



Newsletter # 5

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"10 Most Challenged Books of 2005"

The American Library Association (ALA) reports that Robie H. Harris's *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* was the most frequently challenged book in 2005. Ms. Harris is a popular author of children's books that deals with issues and questions they may face.

The other nine "Most Challenged Books of 2005" include:

- *It's Perfectly Normal*, for homosexuality, nudity, sex education, religious viewpoint, abortion, and being unsuited to age group;
- *Forever*, by Judy Blume, for sexual content and offensive language;
- *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger, for sexual content, offensive language, and being unsuited to age group;
- *The Chocolate War*, by Robert Cormier, for sexual content and offensive language;
- *Whale Talk*, by Chris Crutcher, for racism and offensive language;
- *Detour for Emmy*, by Marilyn Reynolds, for sexual content;
- *What My Mother Doesn't Know*, by Sonya Sones, for sexual content and being unsuited to age group;
- Captain Underpants series by Dav Pilkey, for anti-family content, being unsuited to age group, and violence;
- *Crazy Lady!*, by Jane Leslie Conly, for offensive language; and
- *It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*, by Robie H. Harris, for sex education and sexual content.

When your library selects books to add to the collection is the emphasis on quality writing, topics of interest, learning, growing, and perhaps controversial books or, is the library more likely to make choices that are safe or screened literature? Are you not buying controversial materials because it's easier to avoid conflict?

Oklahoma Legislation Addresses Children's Literature

The Oklahoma House passed a bill that prohibits local funding authorities and library boards from funding their public libraries unless the libraries have "place[d] all children and young adult materials that contain homosexual or sexually explicit subject matter in a special area [and limited] distribution . . . to adults only." The bill also specifies that the state library must withhold funds from noncompliant public libraries.

Members of the Oklahoma Senate have allowed an April 6 deadline to expire without considering the bill that passed the House by a vote of 60-33. Marilyn

Hinshaw, who directs the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System headquartered in Muskogee, credited the bill's failure to advance to "many public librarians in Oklahoma [who] likely were in touch with their legislators at the same time." Hinshaw told *American Libraries* she wrote Sen. Stratton Taylor (D-Oklahoma City), who chairs the Appropriations Committee to which H.B. 2158 had been referred, to refute claims being made that similar legislation was pending in other states."

If enacted, H.B. 2158 would have mandated the establishment of a State Library Material Content Advisory Board to "annually develop a recommended list of child and young adult materials that contain homosexual or sexually explicit subject matter" for distribution to every library in the state. The board, appointed by the respective leaders of the state house and senate, would be comprised of four legislators, four parents of minor children, and four teachers. The full article is posted on American Libraries Online at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/online/currentnews/newsarchive/2006abc/march2006ab/oklabill.htm>

Commentary: If this bill had become law then each public library in that state would have had to revise their collection development policy not to meet community interests and traditional library shelving practices but to comply with the law. Small libraries could be expected to have difficulty in finding the right kind of space in the building to separate such books and when someone is at that shelf he or she will noticed by others with interest. How do you feel and what is your reaction to this possibility?

ALA's State of America's Libraries Report

In the first annual report on the *State of America's Libraries*, the American Library Association found that:

- Americans appreciate libraries and librarians. Eighty-nine percent of Americans surveyed early this year reported being satisfied with their public libraries. Most agree that public libraries are under-funded and need more support.
- Libraries are keeping up with the times—and with the public's needs. In the past 10 years, libraries across the country have achieved a major success in connectivity; today, virtually all public libraries in the United States offer public access to the Internet.
- Despite uncertain funding at the state level, increased demand for the services provided by libraries and strong local support meant that almost 200 public-library building projects were completed in 2005.

Adapted from the March 2006 American Libraries Association's report "State of America's Libraries." <http://www.ala.org/ala/pressreleases2006/march2006/statesummary.htm>

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