



FREE
10th Annual Report on
PEOPLE
Banned and Challenged Books
READ
in Texas Schools
FREELY
2005-2006 School Year

and exclusive interview with banned book author
JUDY BLUME

NATIONAL BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2006
September 23, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Nothing could be simpler than the truly American notion that free people read freely.

Yet every year in Texas, schools fall victim to censors who wish to restrict the knowledge available to students. Censorship breeds ignorance. No school funding plan can improve education in our state when knowledge itself is forbidden.

Reading books that challenge assumptions, that tackle difficult or controversial subjects, or that contain thoughts or language that some find objectionable does not harm students. Rather the contrary. Students learn from being exposed to new ideas. They develop an appreciation for different viewpoints. They are better able to function effectively in a diverse society, and are better able to serve our communities and our state as leaders. In other words, they grow capable of exercising the rights and freedoms all Texans are entitled to enjoy.

Each year for ten years, the ACLU Foundation of Texas has published this annual report of books banned or challenged in Texas schools. Our report spotlights schools that ban books from library shelves or from classroom reading lists. But just as importantly, our report highlights schools that decide to retain a book despite a challenge by a parent, a student, a school official or a member of the public.

This report is only as useful as its users. Who's going to stand up in communities where books are banned? Who's going to speak out when great (and lesser) works of literature are censored? The most effective local advocates are local citizens— that means you, the concerned members of the community, parents, teachers, librarians and most importantly, students.

I am confident that when one Texan speaks out against censorship, others will stand with you. While the ACLU doesn't have the resources to follow through on every instance of censorship, we do want to help people stand firm against censorship in Texas schools.

Getting involved in the ACLU of Texas — as a member, generous donor, volunteer, or simply by joining our email list at www.aclutx.org — is one way to help assure that censors are not in control of school libraries and reading lists. It is also a great way to help protect civil rights and individual liberty for all Texans.

Our Banned Books Project is organized and led by volunteers. I extend the thanks of the ACLU to our volunteers and chapter leaders who have made this program successful over the past decade. I also thank the school administrators and librarians who respond each year to the ACLU's Open Records request. Author Judy Blume has earned our thanks both because of her willingness to be interviewed for our project (see page 14) and for her ongoing work to oppose censorship.

Yours in liberty,



*William C. Harrell, JD, LLM
Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Texas*

FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY

“And when we do that, shut off the dialogue, we do violence to the First Amendment and to the children of this generation and the next generation...”

- John Henry Faulk,
Texas humorist and author (1913-1990).

“Censorship reflects society’s lack of confidence in itself. It is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime...”

- Justice Potter Stewart,
Dissenting, Ginsberg v. United States (383 U.S. 463)

This year the ACLU of Texas Banned Books Project issues its 10th consecutive annual report on books banned or challenged in Texas schools. The content of the report is based on information furnished by independent school districts and charter schools in Texas in response to Open Records requests from the ACLU of Texas. Additional copies of this report may also be obtained online at www.aclutx.org.

The Banned Books Project exists to raise awareness about the level of book challenges and bans in Texas public school libraries; to encourage school officials to use professional librarian standards when confronted with a challenge; and to encourage other ACLU affiliates, library associations, and similar freedom of expression interest groups to conducting similar surveys in their own states.

HIGHLIGHTS AND DISCUSSION

For the 2005-2006 school year, 48 Independent School Districts and charter schools reported 65 challenges to books with all but 16 resulting in bans or restrictions. At the time of response, seven decisions were still pending in committee. It is interesting to note that these numbers are drastically lower than past years’ responses. In 2003-2004, 88 ISDs reported 151 book challenges. The school year 2002-2003 saw 71 districts with 134 challenges. The 2000-2001 report received responses from 90 plus ISDs with well over 200 challenges.

Past trends do not account for this substantial decline in the number of school districts reporting challenges. This may be due to several factors, any of which include informal meetings about books for which no records were kept, or that responses were received too late to be recorded. A more probable reason is that no blockbuster children’s books have been released that could create a lot of controversy.

A prime example that supports this hypothesis is the *Harry Potter* series of books by British author J.K. Rowling. Over the 10 years that the ACLU of Texas has been monitoring book banning in Texas, the *Harry Potter* series has received more challenges than any other book or series. The largest

number of challenges to the series was reported in the 2001-2002 school year when it elicited 71 challenges in 21 separate school districts. While this number is extreme and likely due to the movie releases based upon the series, it still does not account for the staggeringly low results for this year, even when the *Harry Potter*-related challenges are removed from past surveys. In fact, the majority of challenges this year cannot be attributed to any one author or series. While a book may be challenged in more than one district on occasion, it is far more common to see unique challenges in individual districts to singular titles. It is worth noting that the *Harry Potter* craze was largely responsible for all challenges based in the mysticism/paganism realm of complaints. These challenges have nearly disappeared with this year’s report, due mainly to the absence of challenges to the *Harry Potter* series.

Notably, this year saw multiple challenges to the same books such as *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* by George Beard and Harold Hutchins, as well as the *Alice* series of books by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. It should be noted that Naylor was the most banned author for the 2002-2003 school year as well as the 2003-2004 school year due in most part to her *Alice* series that chronicles a young girl growing up and the issues she encounters.

The school district with highest number of challenges was Killeen ISD, which reported 6 book challenges at 5 different schools resulting in 3 books being banned and one book

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being restricted due to “content regarding transgender and gender identity.” Killeen ISD was also responsible for the blacking out of the word “Goddamnit” in Avi’s *The Fighting Ground* resulting in the only reported case of direct censorship without restriction or banning.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY AND BREAKDOWN

Overall, banning percentages are down to 25% for 2005-2006. This compares with 44% in 2004-2005, 36% in 2003-2004, and 31% in 2000-2001. This year, 37% of challenged books were restricted. Past results have been significantly lower, but fluid, with ranges from 25% (including use of alternate books in curricula) in 2003-2004, and a similar result of 34% in 2000-2001 when compared with this year’s findings. At the time of this year’s deadline for submissions, there were 7 decisions still pending.

