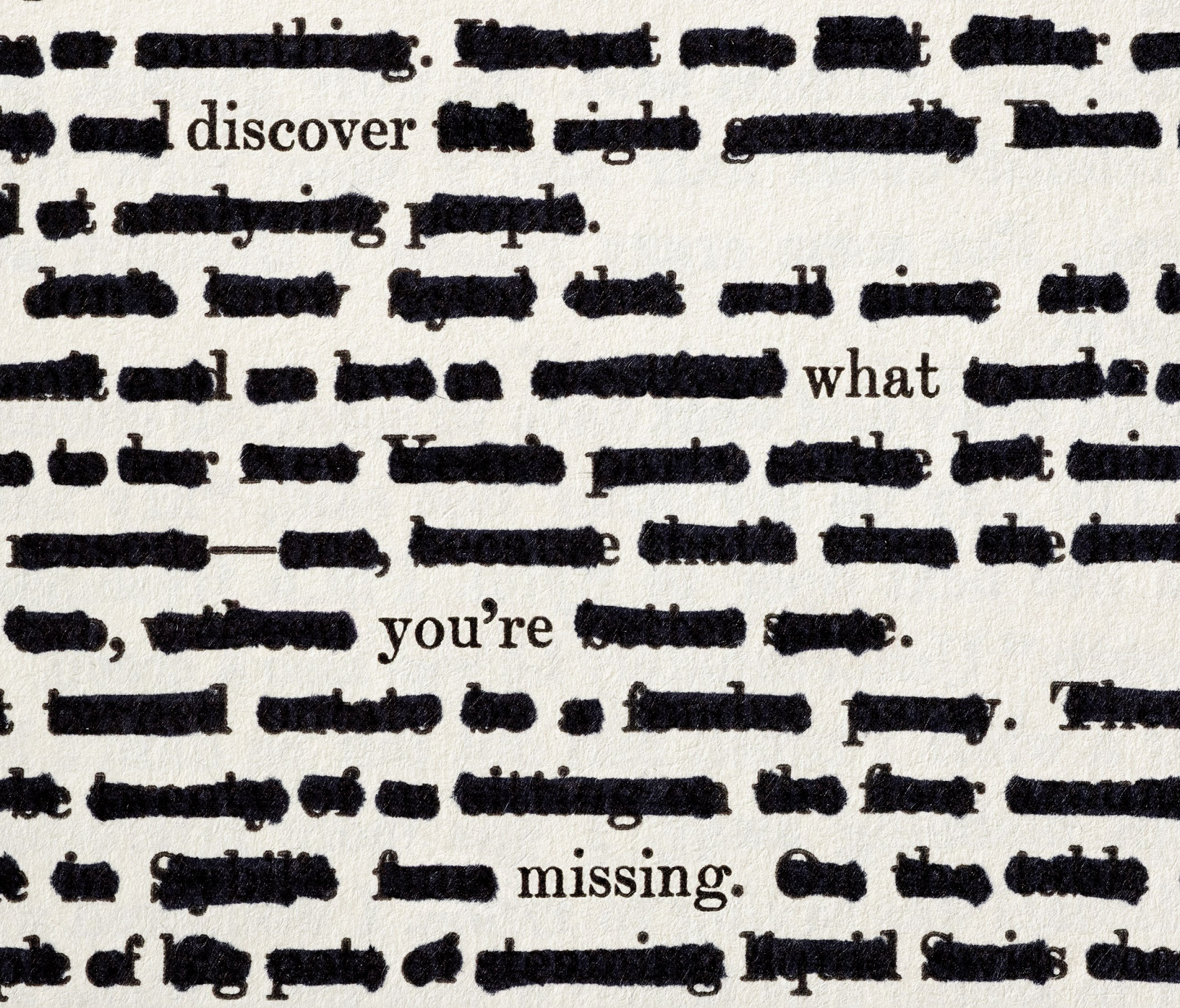

BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED 2012–2013

Robert P. Doyle

Sponsored by:
American Booksellers Association
American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression
American Library Association
American Society of Journalists and Authors
Association of American Publishers
Comic Book Legal Defense Fund
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
PEN American Center

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Center for the Book in the Library of Congress
Project Censored

