

President's Update - September 13, 2018



I like banned books and I cannot lie. You other librarians can't deny--my apologies to Sir Mix-A-Lot. The truth is that I read banned books and have read them since I was a child. I tend to like the subject matter of most banned books. As a young girl, I devoured books like "Charlotte's Web," "James and the Giant Peach," "Harriet the Spy," "The Diary of a Young Girl," and the list goes on and on. As an adult I seek out books that have been banned-"Catcher in the Rye," "the Bluest Eye," "To Kill a Mockingbird," "The Great Gatsby," and "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," just to name a few. I also give banned books as gifts! Some are absolute must reads.

Banned Books Week 2018 is September 23-29. Libraries and bookstores across the country will display, discuss and feature books that have been targeted with removal or restrictions in libraries and schools. Banned Books Week started in 1982, and thirty-six years later we are still displaying banned books with new titles added each year. The American Library Association (ALA) Office of Intellectual Freedom is 51 years strong and continues to fight each and every day for intellectual freedom, including banned books. According to the ALA website, Banned Books Week coverage by the media reaches approximately 2.8 billion readers, and the Banned Books webpage is one of the top two most popular pages on the website.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan Jr., 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 and parents may choose to restrict what they or their children read, but it is not the role of the government or public agency. It is important to remember Justice Brennan's words now and in the future.

March on librarians with banned books in hand! Continue to book talk, display and discuss those challenging, impacting and transforming reads. Read a banned book today!

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