HOW THIS REPORT WAS COMPILED

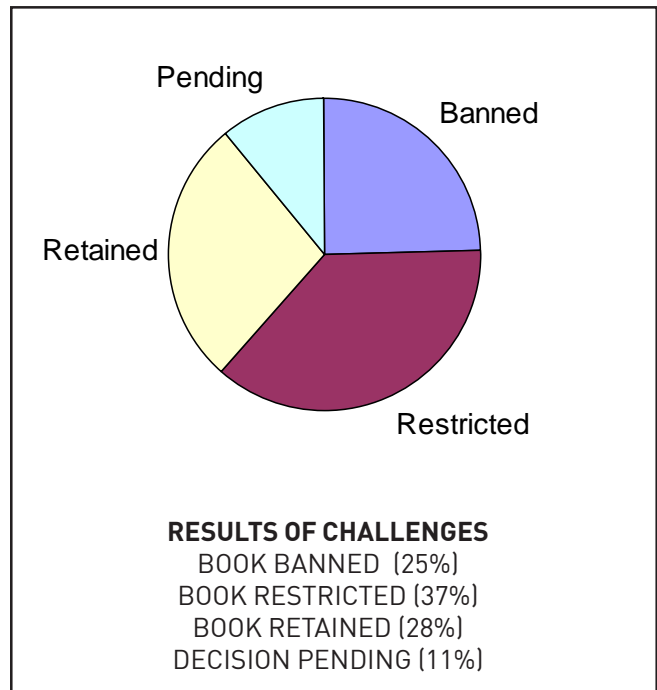
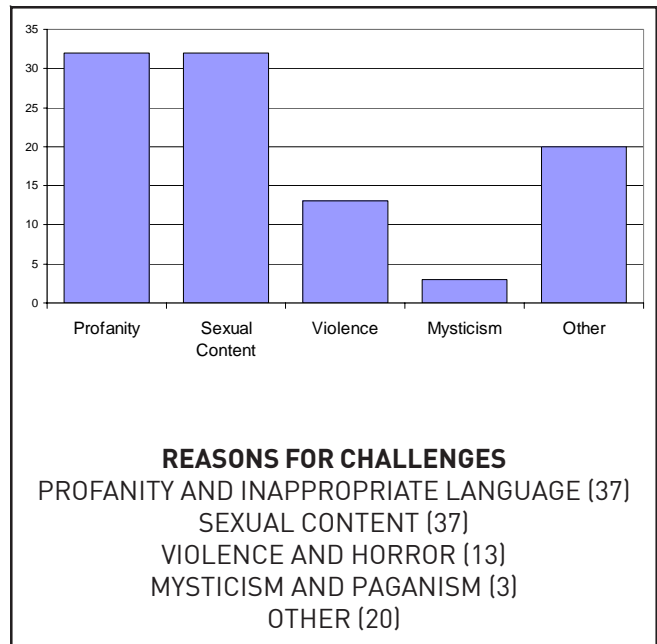
The ACLU of Texas uses a list of school district numbers, names, addresses and other data compiled for the Texas Education Agency and offered on its website. Using this information, schools were mailed a request for information under the authority of the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552 (formerly known as the Texas Open Records Act.) State law requires that public entities respond to such inquiries within 10 days. Included in the mailing are instructions on how to return the information through the mail or through other electronic means. Upon receipt, this information was compiled in spreadsheet format and analyzed for this report.

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

The Texas Library Association holds that the freedom to read is a corollary of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Freedom of choice in selecting materials is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read and must be protected against extra-legal attempts by self-appointed censors to control that process. Citizens have the right of free inquiry, and democracy itself rests on an open dialogue and demands that freedom of the press in all forms of public communication be defended and preserved.

The Association, through its Intellectual Freedom Committee, supports access to information by responding to librarians facing book challenges, offering model policies and procedures, tracking reports of book challenges from its members, and supporting policies and legislative action that respect access to information. Members of TLA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee are also available to consult with librarians facing intellectual freedom challenges. For additional information on these resources, go to:

www.txla.org/pubs/ifhbk.html.



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2006 LIST OF BOOKS BANNED OR CHALLENGED IN TEXAS SCHOOLS (ALPHABETICAL BY BOOK TITLE)

13: Thirteen Stories that Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen, James Howe, Atheneum, 2003. Contemporary, realistic fiction addressing the problems and wonder of being thirteen years old.

The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby, George Beard and Harold Hutchins, Blue Sky Press, 2002. Madcap adventures of young superhero. Villain transforms into “piece of poo.”

An Album of the Viet Nam War, Don Lawson, Franklin Watts, 1986. This book is an illustrated history, with emphasis on American involvement, of the war in Vietnam from Ho Chi Minh’s declaration of independence to the withdrawal of United States troops.

Alice Alone, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Simon Pulse; Reprint edition (September 1, 2002). Young teen Alice copes with breakup with boyfriend, helping another friend deal with sexual abuse.

The Beet Fields: Memories of a Sixteenth Summer, Gary Paulsen, Laurel Leaf (January 8, 2002). *From Publishers Weekly*: No stranger to memoir, Paulsen (My Life in Dog Years; Father Water, Mother Woods) returns to a series of episodes he previously fictionalized in the 1977 Tiltawhirl John and now presents the material “as real as I can write it, and as real as I can remember it happening,” as he says in an author’s note. It is punishingly harsh stuff: 16 years old in 1955, “the boy,” as he is called throughout, wakes up to find his drunken mother in his bed and realizes that tonight “something [is] different, wrong, about her need for him.” He runs away and lands a backbreaking job on a beet farm in North Dakota, where his wages are cancelled out by the farmer’s charges for the use of his hoe, for the tumbledown lodgings and for the only food available, sandwiches made of week-old bread that cost a dollar apiece. Eventually the boy starts working with a carnival, where he learns carnies’ scams and is initiated into sex by the carnival stripper, Ruby. In a mannered prose style, Paulsen serves up strings of studied, impartial observations in paragraph-long sentences.

Blind Sighted, Peter Moore, Viking Juvenile (September 30, 2002). Brilliant, bookish teen experiences first love, parent troubles, and sex, and learns from a blind friend.

Blood and Chocolate, Annette Curtis Klause, Lauren Leaf, 1999. Teenage girl werewolf falls in love with human, complexity ensues.

Blubber, Judy Blume, Yearling; Reissue edition (August 1, 1986). Teenager learns the consequences and rewards of taking a stand against bullies.

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison, Knopf (December 28, 1993). *Amazon.com user review*: Set in Lorain, Ohio, in 1941, *The Bluest Eye* is something of an ensemble piece. The point of view is passed like a baton from one character to the next, with Morrison’s own voice functioning as a kind of gold standard throughout. The focus, though, is on an 11-year-old black girl named Pecola Breedlove, whose entire family has been given a cosmetic cross to bear: You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question.... And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. There are far uglier things in the world than, well, ugliness, and poor Pecola is subjected to most of them. She’s spat upon, ridiculed, and ultimately raped and impregnated by her own father. No wonder she yearns to be the very opposite of what she is—yearns, in other words, to be a white child, possessed of the blondest hair and the bluest eye. (James Marcus)

Born Too Short, Dan Elish, Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books (March 1, 2002). Born Too Short is the hilarious and frank first-person tale of 13 year-old Matt Greene, and his best friend Keith, who has all the things Matt wants in life. Standing at just 5’1”, Matt longs to have the looks, athleticism, and romantic success with girls that seem to come naturally to Keith. Matt’s envy comes to a boiling point, and in a supernatural twist, he enlists a mystical homeless man to put a spell on his happy-go-lucky best pal. When things spin out of control and the tables are turned, Matt realizes his only option is to express how he really feels to Keith. A heartfelt and humorous exploration of the trials of adolescence and friendship.

