

INGRAM LIBRARY CELEBRATES BANNED BOOK WEEK
SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 6

Since inception by the American Library Association (ALA) in 1982, both public and academic libraries throughout the nation have celebrated Banned Book Week. But the importance of this historical event which recognizes one of our most vital freedoms – the right to read – continues to fall on the sidelines of American apathy and fade away from significance. Meanwhile, issues guaranteed to create an immediate response from avid supporters – those of sexual preference, race, education, war, politics and religion – in reality, all share a common thread – the one which binds our freedom to access books, form opinions and discern the truth to the best of our ability.

Between 1990 and 2000, more than 6350 challenges were reported or recorded by the Office for Intellectual Freedom. Seventy-one percent of the challenges were to materials in school libraries. During 2006, more than 500 challenges were formerly filed, many of which were successful in removing books from library shelves. ¹

The first historical account of banning books occurred in 213 BC when all Confucian books were burned save one copy of each which was kept in the Chinese State Library. Destroying literature and persecuting Confucians was an extension of the original plans to consolidate the Qin dynasty composed by Shi Huang (246-210 BC) as the literature was believed to “encourage deep thought in politics and philosophy regarding economic and social changes”. ²

During the 12th century, the Nalanda university, of the Buddhist circuit, was destroyed by Bakhtiar Khilji, a Turkish invader, along with a world renowned library which contained 9 million volumes. During the 13th century, it was at the decree of Pope Gregory IX and King Louis, that all copies of the Talmud were confiscated and publicly burned in Paris. ³ The entire Library of Congress collection was lost when the British burned the Capitol in 1814. Fortunately, the Library was rebuilt a year later using books from Thomas Jefferson's personal library.”

This year ALA released a list of the “100 Most Frequently Challenged Books between 1990-2007” of which the top 20 titles appear below.

1. **Scary Stories (Series) by Alvin Schwartz**
2. **Daddy's Roommate by Michael Willhoite**
3. **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou**
4. **The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier**
5. **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain**
6. **Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck**
7. **Harry Potter (Series) by J.K. Rowling**

¹ <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bookburning/21century.htm>

² <http://www.thenagain.info/WebChron/China/BookBurn.html>

³ <http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bookburning/13thcentury>

8. **Forever by Judy Blume**
9. **Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson**
10. **Alice (Series) by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor**
11. **Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman**
12. **My Brother Sam is Dead by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier**
13. **The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger**
14. **The Giver by Lois Lowry**
15. **It's Perfectly Normal by Robie Harris**
16. **Goosebumps (Series) by R.L. Stine**
17. **A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Newton Peck**
18. **The Color Purple by Alice Walker**
19. **Sex by Madonna**
20. **Earth's Children (Series) by Jean M. Auel**

To learn if one of your favorite novels appears on the challenged list, visit Ingram Library's Banned Book Display, Sept. 29 through October 6th, and cast your vote for UWG's favorite Banned Book. For additional information and an extensive history of persecuted authors and banned books, visit www.ala.org and "Exercise your Freedom to Read" today!

By: Victoria Gunther