

# ACLU

## BECAUSE FREEDOM CAN'T PROTECT ITSELF.

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
of GEORGIA

# BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2011 SEPT. 24 - OCT. 1



Ever since the invention of the printing press in 1456, books have been banned, restricted, removed, censored or challenged for various reasons. Everywhere one turns, censorship rears its ugly head. Music cds have parental warning stickers, movies and television have rating systems, parents, libraries and members of Congress seek to censor the Internet. When a published work is banned, it can usually be found elsewhere, but unexpressed ideas and unpublished works are lost forever.

The American Booksellers Association (ABA) and the American Library Association's (ALA) Banned Books Week brings attention to the type of censorship that hinders the free expression of innovative ideas. This year, the American Association of School Librarians designates September 28th to highlight the dangers of software filters that block access to educational material online.

## ACLU DON'T FILTER ME: PROJECT

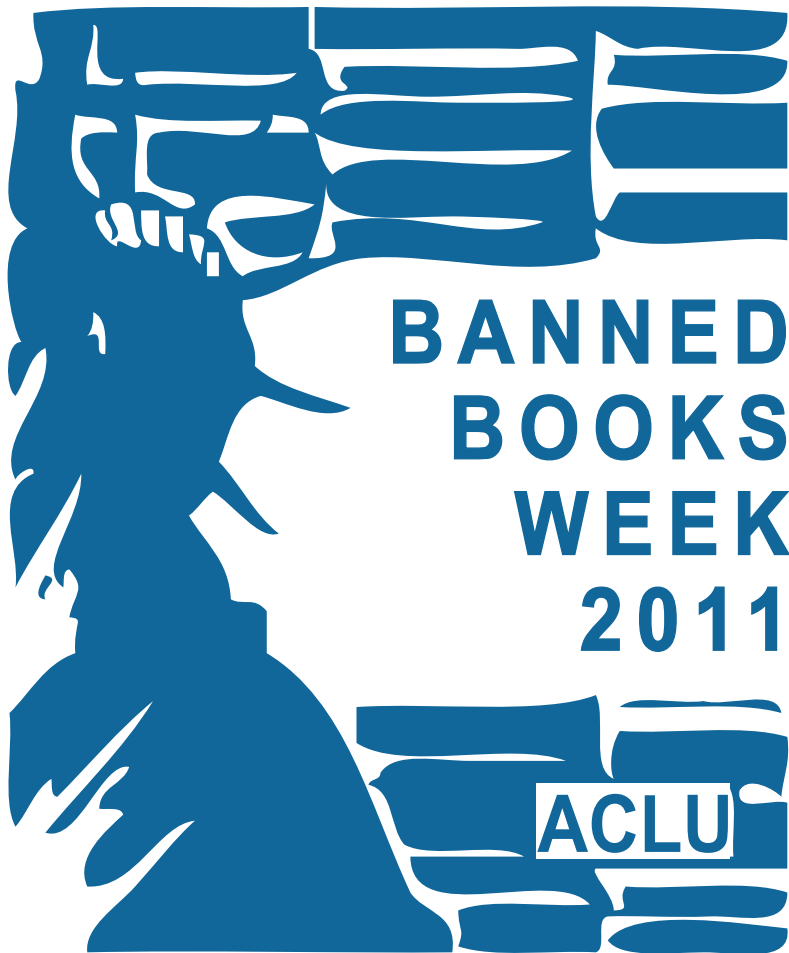
Many public schools around the country are blocking access to LGBT educational material on the Internet - like the Gay-Straight Alliance Network's website - while allowing access to anti-gay websites of organizations such as the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality.

The ACLU upholds our First Amendment right to express our opinion and to encounter others' viewpoints, even if they are unorthodox or unpopular.

The ACLU's "Don't Filter Me" campaign assesses the level of public high schools' censorship against LGBT educational content online. Blocks on educational content violate the Equal Access Act, which requires equal access to school resources for all extracurricular clubs, including gay-straight alliances and LGBT support groups.

Students who want to report unconstitutional web filtering at their schools should visit:

<http://action.aclu.org/dontfilterme>



## Did you know that the following materials were once *banned*?

### Literature:

*Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare  
*Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck  
*The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

### Film:

*A Clockwork Orange* (1971), by Stanley Kubrick  
*Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), by Martin Scorsese  
*M\*A\*S\*H* (1970), by Ring Lardner, Jr.

### Music:

"George Jackson," by Bob Dylan  
"I Can't Get No Satisfaction," by the Rolling Stones  
"Unknown Soldier," by The Doors

### DID YOU KNOW?

Banned Books Week was first held in September 1982 and sponsored by the American Booksellers Association (ABA) and the American Library Association (ALA).

Many people misinterpreted BBW to be a time to ban books.

The most frequently challenged books are usually extremely popular or even classics that enjoy a wide readership. Exactly a third of the titles on the 1998 Modern Library list of the 100 best novels of the 20th Century, including 6 of the top 10, have been removed or threatened removal from bookstores, libraries and schools at some point.

Between 1990 and 1999, the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the ALA tracked 5,718 challenges to materials in schools, school libraries, and public libraries.

The list of most challenged books is tabulated from two sources: newspapers and reports submitted by individuals.

More than three-fourths of challenges to material occurred in schools, usually involving library material.

The Harry Potter series, by J.K. Rowling were the most frequently challenged books of 1999. The most frequently challenged authors for 1999 include Maya Angelou, Judy Blume, Stephen King, J.K. Rowling and John Steinbeck.

Everywhere one turns, censorship rears its ugly head. Music cds have parental warning stickers, movies and television have rating systems, parents, libraries and members of Congress seek to censor the Internet. An author may be asked to make revisions, less for artistic reasons than to avoid controversy. Bookstores and libraries may find published works too controversial and choose not to purchase them. Sometimes a publisher is so afraid that a book may be censored that he or she chooses not to publish it at all. This, of course, is the greatest loss. After all, when a published work is banned, it can usually be found elsewhere, but unexpressed ideas and unpublished works are lost forever.

The ACLU hopes to alert the public to the danger that arises when someone decides for the rest of us what is decent and indecent, and restricts our access to information. The essential message of Banned Books Week is the importance of ensuring the availability of every viewpoint to all who wish to read it. The First Amendment protects our right to express our own opinions and to read, see and hear others' opinions, even those that might be unorthodox or unpopular.