The Captain Underpants Series, Dav Pilkey, Blue Sky Press (AZ); (August 2002). *From Amazon.com*: “Faster than a speeding waistband... more powerful than boxer

shorts...” It’s Captain Underpants! Young readers will devour this fancy new boxed set of the first five paperbacks in the side-splitting, potty-humored (literally) Captain Underpants series. These books are award-winning—but really, who cares about awards when you’re reading about talking toilets and the perilous plot of Professor Poopyants? The “epic” collection includes *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*, *Captain Underpants and the Attack of the Talking Toilets*, *Captain Underpants and the Invasion of the Incredibly Naughty Cafeteria Ladies from Outer Space*, *Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopyants*, and *Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked Wedgie Woman*.

The Car, Gary Paulsen, Harcourt Children’s Books; 1st ed edition (March 30, 1994). Fourteen-year-old Terry Anders has been neglected by his parents. To escape from his plight, he begins by assembling pieces of a kit car. When he finishes building the red Blakely Bearcat, Terry sets out from Cleveland to Oregon to search for an uncle he hardly knows. Along the way Terry teams up with a pair of wandering Vietnam vet who ultimately guide him on a journey of discovery and survival. This thought-provoking book explores some interesting ideas about our country and learning from one’s experiences.

Cause of Death, Barbara Rollins & Michael Dahl, Capstone Press (January 2004). Forensic detective work presented via graphic pictures and descriptions of crime scenes.

The Color Purple, Alice Walker, Pocket Books, reissue edition, 1990. *Amazon.com user review*: “The Color Purple” is one of the strongest statements of how love transforms and cruelty disfigures the human spirit that this reviewer has ever read. Alice Walker gives us Celie, 14 years old when the book opens, who has been raped, abused, degraded and twice impregnated by her father. After he takes her children away from her without a so much as a word, he marries her off like a piece of chattel to her husband, who is so cold, distant and inhuman to her that she can only refer to him as Mr.; and this person deprives her of her sister Nettie, the only one who ever loved her. The last chapter makes many readers go through half a box of Kleenex (Stephen Spielberg once said in an interview that he “cried and cried at the end” of the book), but Walker doesn’t play cheap with the reader’s emotions; she has a powerful

story to tell and she tells it with such consummate skill and sensitivity that she brings us into it and makes it ours. (*Judy Lind*)

Crazy Lady, Jane Leslie Conly, HarperCollins (February 1, 1993). A story about outsiders, loss, friendship and growth, this is the story of Vernon, Maxine, Ronald and their neighborhood.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Mark Haddon, Doubleday; Today Show Book Club edition (July 31, 2003). Autistic, teenage narrator attempts to solve a mystery, broadening his world experience and interactions with other people.

Damage, A.M. Jenkins, HarperCollins; 1st ed edition (October 16, 2001). Popular, small town football star struggles with depression in this novel written in the second person.

Dangerous Girls, R. L. Stine, Harper Collins (August 5, 2003). Sisters recovering from the suicide of their mother find healing at a summer camp, where a camp counselor brings drama and crime to the camp.

Danny's Desert Rats, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Aladdin (November 1, 1999). *From Amazon.com*: There are lots of rules at Rosemary Acres, where T.R. and his brother Danny live with their mother, and the “no pets” rule could mean big trouble for their friend Paul. Paul had to give away his beloved cat, Bonkers, when he and his dad moved to Rosemary Acres. Now Bonkers has managed to travel fifteen miles to get back to Paul — and Paul is *not* going to lose his cat a second time. It's up to the kids of Rosemary Acres — dubbed the “Desert Rats” by T.R.'s mom one hot summer day — to concoct a plan to save the day.

Detour for Emmy, Marilyn Reynolds, Morning Glory Press, 1993. Explores teenage love and its consequences from the viewpoint of a teen who becomes pregnant. Author is a teacher in an alternative school.

The Dirty Cowboy, Amy Timberlake and Adam Rex, Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR); 1st ed edition (August 8, 2003). “Dirty cowboy” takes his annual bath, and is then unrecognized by his own dog. Pictures manage to cleverly conceal the cowboy's nakedness.

Doing It, Melvin Burgess, Henry Holt and Co. (BYR) (May 1, 2004). Three teen boys talk about sex. Characters and situations put sex talk in the background as the novel

progresses.

Doll Baby, Eve Bunting, Clarion Books (August 21, 2000). This book about teen pregnancy centers around Ellie, who becomes pregnant at the age of 15. Ellie is terrified to tell her parents the news, and must enlist their help to manage raising the child. It is clear that Ellie is not mature enough to deal with all the ramifications of having a baby at such a young age. With plenty of full page watercolor and pencil illustrations, this book demonstrates the difficulties of single teen motherhood without any moralizing.

Dragon Knights, Mineko Ohkami, Yuki Ichimura, Mary DeMarle, TokyoPop (April 23, 2002). This is a typical story about a quest of three adventurers. The book is presented in the Japanese graphic novel “manga” style.

The Dumb Bunnies, Sue Denim and Dav Pilkey, Scholastic, 1994. A parody of parodies, allusions to “Goodnight Moon” and the “Stupids” books. Bunnies engage in humorous, goofy behavior.

The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things, Carolyn Mackler, Candlewick; 1st U.S. edition (July 14, 2003). Teenage girl is plain compared to beautiful, svelte sisters, and experiences date rape. She later learns to stand up for herself.

Eloise in Paris, Kay Thompson, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing (May 1, 1999). *From Amazon.com*: *Eloise in Paris* was first published in 1957, the second of the Eloise quartet, and an immediate bestseller. Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight traveled to Paris to research the book, and the illustrations are dotted with the celebrities they knew there: Richard Avedon takes Eloise's passport photograph; Christian Dior prods her tummy, while his young assistant, Yves Saint Laurent, looks on; Lena Horne sits at an outdoor café.

The Emperor's New Clothes, Hans Christian Anderson, Michael Neugebauer (North South Books); Reprint edition (August 1, 2002). Illustrated book presenting the well-known fairy tale about an allegorical naked emperor.

Fallen Angels, Walter Dean Myers, Scholastic Paperbacks, reprint edition, 1989. *From Amazon.com*: *Fallen Angels* is a coming of age tale for young adults set in the trenches of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, Fallen Angels is the story of Perry, a Harlem teenager who volunteers for the service when his dream of attending college falls through. Sent to the front lines, Perry and his platoon

come face-to-face with the Vietcong and the real horror of warfare. But violence and death aren't the only hardships. As Perry struggles to find virtue in himself and his comrades, he questions why black troops are given the most dangerous assignments, and why the U.S. is there at all. Fallen Angels won the 1989 Coretta Scott King Award.

The Fighting Ground, Avi, Laura Geringer (April 25, 1984). *From Amazon.com*: The Fighting Ground is a great book about a 15 years old boy named Jonathan who lived in Trenton, New Jersey. This book is set during the American Revolutionary war. America was fighting for its independence from England. Jonathan is the only boy in his family who had not gone to war so he was waiting for his turn to go to war. Then one day, the bell rang at the Tavern and Jonathan went to go see what was happening. A Corporal was at the Tavern recruiting men to fight the Hessians. The men of the town thought Jonathan was too young, but the Corporal took him anyway. So Jonathan was on his way to war, the one thing he was dreaming of doing for almost half of his life.

