

Banned Books Week 2022 - September 18—24—Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – Banned Books Week – is an annual event celebrating the freedom to read. Banned Books Week was launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores and libraries. Typically held during the last week of September, it highlights the value of free and open access to information. Banned Books Week brings together the entire book community — librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types — in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular. The theme of this year's event is "Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us."

Carolyn Blatchley, executive director of the Cumberland County Library System, comments, "During this annual effort to spotlight the risk and dangers of censorship, the importance of free access to information, and our fundamental freedom to read, we reaffirm the commitment of the System and all of our member library locations to continue providing our patrons with uncensored access to library materials."

The books featured during Banned Books Week have all been targeted for removal or restriction in libraries and schools. By focusing on efforts across the country to remove or restrict access to books, Banned Books Week draws national attention to the harms of censorship. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) compiles lists of challenged books as reported in the media and submitted by librarians and teachers across the country. The Top 10 Challenged Books of 2021 are:

Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe

Reasons: Banned, challenged, and restricted for LGBTQIA+ content and because it was considered to have sexually explicit images

Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison

Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and because it was considered to be sexually explicit

All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson

Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and profanity and because it was considered to be sexually explicit

Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope Perez

Reasons: Banned, challenged, and restricted for depictions of abuse and because it was considered to be sexually explicit

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity and violence and because it was thought to promote an anti-police message and indoctrination of a social agenda

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity, sexual references, and use of a derogatory term

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl by Jesse Andrews

Reasons: Banned and challenged because it was considered sexually explicit and degrading to women

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

Reasons: Banned and challenged because it depicts child sexual abuse and was considered sexually explicit

This Book is Gay by Juno Dawson

Reasons: Banned, challenged, relocated, and restricted for providing sex education and LGBTQIA+ content

Beyond Magenta by Susan Kuklin

Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and because it was considered to be sexually explicit.

Find all your reading materials at the Cumberland County Library System, which consists of seven federated local libraries, one branch facility, a system headquarters office, and an associated non-profit Foundation. The Library System provides support to its member libraries through information technology, securing library materials, older adult services, training opportunities, and administrative and financial services. More information on the Cumberland County Library System can be found at www.cumberlandcountylibraries.org.