BANNED BOOKS WEEK
CELEBRATING THE FREEDOM TO READ

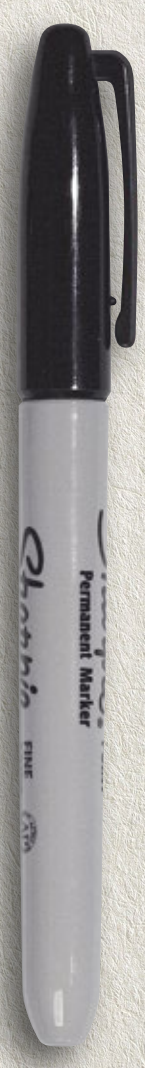
Books Challenged or Banned in 2012–2013

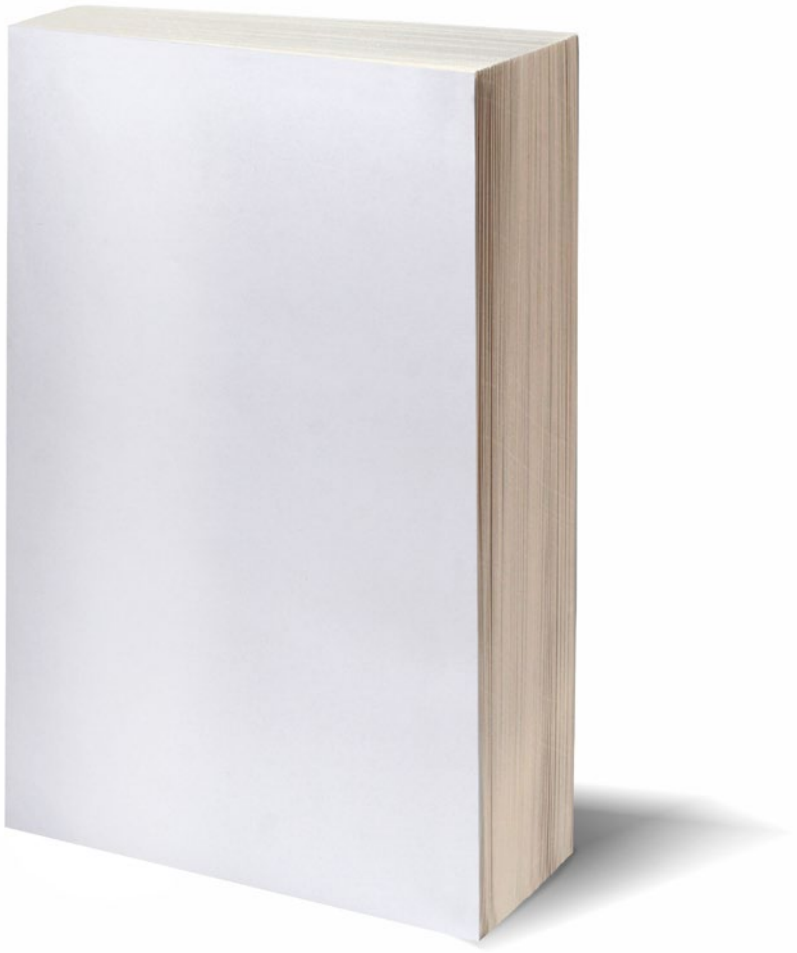
Banned Books Week 2013 is celebrating more than thirty years of the freedom to read. This freedom, not only to choose what we read, but also to select from a full array of possibilities, is firmly rooted in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of 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 viewing 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 up to 85 percent of actual 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 2012 and 2013 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2012 to May 2013.

Dates prior to May 2012 indicate the controversy began earlier, but continues into 2012 or 2013.

Alexie, Sherman
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
THORNDIKE PRESS; LITTLE, BROWN

Challenged as required reading in at least three freshmen English classes at Westfield, N.J. High School (2012) because of "some very sensitive material in the book including excerpts on masturbation amongst other explicit sexual references, encouraging pornography, racism, religious irreverence, and strong language (including the f- and n-words)." Challenged at the West Valley School District in Yakima, Wash. (2013) because some parents found the sexual references and profanity in the novel inappropriate for high school students.

Source: May 2012, pp. 105-6; Mar. 2013, pp. 51–52.

Anderson, M.T.
Feed
CANDLEWICK PRESS

Challenged at the William Monroe High School in Greene County, Va. (2012) because the book is "trash" and "covered with the F-word." A consent form was sent to the students' homes, and a notice that the class would be reading a mature book was posted on the teacher's webpage as well. Among its many awards, the book is a National Book Award Finalist and a Junior Library Guild selection.