Forever, Judy Blume, Pocket; Reissue edition (August 1, 1989). *From Amazon.com*: Here, Blume tells a convincing tale of first love—a love that seems strong and true enough to last forever. Katherine loves Michael so much, in fact, that she's willing to lose her virginity to him, and, as the months go by, it gets harder and harder for her to imagine living without him. However, something happens when they are separated for the summer: Katherine begins to have feelings for another guy. What does this mean about her love for Michael? What does this mean about love in general? What does “forever” mean, anyway? As always, Blume writes as if she's never forgotten a moment of what it's like to be a teenager.

Friday Night Lights, H.G. Bissinger, Da Capo Press (July 2000). *From Amazon.com*: Secular religions are fascinating in the devotion and zealotry they breed, and in Texas, high school football has its own rabid hold over the faithful. H.G. Bissinger, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, enters into the spirit of one of its most fervent shrines: Odessa, a city in decline in the desert of West Texas, where the Permian High School Panthers have managed to compile the most winning record in state annals. Indeed, as this breathtaking examination of the town, the team, its coaches, and its young players chronicles, the team, for better and for worse, *is* the town; the communal health and self-image of the latter is directly linked to the

on-field success of the former. The 1988 season, the one *Friday Night Lights* recounts, was not one of the Panthers' best. The game's effect on the community—and the players—was explosive. Written with great style and passion, *Friday Night Lights* offers an American snapshot in deep focus; the picture is not always pretty, but the image is hard to forget

The Gentleman Outlaw and Me, Mary Downing Hahn, Clarion Books, 1996. Twelve-year-old girl runs away from mean aunt and uncle in the 1880s, seeking her father. Taking disguise as a boy, she meets up with a “gentleman outlaw” on similar journey.

Gone, Kit Craig, Berkeley Publishing Group, 1993. *From Amazon.com*: Clary Hale's husband Tom, a navy captain, was lost at sea four years ago. When Clary disappears, her three children—Teah, Mike, and Tommy (aged 16, 15, and four)—believe she's gone on a secret mission to find their father. But as time passes, they realize she's been kidnapped by Cleve Morrow, a charismatic madman from her past.

The Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck, Rebound by Sagebrush, 1999. *Amazon.com user review*: When *The Grapes of Wrath* was published in 1939, America, still recovering from the Great Depression, came face to face with itself in a startling, lyrical way. John Steinbeck gathered the country's recent shames and devastations—the Hoovervilles, the desperate, dirty children, the dissolution of kin, and the oppressive labor conditions—in the Joad family. Then he set them down on a westward-running road, local dialect and all, for the world to acknowledge. For this marvel of observation and perception, he won the Pulitzer in 1940. The prize must have come, at least in part, because alongside the poverty and dispossession, Steinbeck chronicled the Joad's refusal, even inability, to let go of their faltering but unmistakable hold on human dignity. Witnessing their degeneration from Oklahoma farmers to a diminished band of migrant workers is nothing short of crushing. The Joads lose family members to death and cowardice as they go, and are challenged by everything from weather to the authorities to the California locals themselves. (Melanie Rehak)

It's Not the End of the World, Judy Blume, Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books; Rev. Forma edition (April 1, 2002). *From Amazon.com*: Karen Newman can't believe it when her father moves out. How could her

parents do this? Don't they know they belong together? Somehow Karen has to get her mom and dad to talk to each other face-to-face. Maybe then they'll realize divorce is a mistake. But can she think of a plan soon—and one that works?

Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini, Riverhead Hardcover, 2003. Immigrant haunted by childhood in Afghanistan, includes robust characters and touches on contemporary Middle East political machinations.

The Lemming Condition, Alan Arkin, HarperSanFrancisco; Reprint edition (October 18, 1989). A young lemming is haunted by doubts about the purpose of the great march westward to the sea.

The Listeners, Christopher Pike, Tom Doherty Assoc LLC (November 1998). *From Amazon.com*: FBI agent David Conner is investigating the Listeners, a channeling group that seems to have access to highly classified information. Though he quickly falls in love with Lucy, one of the twins who are the heart of the group, David remains skeptical about the Listeners' power—until an astonishing experience convinces him that they really can reach into humanity's past and carry ancient wisdom to the present. But wisdom is not all that lurks in the past, awaiting innocent discovery. The Listeners have tapped into an ancient evil that intends to remake first David and the woman he loves, and then all of mankind, in its own horrifying image.

Little Vampire Does Kung Fu, Joann Sfar, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing (September 1, 2003). This comic by French cartoonist Sfar follows the adventures of a young boy named Michael and his red feline friend Little Vampire. In this oversize comic book, Little Vampire helps Michael cope with a bully by whisking him away to a world of strange and fantastic monsters. Among the characters they encounter are Rabbi Solomon, a society of monkeys, pretty Sabrina, and a kung fu dragon. In this series of wild and amusing experiences, Michael's bully gets him comeuppance as Little Vampire and Michael's adventuresome friendship continues.

Lovingly Alice, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Atheneum (August 24, 2004). A book in the series about a motherless girl growing up. Book touches on puberty, growth and sexuality education.

Luna, Julie Anne Peters, Megan Tingley (May 26, 2004). *From Amazon.com*: Peters

tells two stories in this groundbreaking novel—one about Regan, and the other about Liam, Regan's transgender brother, who is the son his father expects by day but a young woman, Luna, by night. Fiercely protective of Liam/Luna, Regan has put her life on hold; she worries about her brother's female self being discovered and the family's reaction, and she fears that her brother may someday give in to despair. While Regan wonders if she will ever be able to have a life separate from the needs of her sibling, Liam seriously begins to consider a permanent change. Peters isn't putting forward a political agenda here. Rather, she's bringing the circumstances surrounding a difficult situation to light, and her sensitively drawn characters realistically encompass a wide range of reactions—from tentative acceptance by a best friend to Mom's feigned ignorance and Dad's total disbelief. The subject matter and occasional rough language will undoubtedly raise some eyebrows, but this book belongs in most young adult collections.

Mamá No Me Contó, (translation: Mummy Never Told Me) Babbette Cole. Description unavailable.

Manga Book Series, Typical book: How to Draw Manga, Vol. 34, Hikaru Hayashi & Kimiko Morimoto, Graphic-Sha (February 25, 2005). *From Amazon.com*: While one would think undergarments are standard fixtures on manga characters, they can be unexpectedly tricky for artists to draw. This book includes more than 4,000 illustrations showing details of these garments worn on a figure in addition to a detailed history of intimate apparel. Moreover, it enables the reader to make practical use of the illustrations provided to create easily their own fantasy costume designs.

Miss Smithers, Susan Juby, Harper Tempest, 2004. Young “misfit” student becomes local beauty queen.

My Brother Sam is Dead, James & Christopher Collier, Scholastic reprint edition, 1985. This book recounts the tragedy that strikes the Meeker family during the American Revolution when one son joins the rebel forces while the rest of the family tries to stay neutral in a Tory town.

