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can lead to voluntary restriction of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy; in these cases, material may not be published at all or may not be purchased by a bookstore, library, or school district.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
THORDIKE 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 East Valley School District in Yakima, Wash. (2013) because some parents found the sexual references and profanity in the novel inappropriate for high school students.

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 Azerbijanis as savages.
Source: Mar. 2013, p. 79.

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.

Card, Orson Scott
Endeavor’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.

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.

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.”

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.

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.
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.


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.


Howe, James
*Totally Joe*  
**ATHENEUM BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS**


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.


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.


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.


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.


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 Aztlán*, 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.


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.


Morrison, Toni
*Beloved*  
**KNOPF; NAL**

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.


**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.


**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.


**Palaniuk, Chuck**

**Fight Club**

**W.W. NORTON**


**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.


**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.


**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).


**Richardson, Justin, and Peter Parnell**

**And Tango Makes Three**

**SIMON**


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)
SPARkno TES

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.

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.

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.

Swift, Graham
Waterland
VINTAGE


Tateno, Makoto
Hero-Heel 2
DIGITAL MANGA

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.”