Source: July 2012, p. 159.

Atwood, Margaret
The Handmaid's Tale
McCLELLAND AND STEWART

Challenged as required reading for a Page High School International Baccalaureate class and as optional reading for Advanced Placement reading courses at Grimsley High School in Guilford County, N.C. (2012) because the book is "sexually explicit, violently graphic and morally corrupt."

Source: Jan. 2013, p. 11.

Aylisli, Akram
Stone Dreams
NOVELLA PUBLISHED IN DRUZHBA NARODOV (FRIENDSHIP OF THE PEOPLES)

Burned (2013) at various locations around Azerbaijan. The novella is sympathetic to Armenians and recounts Azeri atrocities in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia twenty years ago. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stripped the author of his title of "People's Writer" and the pension that goes with it. A pro-government political party in Baku, Azerbaijan, announced that it will pay $12,700 to anyone who cuts off the ear of the 75-year-old novelist for portraying Azerbaijanis as savages.

Source: May 2013, pp. 108–9.

Brannen, Sarah S.
Uncle Bobby's Wedding
PUTNAM

Challenged, but retained at the Brentwood, Mo. Public Library (2012) despite a resident who did not like the book's subject matter. The picture book involves a young guinea pig and her beloved uncle, who is going to marry his male partner.

Source: Jan. 2013, p. 33.

Card, Orson Scott
Ender's Game
TOR SCIENCE FICTION

A teacher at Schofield Middle School in Aiken, S.C. (2012) will not face criminal charges for reading to his students from the science-fiction book. In addition to the Card novel—which has won several science-fiction awards and is listed on numerous children's literature review websites as appropriate for readers twelve and older—the teacher read excerpts from an Agatha Christie novel and a young adult novel set in the Old West, officials said. The incident came to light after the materials were characterized by one student and one parent as pornographic, according to a press release issued by the school district.

Source: May 2012, p. 107.

Chbosky, Stephen
The Perks of Being a Wallflower
POCKET BOOKS

Challenged as an assigned reading at the Grandview Heights, Ohio High School (2012) because the book deals with drugs, alcohol, sex, homosexuality, and abuse.

Source: Jan. 2013, pp. 11–12.

Colasanti, Susane
When It Happens
SPEAK

Challenged, but retained in the teen section of the Helen Matthes Library in Effingham, Ill. (2013) despite concerns that the content is too explicit.

Source: Mar. 2013, p. 79.

Connell, Richard
The Most Dangerous Game
PERFECTION LEARNING; CREATIVE EDUCATION

Challenged at the Bromley East Charter School in Brighton, Colo. (2012) because the 1924 short story "only serves to encourage school violence." English teachers have used it for decades to teach literary concepts like symbols and motifs.

Source: Jan. 2013, pp. 9–10.

Crawford, Brent
Carter Finally Gets It
DISNEY HYPERION BOOKS

Challenged, but retained in the Broken Arrow, Okla. middle school libraries (2012) despite a parent's complaint that it is "vulgar, vulgar, vulgar." The book was recognized by the Young Adult Library Services Association as one of 2010's Amazing Audiobooks.

Source: July 2012, p. 179.

Ehrenreich, Barbara
Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America
HOLT

Challenged, but retained on the Easton, Pa. Area High School's Advanced Placement English reading list (2012) despite several residents and persons from outside the district calling the book "faddish," of "no moral value," and even "obscene."

Source: May 2012, pp. 128–29; July 2012, pp. 179–80.

Esquivel, Laura
Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies
DOUBLEDAY

Removed from the reading list at Nampa, Idaho High School (2012) because it was considered too racy for sophomores. The book has been considered a contemporary classic in Latin American literature.

Source: Nov. 2012, pp. 237–38.

Green, John
Looking for Alaska
SPEAK

Banned as required reading for Sumner County, Tenn. schools (2012) because of "inappropriate language." The book won the 2006 Printz award for excellence in young adult literature.

Source: July 2012, pp. 158–59.

Hergé [Georges Remi]
Tintin in the Congo
FRENCH & EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS

A Belgian court (2012) rejected a five-year-old bid by a Congolese student to have the 1946 edition of Hergé's book banned because of its racist depictions. "It is clear that neither the story, nor the fact that it has been put on sale, has a goal to … create an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment," the court said in its judgment. The student, who launched the campaign in 2007 to ban the book, plans to appeal.