Olive's Ocean, Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow, 2003. A twelve-year-old girl learns about her family, first crushes, and death on the way to becoming an adolescent.

Out of Order, A.M. Jenkins, Harper Tempest, 2003. Student with learning disabilities

attempts to stop being a “dumb jock” in order to please classmates, girlfriend. New tutor may become new girlfriend. A portrait of sometimes-cruel high school culture.

Ozzy Osbourne and Kelly Osbourne (Famous Families), Linda Saucerman, Rosen Publishing Group, 2004. This book is part of a biographical series about famous families featuring rock star Ozzy Osbourne and his family.

Patently Alice, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Atheneum; 1st ed edition (May 1, 2003). The 15th “Alice” novel by Naylor includes frank talk about sex and dating.

A Prayer for Owen Meany, John Irving, Ballantine Books, Reissue edition, 1990. The life and times of an odd, dwarfish martyr. Subplots indict U.S. foreign policy in a John Irving masterpiece.

Rainbow Boys, Alex Sanchez, Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing (October 4, 2005). Three gay teen friends on a road trip meet a wild and diverse cast of characters.

A Series of Unfortunate Events: A Bad Beginning, Lemony Snicket, HarperCollins; Boxed edition (October 2, 2001). *Amazon.com user review:* Fans of Lemony Snicket and newcomers to his gleefully ghastly Series of Unfortunate Events will be elated to discover this boxed gift set of the first three books in hardcover: *The Bad Beginning*, *The Reptile Room*, and *The Wide Window*. While it’s true that the events that unfold in Snicket’s novels are bleak, and things never turn out as you’d hope, these delightful, funny, linguistically playful books are reminiscent of Roald Dahl, Charles Dickens, and Edward Gorey. After they get their paws on this boxed set, there is no question that young readers will want to read the continuing unlucky adventures of the three Baudelaire orphans. (Karin Snelson)
Sgt. Frog (Sgt. Frog Graphic Novels), Mike Yoshizaki & Carol Fox, TokyoPop (November 2004). *Amazon.com user review:* The basic premise behind Mine Yoshizaki’s SGT FROG [sic] manga is this: froglike alien Sgt. Keroro and his extraterrestrial compatriots, in a failed attempt to conquer Pokopen (the Earth), find themselves stranded in the company of two Pokopenian siblings, Fuyuki and Natsumi Hinata, and their friends and family. Hilarity ensues. There you go. That’s the series - beyond that there is no real coherent plot. But that’s not particularly important, because the fact is a complex storyline isn’t required for madcap comedy of this order.

Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson, Harcourt; 1st ed edition (September 1994). *From Amazon.com:* This is the kind of book where you can smell and hear and see the fictional world the writer has created, so palpably does the atmosphere come through. Set on an island in the straits north of Puget Sound, in Washington, where everyone is either a fisherman or a berry farmer, the story is nominally about a murder trial. But since it’s set in the 1950s, lingering memories of World War II, internment camps and racism helps fuel suspicion of a Japanese-American fisherman, a lifelong resident of the islands. It’s a great story, but the primary pleasure of the book is Guterson’s renderings of the people and the place.

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee, Harper Collins, 1999. *Amazon.com user review:* Set in the small Southern town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Depression, *To Kill a Mockingbird* follows three years in the life of 8-year-old Scout Finch, her brother, Jem, and their father, Atticus—three years punctuated by the arrest and eventual trial of a young black man accused of raping a white woman. Though her story explores big themes, Harper Lee chooses to tell it through the eyes of a child. The result is a tough and tender novel of race, class, justice, and the pain of growing up. Like the slow-moving occupants of her fictional town, Lee takes her time getting to the heart of her tale; we first meet the Finches the summer before Scout’s first year at school. She, her brother, and Dill Harris, a boy who spends the summers with his aunt in Maycomb, while away the hours reenacting scenes from *Dracula* and plotting ways to get a peek at the town bogeyman, Boo Radley. At first the circumstances surrounding the alleged rape of Mayella Ewell, the daughter of a drunk and violent white farmer, barely penetrate the children’s consciousness. Then Atticus is called on to defend the accused, Tom Robinson, and soon Scout and Jem find themselves caught up in events beyond their understanding. During the trial, the town exhibits its ugly side, but Lee offers plenty of counterbalance as well—in the struggle of an elderly woman to overcome her morphine habit before she dies; in the heroism of Atticus Finch, standing up for what he knows is right; and finally in Scout’s hard-won understanding that most people are essentially kind “when you really see them.” (Alix Wilber)

Toughing It, Nancy Springer, Harcourt Children’s Books; 1st ed edition (November 30, 1994). A boy’s brother is murdered and family troubles ensue. The boy’s lost father shows up to lighten things up and be the hero.

Tribute to Another Dead Rock Star, Randy Powell, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999. *From Amazon.com:* Many people would admire Grady, having a world-famous rock star for a mom. But when she dies of a drug overdose, Grady doesn’t know where he belongs. His stepmother is very religious, and she and Grady fight all the time. Plus, he loves his mentally disabled brother Louie, but Louie also drives him crazy sometimes. The characters are portrayed in a realistic manner dealing with personal hardships.

What My Mother Doesn’t Know, Sonya Sones, Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing; 1st ed edition (October 1, 2001). A portrayal of teenage love and heartache using the language of youth.

What You Never Knew about Tubs, Toilets, and Showers, Patricia Lauber, Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing (May 1, 2001). An earnest, yet humorous, look at plumbing, exploring the history of bathing and sanitation while taking on differences among various cultures and civilizations.

When Jeff Comes Home, Catherine Atkins, Putnam Juvenile (December 31, 2001). A boy is abducted and emotionally and sexually abused by kidnappers. Once released, the protagonist works through difficulties with family, friends and abduction investigators.

When Kambia Elaine Flew in From Neptune, Lori Aurelia, Simon Pulse; Reprint edition (September 1, 2001). Kambia is apparently physically abused by fanciful, made up beings in the wallpaper. Her friend Shayla must balance telling adults the truth about the abuse and staying true to her friend.
You Hear Me?, Betsy Franco, Candlewick (May 1, 2001). Free verse about the dreams and desires—and fears and troubles—of male teens from a variety of backgrounds.

Yucky Riddles, Marilyn Helmer & Eric Parker, Kids Can Press, 2003. *From Amazon.com:* The words yucky and riddles in one title? What could make an elementary school student happier? An easy way to entice children into reading, this joke book, part of the Kids Can Read series, features one riddle to a page, accompanied by a full-size, color picture. Most of the jokes are actually funny and they stay true to their essential yuckiness with skunks, barf, and nose picking all getting their due. Parker’s zany cartoon-style artwork finds all the humor, while managing to tread the line between funny and disgusting.

