

# Public Librarians' Monthly Chat

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Alaska State Library

# Office for Intellectual Freedom



# Agenda

- Introduction
- What is Censorship?
- How to Handle a Challenge
- OIF Support and Resources
- What Can You Do Before a Challenge?

# What is Censorship?

The suppression of speech, public communication or other information which may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as determined by governments, media outlets, authorities or other groups or institutions.



Expression of Concern

Oral Complaint

Written Complaint

Public Attack

Censorship

*(Definitions by the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, Intellectual Freedom Manual, 2002)*

**CHALLENGES: Concerns, Complaints, Censorship**

Expression  
of Concern



*an inquiry that has **judgmental** overtones*

# Oral Complaint



*an oral challenge to the **presence** or **appropriateness** of the material in question*



# Written Complaint



a formal, written complaint filed with the library challenging the *presence* or *appropriateness* of specific material

\*Report to OIF

# Public Attack

## West Bend Library issue with GAY books for CHILDREN moves to Board

Next Tuesday at 7 p.m. the West Bend Library Board discussion for community members on their offeri



### Letters TO THE Editor

#### Didn't lose me

I read your Feb. 26 article regarding the ski industry losing women's participation in the sport with interest. I was one of those women until I purchased an innovation that significantly extended my physical ability to enjoy the sport.

The apparatus, called CADS, is the invention of Walter Dandy, a resident of Vail. I'm sure you, being an integral part of Vail, are aware of this unusual

but as the years progressed, my knees began to tolerate skiing less and less.

As a physical therapist for over 20 years with bad knees (chondromalacia, onset of osteoarthritis, and what we call "joint mice"), I was hesitant to join my husband's all-day skiing glide only to be in misery at night with swollen, painful knees. When my skiing during the day was interfering with my ability to walk to dinner at night down to Sweet Basil or La Tour, I

ly injured skiers would be hack on the slopes much sooner and more often, whether they are male or female. It was pain and swelling that was keeping me in the village. I have heard of other people having great results being able to ski without their hip or back pain thanks to CADS. They are one of those little-known secrets around town that keep us up there skiing while actually reducing harmful forces and pressure to our aging parts.

Sandy Raskin  
Colorado Springs

#### Keeps me going

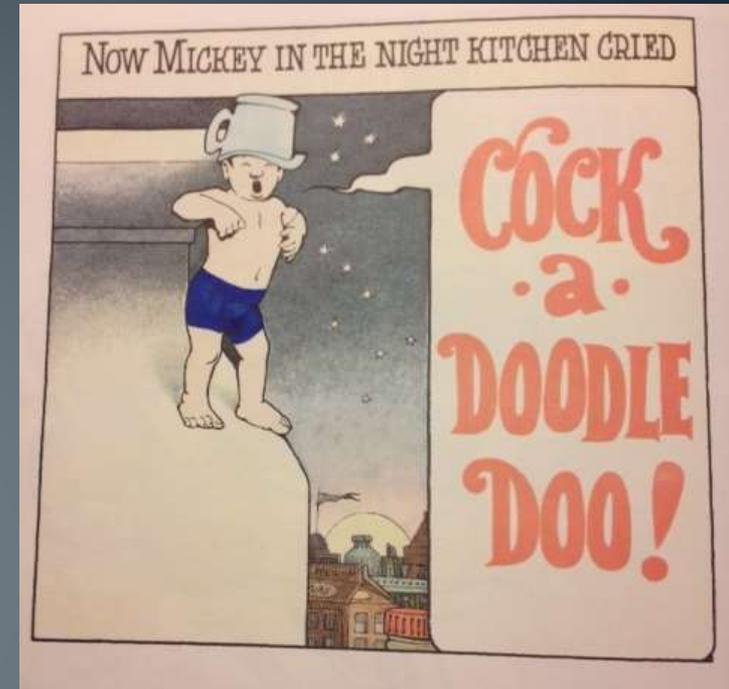
I am a 61-year-old woman, and I have been skiing for 30 years. Because of many years of tennis and running as well as skiing, I have osteoarthritis and a loss of cartilage in my knees.