Source: Jan. 2012, pp. 17–18; May 2012, p. 130.

Hosseini, Khaled
The Kite Runner
BLOOMSBURY

Challenged as optional reading in the tenth-grade honors class at Troy, Pa. area schools (2012) because the novel depicts a rape in graphic detail and uses vulgar language.

Source: May 2012, pp. 106–7.

Howe, James
Totally Joe
ATHENEUM BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

Marked for removal in the Davis, Utah School District (2012) because parents might find it objectionable. The title character, a thirteen-year-old boy, writes an alphabiography—his life from A to Z—and explores issues of friendship, family, school, and the challenges of being a gay teenager.

Source: July 2012, p. 156.

Ignatow, Amy
The Popularity Papers
AMULET

Challenged, but retained at two Prosser, Wash. elementary school libraries (2013). Only available to fifth graders, the book is about two girls who want to unlock the secrets to being popular in middle school. One of the girls has two fathers; the other has only a mother.

Source: May 2013, p. 124.

James, E.L.
Fifty Shades of Grey
VINTAGE

Pulled, but later returned to the Brevard County, Fla. public libraries' (2012) shelves "in response to public demand." The racy romance trilogy is particularly popular among middle-aged women. Despite overwhelming demand and long wait lists for library copies, some other libraries across the country are refusing to acquire the book.

Source: July 2012, pp. 145, 147–48.

King, Stephen
Different Seasons
VIKING

Challenged, but retained at the Rocklin, Calif. High School library (2012) despite a parent's complaint that the book contained a graphic rape scene.

Source: Jan. 2013, p. 33.

Loux, Matthew
SideScrollers
ONI PRESS

Removed as an option on the Enfield, Conn. school district's ninth-grade summer reading list (2012) after a parent complained of profanity and sexual references. The graphic novel was chosen as one of the Young Adult Library Services Association's Great Graphic Novels for Teens in 2008.

Source: Nov. 2012, p. 237.

Manji, Irshad
Allah, Liberty, and Love
FREE PRESS; ZI PUBLICATIONS

Banned (2012) because officials in Malaysia said it went against Islamic teachings and led to a raid on a bookstore in the country. Activists and others said they believe Manji's book was banned because she is a lesbian.

Source: July 2012, pp. 183–84; Sept. 2012, pp. 203–4.

Martinez, Elizabeth
500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures
SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Banned from the Tucson, Ariz. Unified School District (2012) along with *Critical Race Theory,* by Richard Delgado; *Message to Aztlan,* by Rodolfo Corky Gonzales; *Chicano! The History of the Mexican Civil Rights Movement,* by Arturo Rosales; *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* by Paulo Freire; *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years,* edited by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson; and *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos,* by Rodolfo Acuña. In a district with over 60 percent of the students coming from Mexican-American backgrounds, the school board "dismantled its Mexican-American Studies program, packed away its offending books, shuttled its students into other classes," according to a January 21, 2102, *New York Times* editorial because "it was blackmailed into doing so." The *Times* referred to measures taken by Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal, who threatened to withhold millions of dollars if the school district didn't terminate the nationally acclaimed program immediately. The superintendent has spent years crusading against ethnic studies programs that he claims are "brainwashing" children into thinking that Latinos have been victims of white oppression. On March 8, 2013, a federal court upheld most provisions of an Arizona state law used to prohibit the controversial Mexican-American Studies curriculum in Tucson. Activists plan to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 49, 51, 82–84; May 2012, pp. 102–3; May 2013, pp. 114–15.

Moore, Alan
Neonomicon
AVATAR PRESS

Banned at the Greenville County, S.C. Public Library (2012) after a patron's teenage daughter checked it out of the library's adult section. The teenage girl was given an adult library card, which allowed her to check out adult-themed books. The head of the library system overturned an internal review committee's decision to retain the graphic novel because the pictures gave her pause.

Source: Sept. 2012, p. 201; Mar. 2013, pp. 48–49.

Morrison, Toni
Beloved
KNOPF; NAL

Challenged, but retained as a text in Salem, Mich. High School Advanced Placement English courses (2012). The complainants cited the allegedly obscene nature of some passages in the book and asked

that it be removed from the curriculum. District officials determined the novel was appropriate for the age and maturity level of Advanced Placement students. In reviewing the novel, the committee also considered the accuracy of the material, the objectivity of the material, and the necessity of using the material in light of the curriculum. Challenged at the Fairfax County, Va. schools (2013) because a parent complained that the book "depicts scenes of bestiality, gang rape, and an infant's gruesome murder." The novel won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 79–80; May 2012, pp. 127–28; Mar. 2013, pp. 50–51.

