



## **Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read**

**September 26–October 3, 2009**

Banned Books Week (BBW): Celebrating the Freedom to Read is observed during the last week of September each year. Observed since 1982, this annual American Library Association event reminds Americans not to take this precious democratic freedom for granted. BBW celebrates the freedom to choose or the freedom to express one's opinion even if that opinion might be considered unorthodox or unpopular and stresses the importance of ensuring the availability of those unorthodox or unpopular viewpoints to all who wish to read them. After all,

intellectual freedom can exist only where the freedom to express oneself and the freedom to choose what opinions and viewpoints to consume are both met. As the Intellectual Freedom Manual (ALA, 7th edition) states:

Intellectual freedom can exist only where two essential conditions are met: first, that all individuals have the right to hold any belief on any subject and to convey their ideas in any form they deem appropriate; and second, that society makes an equal commitment to the right of unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the communication medium used, the content of the work, and the viewpoints of both the author and receiver of information. Freedom to express oneself through a chosen mode of communication, including the Internet, becomes virtually meaningless if access to that information is not protected. Intellectual freedom implies a circle, and that circle is broken if either freedom of expression or access to ideas is stifled.

Although they were the targets of attempted bannings, most of the books featured during BBW were not banned, thanks to the efforts of librarians to maintain them in their collections. Imagine how many more books might be challenged—and possibly banned or restricted—if librarians, teachers, and booksellers across the country did not use Banned Books Week each year to teach the importance of our First Amendment rights and the power of literature, and to draw attention to the danger that exists when restraints are imposed on the availability of information in a free society.

From: <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/bannedbooksweek/index.cfm>

### **Banned and challenged classics:**

<http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedclassics/reasons banned/index.cfm>