BANNED BOOKS

BOOKS REMOVED FROM LIBRARY SHELVES AND/OR CLASS READING LISTS

Blume, Judy
Forever

Juby, Susan
Miss Smithers

Sfar, Joann
Little Vampire Does Kung Fu

Burgess, Melvin
Doing It

Morrison, Toni
The Bluest Eye

Sones, Sonya
What My Mother Doesn't Know

Craig, Kit
Gone

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds
Lovingly Alice

Stine, R.L.
Dangerous Girls

Curtis, Annette
Blood and Chocolate

Ohkame, Mineko & Yuki Ichimura
Dragon Knights

Timberlake, Amy & Adam Rex
The Dirty Cowboy

Hayashi, Hikaru & Kimiko Morimoto
*Manga Book Series, How to Draw
Manga*

Paulsen, Gary
*The Beet Fields: Memories of a
Sixteenth Summer*

Yoshizaki, Mike & Carol Fox
Sgt. Frog

Pike, Christopher
The Listeners

RESTRICTED BOOKS

(BOOKS RESTRICTED TO READERS BASED ON AGE, READING LEVEL, ETC.)

Atkins, Catherine
When Jeff Comes Home

Haddon, Mark
*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the
Night-Time*

Peters, Julie Anne
Luna

Beard, George & Harold Hutchins
The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby

Henkes, Kevin
Olive's Ocean

Powell, Randy
Tribute to Another Dead Rock Star

Blume, Judy
Blubber
It's Not the End of the World

Irving, John
A Prayer for Owen Meany

Sanchez, Alex
Rainbow Boys

Bunting, Eve
Doll Baby

Jenkins, A.M.
Out of Order

Snicket, Lemony
*A Series of Unfortunate Events: A Bad
Beginning*

Collier, James & Christopher
My Brother Sam is Dead

Lawson, Don
An Album of the Viet Nam War

Sones, Sonya
What My Mother Doesn't Know

Franco, Betsy
You Hear Me?

Myers, Walter Dean
Fallen Angels

Steinbeck, John
The Grapes of Wrath

Guterson, David
Snow Falling on Cedars

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds
Danny's Desert Rats
Alice Alone
Patiently Alice

Walker, Alice
The Color Purple

RETAINED BOOKS

SCHOOL RETAINED BOOK IN LIBRARY OR ON CLASS READING LISTS DESPITE CHALLENGE

Alief ISD
Bailey Middle School
Jane Leslie Conley, *Crazy Lady*
Betsy Franco, *Your Hear Me?*

Bandera ISD
Alkek Elementary
Marilyn Helmer & Eric Parker, *Yucky Riddles*

Denton ISD
McNair Elementary
Mary Downing Hahn, *The Gentleman Outlaw and Me*

Granbury ISD
Action Middle School
Marilyn Reynolds, *Detour for Emmy*

Irving ISD
Travis Middle School
Carolyn Mackler, *The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things*

Keller ISD
Whitely Road Elementary
Dav Pilkey, *The Captain Underpants Series*

Killeen ISD
Union Grove Middle School
Lori Aurelia, *When Kambia Elaine Flew in from Neptune*

Liberty Hill ISD
Liberty Hill Intermediate
Dav Pilkey, *The Captain Underpants Series*

McKinney ISD
Elementary
James Howe, *13: Thirteen Stories that Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen*

Midway ISD
Midway Middle School
Nancy Springer, *Toughing It*

Nederland ISD
Helena Park Elementary
Barbara Rollins & Michael Dahl, *Cause of Death*

Progreso ISD
Dorothy Thompson Middle School
Hans Christian Anderson, *The Emperor's New Clothes*

Red Oak ISD
Red Oak Junior High
Dan Elish, *Born Too Short*
Gary Paulsen, *The Car*

Rockwall ISD
Rockwall Heath High School
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Learn more about the ACLU of Texas' work to guard liberty and assure justice here in the Lone Star State online at www.aclutx.org.

BANNED AND CHALLENGED BOOKS - By School

Alief ISD

School: Alief Middle School

Book: *You Hear Me?* by Betsy Franco

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Violence/Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: Also religious content, homosexuality, drug references.

School: Intermediate School

Book: *Crazy Lady* by Jane Leslie Conly

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Alcoholism."

Austin ISD

School: Bailey Middle School

Book: *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Book taken off Accelerated Reader list, moved to Professional Shelf"

Bandera ISD

School: Alkek Elementary

Helmer, Marilyn & Eric Parker

Book: *Yucky Riddles* by Marilyn Helmer & Eric Parker

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Reference to Cannibalism."

Canutillo ISD

School: Bill Childress Elementary

Book: *Mamá No Me Contó* by Babbette Cole

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Result Unknown

Chisum ISD

School: Chisum Middle School

Book: *Friday Night Lights* by H.G. Bissinger

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Copies are off shelf until committee meets."

School: Chisum Elementary

Book: *The Lemming Condition* by Alan Arkin

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Violence

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Book is off shelf pending committee decision."

Conroe ISD

School: McCullough Jr. High

Book: *Manga Book Series, Typical Book: How to Draw Manga* by Hikaru Hayashi & Kimiko Morimoto

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Books were sent to the high school campus. Parents complained about the content and art."

Corpus Christi ISD

School: Kaffie Middle School

Book: *Miss Smithers* by Susan Juby

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Challenge resolved informally by school librarian, district representatives, and parent of 10-year old 6th grader."

School: Carroll High School

Book: *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

Reason Cited: Sexual Content/Violence/Other

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Also challenged for negative cultural portrait"

Denton ISD

School: McNair Elementary

Book: *The Gentleman Outlaw and Me* by Mary Downing Hahn

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Alcohol."

Ector County ISD

School: Ector Jr. High School

Book: *Blood and Chocolate* by Annette Curtis

Reason Cited: Sexual Content/Mysticism Paganism

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Recommended for High School use."

Elkhart ISD

School: Elkhart High School

Book: *Gone* by Kit Craig

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Violence

Action Taken: Banned

School: Elkhart Middle School

Book: *Dangerous Girls* by R.L. Stine

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Violence/Other

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Not Age Appropriate."

George West ISD

School: George West Primary

Book: *The Dumb Bunnies* by Sue Denim & Dav Pilkey

Reason Cited: Violence

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Challenge made by parent."

Graford ISD

School: Graford High/Elementary

Book: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Granbury ISD

School: Action Middle School

Book: *Detour for Emmy* by Marilyn Reynolds

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Committee voted to keep book on shelves w/no restriction."

Gregory-Portland ISD

School: W.C. Andrews Elementary

Book: *The Dirty Cowboy* by Amy Timberlake & Adam Rex

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Removed

Notes: "Principal didn't want book in the library."

Hays CISD

School: Tobias Elementary

Book: *Doll Baby* by Eve Bunting

Reason Cited: Sexual Content/Other

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Topic deemed inappropriate for elementary schools: teen pregnancy. ...

"this subject is too delicate for this age" Requested removal "from all campuses below 8th grade from all district & statewide campuses."

Hempstead ISD

School: Hempstead Middle School

Book: *The Listeners* by Christopher Pike

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Violence

Action Taken: Banned

Book: *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Banned

IDEA Public Schools

School: IDEA College Prep

Book: *Rainbow Boys* by Alex Sanchez

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "We met as a committee and decided not to let anyone below 9th grade check out this book. A 7th grader's parents were the ones who questioned it."