Myers, Walter Dean
Fallen Angels
SCHOLASTIC

Challenged on the Danbury Middle School reading list in Toledo, Ohio (2013) because of inappropriate language. The book depicts the reality of the Vietnam War, with sometimes gruesome descriptions of combat and frequent foul language from soldiers.

Source: May 2013, p. 104.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds
Intensely Alice
ATHENEUM BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS; SIMON PULSE

Challenged, but retained in the Buffalo, Mo. middle school (2013) despite the principal's formal complaint against several "very questionable pages" featuring a safe sex scene.

Source: May 2013, pp. 123–24.

Othman, Norani, ed.
Muslim Women and the Challenges of Islamic Extremism
SISTERS IN ISLAM

Banned by the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs (2008) on the grounds that it was "prejudicial to public order" and that it could confuse Muslims, particularly Muslim women. The Malaysian High Court overturned the ban on January 25, 2010, and on March 14, 2103, the Federal Court threw out the government's appeal to reinstate the ban.

Source: May 2013, pp. 125–26.

Palaniuk, Chuck
Fight Club
W.W. NORTON

Removed from the Katy, Tex. Independent School District required reading list (2012) following parental complaints about the book's violent nature and explicit undertones.

Source: Mar. 2013, p. 50.

Parr, Todd
The Family Book
LITTLE, BROWN

Banned from an Erie, Ill. elementary school's shelves (2012) because of a line that reads, "some families have two moms or two dads." The district also banned everything furnished by GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network), including learning materials and various programs aimed at preventing bullying.

Source: July 2012, p. 157; Sept. 2012, pp. 202–3.

Pelzer, Dave
A Child Called It
HCI

Challenged at the Housel Middle School in Prosser, Wash. (2013) because the autobiography provides graphic depiction of child abuse. Middle-school students had to have parental permission to check out the book.

Source: Mar. 2013, p. 49.

Plum-Ucci, Carol
The Body of Christopher Creed
HARCOURT

Challenged, but retained in the Appleton, Wis. Area School District (2012), despite the book's references to suicide and sex. Other titles also considered inappropriate by the local parent group, Valley School Watch, include *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The House on Mango Street.* The reading list for the group's ideal alternate class would contain books with no profanity, obscenity, or sexual material.

Source: July 2012, p. 180.

Polacco, Patricia
In Our Mothers' House
PHILOMEL BOOKS

Removed from the shelves of elementary school libraries in Davis County, Utah (2012) after a group of parents raised objections about the suitability of the story. It remained available only if a student presented a permission slip from a parent to check out the book. A parent then sued the Davis School District in November 2012 alleging her children's First Amendment rights were violated by the book's removal. On January 15, 2013, the book was reinstated without restrictions and the school district agreed to pay $15,000 in attorneys' fees for the lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Source: July 2012, pp. 155–57; Sept. 2012, pp. 201–2; Jan. 2013, pp. 7–8; Mar. 2013, p. 80.

Richardson, Justin, and Peter Parnell
And Tango Makes Three
SIMON

Marked for removal in the Davis, Utah School District (2012) because parents might find it objectionable.

Source: July 2012, p. 156.

Satrapi, Marjane
Persepolis
PANTHEON BOOKS

Removed, via a district directive, from all Chicago, Ill. public schools (2013) due to "graphic illustrations and language" and concerns about "developmental preparedness" and "student readiness." Seventh- and eleventh-grade students study the graphic novel about the author's experience growing up in Iran during the Iranian revolution as part of Chicago Public Schools' Literacy Content Framework. As the news spread of the directive, students mobilized a media campaign in opposition to "banning a book that's all about the freedom of speech." Students took to their Facebook and Twitter accounts, checked out all library copies of the book, wrote blogs, sent e-mails, wrote investigative articles for the student newspaper, contacted the author, staged protests, and appeared on local radio and television programs. Eventually, the school issued a letter telling high school principals to disregard the earlier order to pull the book.

Source: May 2013, pp. 103–4.

Shakespeare, William
Romeo and Juliet (No Fear Shakespeare)
SPARKNOTES

Some parents in Liberty, S.C. (2012) are furious about the book their kids are reading in middle school. They say it's too mature for their kids because of the sex. The book in question is an easy-to-read version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Source: May 2012, p. 107.