For many years, I considered



a **publicly disseminated** statement challenging the **value** of the material, presented to the media or others outside the institutional organization in order to gain **public support** for further action

# Censorship



a change in the **access** status of material, based on the **content** of the. such changes include exclusion, **restriction**, removal, or age/grade level changes

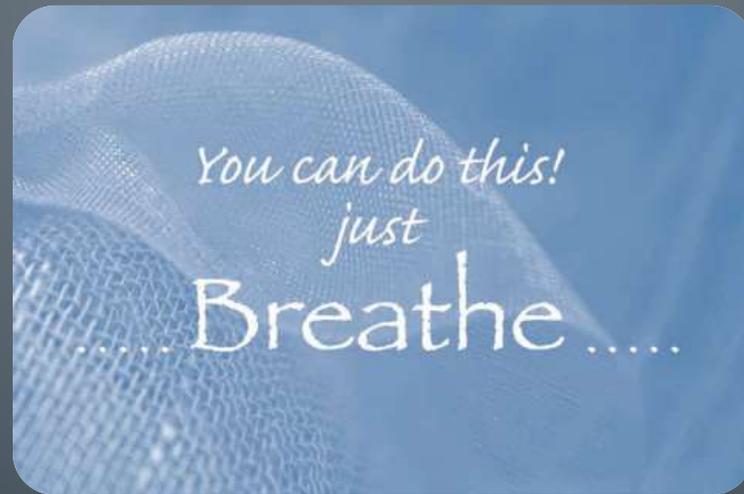


# Finding Common Ground

How to Handle a Challenge

# Step One

- (1) Step back and breathe deeply
- (2) Remember: It's not about me
- (3) Remember: It's not about the person making a challenge



# LIGHT Strategy for Resolving Challenges

**Listen:** Acknowledge patron concerns

**Inquire:** Would patron like to discuss it? What would (s)he like done?

**Give/Offer:** Policies, explanation, referral, “added value”

**Help** patron by stating what library can offer, and if patron is interested, provide a challenge form

**Thank** the patron for caring enough to express her or his own free speech



## Actively Listen

### SIGNS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

- Eye contact
- Attentive posture
- Paraphrasing for clarity
- Empathy

### HOW TO ACTIVELY LISTEN

- Put your own thoughts aside
- Care about what the other has to say

# Know Your Library's Policies, Procedures & Forms

- Does your library have a written policy and procedure for handling complaints about materials or the Internet? Is it available on your website?
- Does your library have form(s) and do you know where they're located?
- Do you fully understand all of the policies at your library that affect access?