Irving ISD

School: Travis Middle School

Book: *The Earth, My Butt and Other Big Round Things* by Carolyn Mackler

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Principal met with parent, gave her the form. The form was never completed and returned to principal."

Book: *When Jeff Comes Home* by Catherine Atkins

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Parental Consent Needed."

Joshua ISD

School: A.G. Elder Elementary

Book: *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* by George Beard & Harold Hutchins

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Challenged for misspellings. Committee decided to leave the book on the shelf; the parent may request to block her child from checking it out from the library."

School: Caddo Grove Elementary

Book: *Little Vampire Does Kung Fu* by Joann Sfar

Reason Cited: Violence/Horror

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Challenge made by Parent."

Katy ISD

School: Junior High

Book: *Alice Alone* and *Patiently Alice* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Moved from Jr. High to High School."

School: Elementary

Book: *A Series of Unfortunate Events: A Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket

Reason Cited: Violence/Horror

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "The book is to remain in the library but not used for instructional purposes."

Keller ISD

School: Whitley Road Elementary

Book: *The Captain Underpants Series* by Dav Pilkey

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Bathroom Humor."

Killeen ISD

School: Union Grove Middle School

Book: *When Kambia Elaine Flew in from Neptune* by Lori Aurelia

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content

Action Taken: Retained

School: Audie Murphy Middle School

Book: *Luna* by Julie Anne Peters

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Content regarding transgender and gender identity."

Book: *Dragon Knights* by Mineko Ohkame & Yuki Ichimura

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content

Action Taken: Banned

School: Reeces Creek Elementary

Book: *The Fighting Ground* by Avi

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Content Changed/Deleted

Notes: "Blacked out the word 'Goddamnit.'"

School: Smith Middle School

Book: *Sgt. Frog* by Mike Yoshizaki & Carol Fox

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Violence

Action Taken: Banned

School: Harker Heights High School

Book: *Doing It* by Melvin Burgess

Reason Cited: Sexual Content

Action Taken: Banned

Notes: "Teacher complaint; principal read the book and had it removed from the library."

Klein ISD

School: Krahn Elementary

Book: *What You Never Knew About Tubs, Toilets, and Showers* by Patricia Lauber

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Inappropriate Illustrations."

"Citizen's Request for Reconsideration."

La Porte ISD

School: Jennie Reid Elementary

Book: *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* by George Beard & Harold Hutchins

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Decision Pending

Notes: "Book was challenged by a parent at the end of the school year. The Principal will appoint a committee to review the book/challenge."

Liberty ISD

Book: *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Violence

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "Book sent to High School Library."

Liberty Hill ISD

School: Liberty Hill Intermediate

Book: *The Captain Underpants Series* by Dave Pilky

Reason Cited: Other

Action Taken: Retained

Notes: "Parents didn't think books represented 'good literature' and were offended by a character dressed only in a cape and underpants."

School: Liberty Hill Middle School

Book: *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones

Reason Cited: Sexual Content/Other

Action Taken: Use Restricted

Notes: "6th grade parents offended by sexual references; ass't principal insisted book be removed because she found it inappropriate; book placed on reserved shelf, no restrictions for 7-8th grades; we are now just a 7th & 8th grade school, and book has been returned to circulation!"

Llano ISD

School: Llano High School

Book: *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language

Action Taken: Use Restricted/Alternate Book Allowed

McAllen ISD

School: McAllen High School

Book: *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

Reason Cited: Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/other

Action Taken: Restricted/Alternate Allowed

Notes: "Derogatory References to Jesus Christ and his birth."

McKinney ISD**School:** Elementary**Book:** *Danny's Desert Rats* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Use Restricted**Notes:** "Parental permission will be required to check out book. Book will be placed behind the shelf and the accelerated reader quiz will be deleted. Parent challenge."**Book:** *13: Thirteen Stories that Capture the Agony and Ecstasy of Being Thirteen* by Alex Sanchez**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content/Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "Homosexuality."**Midlothian ISD****School:** Walnut Grove Middle School**Book:** *Ozzy Osbourne and Kelly Osbourne* by Linda Saucerman**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content/Violence/Mysticism Paganism**Action Taken:** Retained**Midway ISD****School:** Speegleville Elementary**Book:** *An Album of the Vietnam War* by Don Lawson**Reason Cited:** Violence/Horror**Action Taken:** Use restricted**Notes:** "Book was placed in reference section of the library."**School:** Midway Middle School**Book:** *Toughing It* by Nancy Springer**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Violence/Horror/Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "Drug references. Review committee formed per school policy determined that book should remain. The book was marked with a Young Adult Sticker to warn parents of the content."**Nederland ISD****School:** Helena Park Elementary**Book:** *Cause of Death* by Barbara Rollins & Michael Dahl**Reason Cited:** Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "This book is a bit more graphic than most traditional books."**New Boston ISD****School:** New Boston Middle School**Book:** *My Brother Sam is Dead* by James and Christopher Collier**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language**Action Taken:** Alternate Book Allowed**Notes:** "Challenged for drunkenness, gruesome death, references to alcohol."**New Braunfels ISD****School:** Seele**Book:** *Olive's Ocean* by Kevin Henkes**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Use Restricted**New Caney ISD****School:** Bens Branch Elementary**Book:** *Lovingly Alice* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Banned**North East ISD****School:** Eisenhower Middle School**Book:** *Tribute to Another Dead Rock Star* by Randy Powell**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Mysticism/Paganism**Action Taken:** Use Restricted**Onalaska ISD****School:** Onalaska Jr. & Sr. High School**Book:** *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Banned/Alternate Book Allowed**Pleasant Grove ISD****School:** Pleasant Grove Middle School**Book:** *It's Not the End of the World* by Judy Blume**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language**Action Taken:** Restricted**Prairie Lea ISD****School:** Prairie Lea K-12**Book:** *Out of Order* by A.M. Jenkins**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Use Restricted**Pringle-Morse CISD****Book:** *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language**Action Taken:** Use Restricted**Notes:** "Parental Permission."**Progreso ISD****School:** Dorothy Thompson Middle School**Book:** *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Anderson**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "Illustration of Emperor's rear."**Red Oak ISD****School:** Red Oak Junior High**Book:** *Born Too Short* by Dan Elish**Reason Cited:** Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "Gives young boys ideas about what to do with a girl."**Book:** *The Car* by Gary Paulsen**Reason Cited:** Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "The book mentions the killing of a 3 year old child. The main character is gay."**Book:** *Blind Sighted* by Peter Moore**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Decision Pending**Rockwall ISD****School:** Rockwall Heath High School**Book:** *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Other**Action Taken:** Retained**Notes:** "Racial slurs, Bigotry."**Socorro ISD****School:** Escontrias Elementary**Book:** *Forever* by Judy Blume**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Banned**Notes:** "Reconsideration committee decided this title 'not age appropriate' for elementary school library."**Stephenville ISD****School:** Hook Elementary**Book:** *The Adventures of Super Diaper Baby* by George Beard & Harold Hutchins**Reason Cited:** Profanity/Inappropriate Language/Other**Action Taken:** Decision Pending**Notes:** "Grandmother of student objected to language and 'bathroom humor.'"**West Sabine ISD****School:** West Sabine High School**Book:** *The Beet Fields: Memories of a Sixteenth Summer* by Gary Paulsen**Reason Cited:** Sexual Content**Action Taken:** Banned