Sittenfeld, Curtis
Prep
RANDOM HOUSE

Removed from the Emmaus, Pa. High School ninth-grade summer reading list (2012) because the story of a girl from Indiana who goes to a boarding school in New England was "too mature for ninth graders." Instead, it was added to the twelfth-grade Advanced Placement reading list.

Source: Jan. 2013, p. 12.

Smiley, Jane
A Thousand Acres
ANCHOR

Removed from the Katy, Tex. Independent School District required reading list (2012) following parental complaints about references to sex and violence.

Source: Mar. 2013, p. 50.

Swift, Graham
Waterland
VINTAGE

Challenged as a text in Salem, Mich. High School Advanced Placement English courses (2012) due to the book's sexual content. Superintendent Jeremy Hughes immediately pulled the book, but later decided to put the book through the district's review process. The book was reviewed and retained.

Source: Mar. 2012, pp. 59–60; May 2012, pp. 127–28.

Tateno, Makoto
Hero-Heel 2
DIGITAL MANGA

Challenged at the King County, Wash. Library System (2012) due to yaoi manga's sexually explicit nature.

Source: Jan. 2013, pp. 8–9.

Timberlake, Amy
The Dirty Cowboy
FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

Removed from the Annville, Pa. elementary school library shelves (2012) because of its illustrations, involving a cartoon cowboy taking his annual bath. The supposedly true story is of a young cowboy who needs his annual bath and instructs his dog to watch his clothes while he bathes. When the cowboy emerges from his bath in the river, the dog does not recognize his familiar smell and refuses to give back his clothes. In the illustrations, the cowboy's private parts are always covered. The book has received numerous awards, including the International Reading Association award in 2004, the Parents Choice Gold Medal, and the Bulletin Blue Ribbon from *The Bulletin for the Center for Children's Books*.

Source: July 2012, pp. 153–54.

Trueman, Terry
Stuck in Neutral
HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS.

Challenged at the Creekwood Middle School in Humble, Tex. (2012) because the book was an "inappropriate reading assignment." The fictional book is told in the first person by a teen with cerebral palsy and deals with such subjects as disabilities, quality of life, and euthanasia.

Source: July 2012, pp. 154–55.

Walls, Jeannette
The Glass Castle: A Memoir
SCRIBNER

Removed, but later returned as an assigned reading for ninth-grade honors English in the Traverse City, Mich. West Senior High School (2012). The 2005 best-selling memoir recounts the author's experience growing up in a dysfunctional family with an alcoholic father and a mother who suffered from mental illness. It includes explicit language and references to child molestation, adolescent sexual exploits, and violence. Challenged at the McPherson, Kans. High School pre-AP English freshman class (2013). A school committee unanimously determined the book was appropriately placed in the curriculum noting the district's opt-out policy, which allows all families to opt their children out of any assignment, and ask for an alternate one. The committee made a series of recommendations to the superintendent, who sent a letter to the parents informing them of these recommendations and asking if they desired to appeal the committee's decision. No one appealed the decision.

Source: Jan. 2013, pp. 10–11; Mar. 2013, pp. 80–81.

Wilson, David Howard
Robopocalypse
DOUBLEDAY; VINTAGE

Challenged, but retained as required reading at the Hardin Valley Academy in Knoxville, Tenn. (2012) despite objections to "inappropriate language." The national bestseller was awarded the 2011 Alex Award by the Young Adult Library Services Association.

Source: Nov. 2012, p. 238; Jan. 2013, pp. 33–34.

Wolfe, Tom
The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test
FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

Challenged on the Emmaus, Pa. High School tenth-grade summer reading list (2012) because the nonfiction account of the author's drug-induced bus journey across the country has "objectionable sexual content and that there is nothing good about it."

Source: Jan. 2013, p. 12.

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 his or her 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 are three ways that you can get involved:

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

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

Join groups committed to preserving the right to read

You can participate by joining these nonprofit organizations.

The Freedom to Read Foundation (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 (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 (ncac.org) is an alliance of fifty national nonprofit organizations, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups, that work 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 (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 (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 (aclu.org/affiliates) provide assistance to local communities.

Two: 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 ala.org/challengereporting.

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 that 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. Letters to public officials, letters sent to local news outlets, and comments posted on websites 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 website. 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 its website at westbendparentsforfreespeech.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 addresses demands to remove books from libraries or schools.

