

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recognizing Banned Books Week 2023 – Let Freedom Ring in County Libraries

Mechanicsburg, PA – Banned Books Week – October 1-7, 2023 - is an annual event celebrating the freedom to read. The week 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 [American Library Association \(ALA\) documented 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022](#), the highest number of attempted book bans since the organization began compiling data about censorship in libraries in 1982. The unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022 nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021.

“Library workers are concerned with the risk and dangers of censorship, and the importance of free access to information,” said Carolyn Blatchley, Cumberland County Library System executive director. “The Cumberland County Library System and all of our member library locations will continue to support a literate and informed society by providing the community 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 13 Challenged Books of 2022 are:

1. *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

2. All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit
3. The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
 - Challenged for: depiction of sexual abuse, DEI content, claimed to be sexually explicit
4. Flamer by Mike Curato
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit
5. Looking for Alaska by John Green
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit
6. The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky
 - Challenged for: depiction of sexual abuse, LGBTQIA+ content, drug use, profanity, claimed to be sexually explicit
7. Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit
8. The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie
 - Challenged for: profanity, claimed to be sexually explicit
9. Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope Perez
 - Challenged for: depictions of abuse, claimed to be sexually explicit
10. A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas
 - Challenged for: claimed to be sexually explicit
11. Crank by Ellen Hopkins
 - Challenged for: drug use, claimed to be sexually explicit
12. Me and Earl and the Dying Girl by Jesse Andrews
 - Challenged for: profanity, claimed to be sexually explicit
13. This Book Is Gay by Juno Dawson
 - Challenged for: LGBTQIA+ content, providing sexual education, claimed 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.

The Cumberland County Library System is a federated library system consisting of seven member libraries, one branch facility, an administrative headquarters, and a non-profit foundation. Member libraries include Amelia S. Givin Free Library in Mt. Holly Springs, Bosler Memorial Library in Carlisle, Coy Public Library of Shippensburg, East Pennsboro Branch Library in Enola, Fredricksen Library in Camp Hill, John Graham Library in Newville, New Cumberland Public Library, and Simpson Library in Mechanicsburg.

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