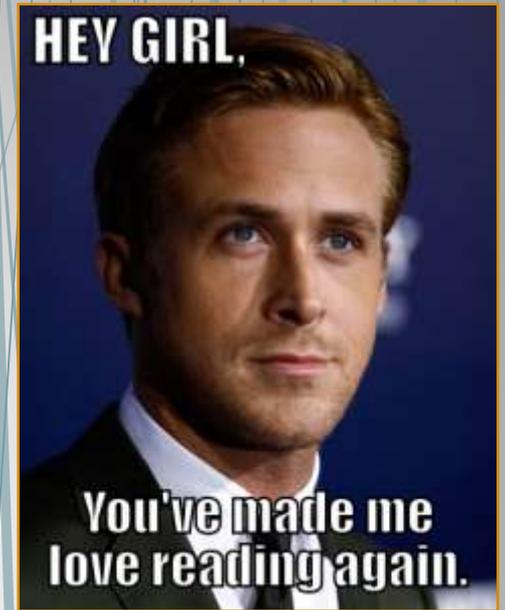
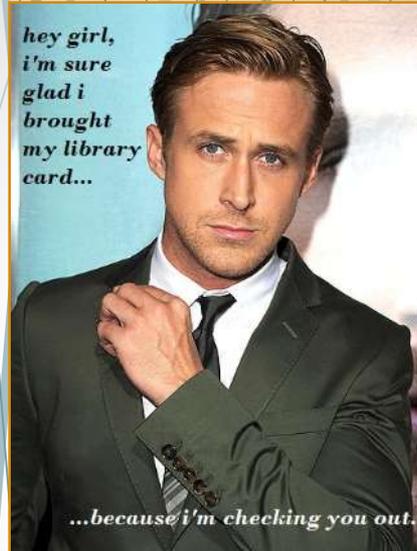
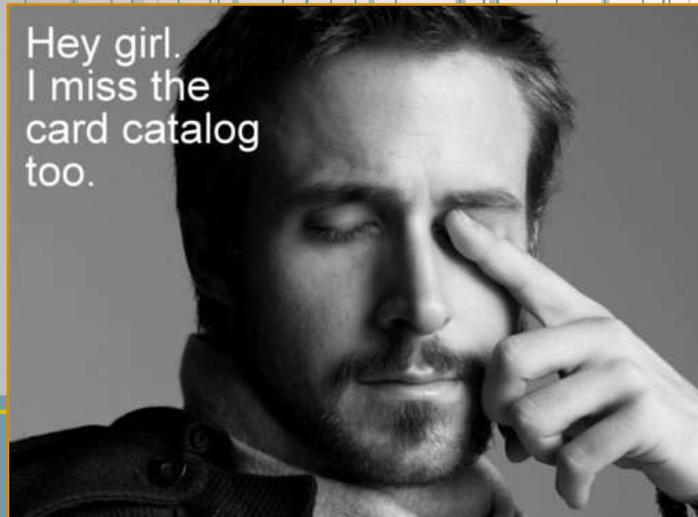
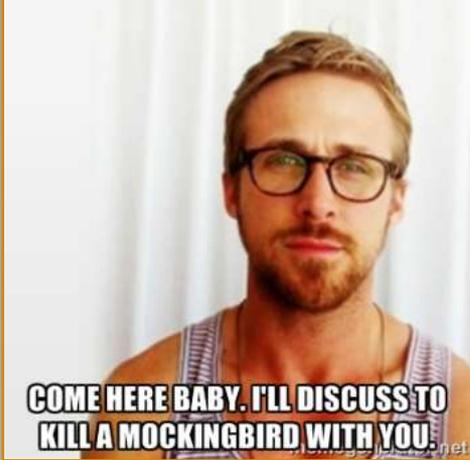
# The Foundation of Your Library's Policies and Mission

- First Amendment
- Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statement



**Follow  
Your  
Policy**





# Support

Sometimes you just need someone who "GETS" it.

# Office for Intellectual Freedom

Call our office. You don't have to be an ALA member. Everything is confidential. Dedicated, experienced professionals are available weekdays by phone from 8:30-4:30 (central time) or any time by e-mail.

Before challenges happen, we can offer training, workshops, e-learning to help staff become more familiar with the First Amendment, the freedom to read and intellectual freedom principles. We've worked with librarians, teachers, library boards, administrations, and non-degreed staff on the front lines about issues beyond just book censorship; privacy, filtering, meeting rooms, display space, new technologies like 3D printing.

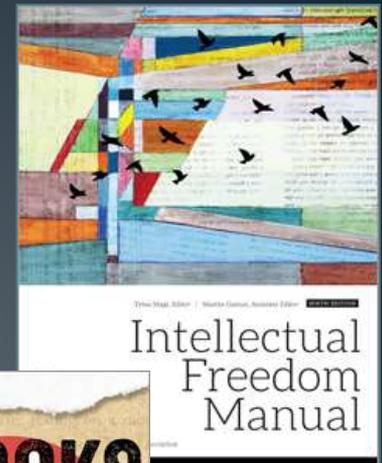
During challenges: Our office has a lot of experiences with challenges, so we can offer suggestions with language in policies, letters, and communication with the public. We have strategy that might be helpful. We can be a confidential sounding board. We have access to tons of publications and resources. We can email librarians multiple reviews and awards lists for the book that is under reconsideration.

As an office we can also offer a formal letter of support. As a nationally recognized professional organization, a letter from ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom can encourage decision makers to adhere to the First Amendment and protect every person's right to information. In some cases, when the press has picked up on a challenge, OIF can provide interviews and make the letters of support publicly available.