Three: Support Your Local Schools and Libraries

Join Library Friends Groups and PTAs

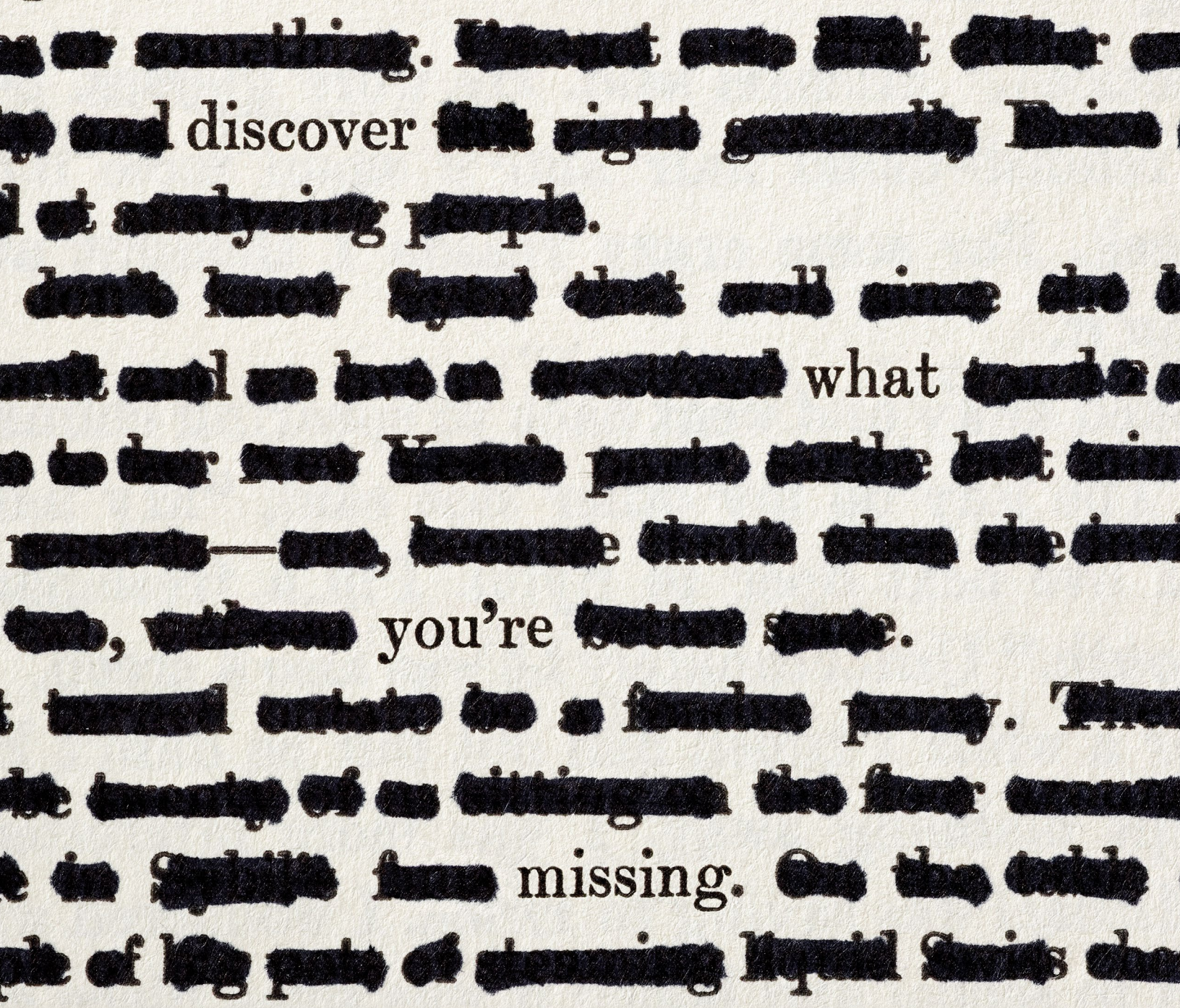
You can become an advocate for community education groups.

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 ala.org/bbooks for more resources and information, or connect on Facebook (facebook.com/bannedbooksweek).



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 **alastore.ala.org**, or by calling toll-free at **1-866-SHOP ALA** (1-866-746-7252).

For more information on Banned Books Week, please visit **ala.org/bbooks**