ACLU OF TEXAS TALKS WITH BANNED BOOKS AUTHOR JUDY BLUME

Judy Blume spent her childhood in Elizabeth, New Jersey, making up stories inside her head. She has spent her adult years in many places, doing the same thing, only now she publishes her stories. Her irreplaceable writing for young readers includes such books as: *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*; *Superfudge*; *Blubber*; *Just As Long As We're Together*; and *Forever*. She has also published successful "adult" novels, including: *Wifey*; *Smart Women*; and *Summer Sisters* (a New York Times No. 1 bestseller). More than 75 million copies of her books have been sold, and her work has been translated into over twenty languages. She has earned countless awards, including the American Library Association's Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement. Judy Blume has also earned the distinction of being one of the most banned authors in Texas, as her books have been removed from Texas public school library shelves across the state. She has been acting in fighting censorship, including editing the collection *Places I Never Meant to Be: Original Stories by Censored Writers*, and publishing the editorial "Is Harry Potter Evil?" in the New York Times.

In honor of the ACLU of Texas Banned Book Project's 10th Anniversary, **Jeremy Wright**, the founder of the Project, spoke with Judy Blume, who has thousands of readers in Texas, about her career, the banning of her books, and the impact of censorship on writers and young readers.

ACLU of Texas: *Please tell us about the start of your career as a writer.*

Judy Blume: *I began to write when I was in my mid-twenties. By then, I was married with two small children and desperately in need of creative work. I wrote *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* right out of my own experiences and feelings when I was in sixth grade. Controversy wasn't on my mind. I wanted only to write what I knew to be true. I wanted to write the best, the most honest books I could, the kinds of books I would have liked to read when I was younger. If someone had told me then I would become one of the most banned writers in America, I'd have laughed.*

ACLU: *When you began your career, did you instinctively limit the language you used or the themes you explored out of fear of offending readers?*

JB: *No, it never occurred to me that what I was writing would offend anyone. I was writing what I knew to be true. I wasn't trying to shock. Who knew puberty would turn into such a taboo subject? How sad for kids.*

When I'm in the writing "zone," I actually hear my characters talking. I can't censor them. My readers would know I was being dishonest.

ACLU: *When was it that censorship of your work became noticeable to you?*

JB: *Almost overnight, following the presidential election of 1980, the censors crawled out of the woodwork, organized and determined. Not only would they decide what their children could read but what all children could read.*

Those who were most active in trying to ban books came from the "religious right," but the impulse to censor spread like a contagious disease. Other parents, confused and uncertain, were happy to jump on the bandwagon. Book banning satisfied their need to feel in control of their children's lives. Those who censored were easily frightened. They were afraid of exposing their children to ideas different from their own. Afraid to answer children's questions or talk with them about sensitive subjects.

ACLU: *Has the focus on your books by censors impacted your writing?*

JB: *My worst moment came when I was working with my editor on the manuscript of *Tiger Eyes* (the story of a fifteen-year-old girl, Davey, whose beloved father dies suddenly and violently). When we came to the scene in which Davey allows herself to feel again after months of numbness following her father's death, I saw that a few lines alluding to masturbation had been circled. My editor put down his pencil and faced me. "We want this book to reach as many readers as possible, don't we?" he asked.*

*I felt my face grow hot, my stomach clench. This was the same editor who had worked with me on *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*; *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*; *Deenie*; *Blubber*; *Forever* – always encouraging, always supportive. The scene was psychologically sound, he assured me, and delicately handled. But it also spelled trouble. I got the message. If you leave in those lines, the censors will come after this book. Librarians and teachers won't buy it. Book clubs won't take it.*

I tried to make a case for why that brief moment in Davey's life was important. He asked me how important? Important enough to keep the book from reaching its audience? I willed myself not to give in to the tears of frustration and disappointment I felt coming. Ultimately, I caved in and took out those lines. I still remember how alone I felt at that moment.

I've never forgiven myself for caving in to editorial pressure based on fear, for playing into the hands of the censors. I knew then it was all over for me unless I took a stand. So I began to speak out about my experiences.

ACLU: *Most, if not all, of your books for young readers are written in the first person. Do you think that censors are drawn to your books because of this personal writing style?*

JB: *I don't think that has much to do with it, although I can't be sure. With my books it's always been about language, sexuality, and something the censors like to call "undermining authority." But when you're writing about 12 year olds, puberty is often an important issue, as is the questioning of authority. I've always found it interesting that those who would ban books for young people tend to attack the books the children most enjoy. It's as if to say, "If kids like it, there must be something wrong with it."*

ACLU: *Do you feel that those who call for the banning of your books are generally unaware of what is going on in the real lives of children today?*

JB: *I think they don't want to know, they don't want to believe, and they've forgotten what it was like for them. They don't want to talk with their children about personal issues, or answer their questions. The kids get the message pretty quickly and stop going to their parents for information. That doesn't mean they stop thinking about it.*

ACLU: *Do you feel that the presence of censors has impacted the quality of writing for young readers?*

JB: *It's hard to write when you feel the censor sitting on your shoulder. But the writers I know who are just starting out are almost as unaware as I was when I began to write, and that's good. You have to be fearless in your writing in order for it to resonate with your readers, no matter what genre and for which age group. Fear is chilling to creativity.*

ACLU: *What has been the impact of censorship on young readers?*

JB: *What I worry about most is the loss to young people. If no one speaks out for them, if they don't speak out for themselves, all they'll get for required reading will be the most bland books available. And instead of finding the information they need at the library, instead of finding the novels that illuminate life, they will find only those materials to which nobody could possibly object.*

ACLU: *What advice would you offer to parents who are concerned about what their children are exposed to?*

JB: *Exposed to in books or in the world? Either way, if your children have questions, answer them as honestly and to the point as you can. Don't make a big deal out of it. Read the books yourselves, get comfortable with the characters, try not to be judgmental. Use the characters to discuss issues and situations. Reading the same books is a great way to communicate with your kids. I know this isn't always easy, but don't give up. Like everything, talking to your kids gets easier the more you do it.*

ACLU: *On behalf of the ACLU of Texas and our thousands of members across the state, I'd like to thank you for your support for our Banned Book Project, your work against censorship, and your wonderful books that have impacted the lives of so many.*

JB: *Thank you.*

The **ACLU Foundation of Texas** educates, litigates and acts in spirited defense of the Bill of Rights and our nation's civil rights laws. The ACLU Foundation of Texas and the national ACLU Foundation are sustained by the generous financial support of individuals. We invite you to support the work of the ACLU in Texas, including our Banned Books Project and well as our work guarding liberty statewide. For more information, please visit www.aclutx.org.

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