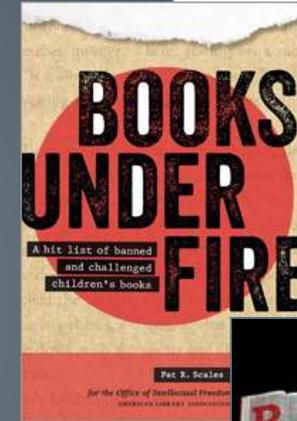
# Resources

## Intellectual Freedom Manual 9<sup>th</sup> Edition

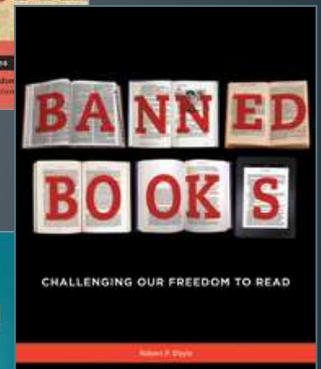
Includes legal explanations in clear, easy-to-understand language, alongside case citations as well as the *Library Bill of Rights* and its Interpretations.



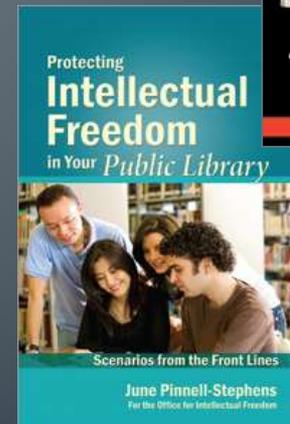
## Books under Fire: A Hit List of Banned and Challenged Children's Books by Pat R. Scales for OIF



## Banned Books: Challenging Our Freedom to Read, 2014 Edition Robert P. Doyle



## Protecting Intellectual Freedom in Your Public Library June Pinnell-Stephens for OIF (Winner of the 2014 Eli M. Oboler Award)



Not Censorship But Selection by Lester Asheim  
Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Q&A  
Workbook for Selection Policy Writing  
Dealing With Concerns About Library Resources  
Strategies and Tips

# What Can You Do Before a Challenge?

- **Train and Educate**
  - Review Policies
  - Offer training for board members or local officials
  - Display Freedom to Read statement
- **Celebrate the Freedom to Read**
  - Banned Books Week. September 27-October 3
  - #FReadom2Read
  - Support organizations like the Freedom to Read Foundation
  - Write Talk Share READ



# Why is it important?

- 80% of Challenges go unreported
- Almost 13,000 challenges recorded since 1990
- That's more than 1 challenge every single day
- 311 challenges in 2014 alone

# Top Ten

- 1) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie  
Reasons: anti-family, cultural insensitivity, drugs/alcohol/smoking, gambling, offensive language, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group, violence.  
Additional reasons: “depictions of bullying”
- 2) *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi  
Reasons: gambling, offensive language, political viewpoint.  
Additional reasons: “politically, racially, and socially offensive,” “graphic depictions”
- 3) *And Tango Makes Three*, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell  
Reasons: Anti-family, homosexuality, political viewpoint, religious viewpoint, unsuited for age group.  
Additional reasons: “promotes the homosexual agenda”
- 4) *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison  
Reasons: Sexually explicit, unsuited for age group.  
Additional reasons: “contains controversial issues”
- 5) *It’s Perfectly Normal*, by Robie Harris  
Reasons: Nudity, sex education, sexually explicit, unsuited to age group.  
Additional reasons: “alleges it child pornography”
- 6) *Saga*, by Brian Vaughan and Fiona Staples  
Reasons: Anti-Family, nudity, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group.  
Additional reasons:
- 7) *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini  
Reasons: Offensive language, unsuited to age group, violence
- 8) *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky  
Reasons: drugs/alcohol/smoking, homosexuality, offensive language, sexually explicit, unsuited for age group.  
Additional reasons: “date rape and masturbation”
- 9) *A Stolen Life*, Jaycee Dugard  
Reasons: drugs/alcohol/smoking, offensive language, sexually explicit, and unsuited for age group
- 10) *Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier  
Reasons: sexually explicit



Any  
Questions?



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[youtube.com/oiftube](https://youtube.com/oiftube)



[google.com/+bannedbooksweek](https://google.com/+bannedbooksweek)

Thank you

*Kristin Pekoll*

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