

BOOKS CHALLENGED OR BANNED IN 2004–2005

Robert P. Doyle



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Books Challenged or Banned in 2004–2005

This bibliography represents books challenged, restricted, removed, or banned in 2004–2005 as reported in the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* from May 2004 through May 2005.

Anaya, Rudolfo A. *Bless Me, Ultima*. TQS Pubns. Pulled by the Norwood, Colo. Schools superintendent (2005) after two parents complained about profanity in the book. The superintendent confiscated all of the copies of the book and gave them to the parents, who “tossed them in the trash.” The superintendent later apologized. Students organized an all-day sit-in at the school gym. President George W. Bush awarded Anaya the National Media of Arts in 2002. First Lady Laura Bush has listed the book as ninth on a list of twelve books that she highly recommends. Source: Mar. 2005, p. 55.

Babbitt, Natalie. *The Devil's Storybook*. Farrar. Challenged at the Chestnut Ridge Middle School in Washington Township, Pa. (2004). The complainants wanted the school district to seek parental approval before elementary- and middle-school students could check out books related to the occult. Source: May 2004, pp. 117–18.

Blume, Judy. *Deenie*. Bradbury Pr. Challenged by a parent in the Spring Hill Elementary School District in Hernando County, Fla. (2003) due to passages that talk frankly about masturbation. The board decided to retain the title, but require students to have written parental permission to access the novel. Source: Jan. 2003, pp. 8–9; Mar. 2004, pp. 48–49; May 2004, pp. 95–96.

Cart, Michael. *My Father's Scar*. Simon. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Chambers, Aidan. *Dance on My Grave: A Life and Death in Four Parts*. Bodley Head; Harper. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad

Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Pocket Bks. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Retained in the Arrowhead High School curriculum in Merton, Wis. (2005). Reading the book was optional and parents could choose to have their children read something else. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32; Jan. 2005, p. 11; May 2005, pp. 111–12.

Clutton-Brock, Juliet. *Horse*. Knopf. Challenged, but retained at the Smith Elementary School in Helena, Mont. (2004) despite a parent's concern that it “promotes evolution.” Source: May 2004, p. 97; July 2004, p. 157.

Cormier, Robert. *I Am the Cheese*. Pantheon. Challenged on the seventh-grade honors English reading list at Elko, Nev. Junior High School (2004) because of the book's sexual content. Source: Jan. 2005, pp. 9–10.

Coville, Bruce. *Am I Blue?* HarperCollins. Challenged in the Solon, Iowa eighth-grade language arts class (2004)



“Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us.”

– William O. Douglas

because the short fictional story explores a boy's confusion with his sexual identity and the gay fairy godfather who helps him overcome homophobia at school. The short story, published in *Am I Blue?: Coming out from Silence* by

Marion Dane Bauer, ed., was eventually retained. Source: Jan. 2005, p. 8.

Cruse, Howard. *Stuck Rubber Baby*. Paradox Pr. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Crutcher, Chris. *In the Time I Get*. Dell; Greenwillow; Thronkide Pr. Challenged in the Solon, Iowa eighth-grade language arts class (2004) because the short story is about a man who befriends a young man dying of AIDS. The short story, published in *Athletic Shorts* by Chris Crutcher, was eventually retained. Source: Jan. 2005, p. 8.

_____. *Whale Talk*. Greenwillow. Removed from all five Limestone County, Ala. high school libraries (2005) because of the book's use of profanity. Removed from the suggested reading list for a pilot English–literature curriculum by the superintendent of the South Carolina Board of Education (2005). Challenged at the Grand Ledge, Mich. High School (2005). Source: May 2005, p. 107.

Dandicat, Edwidge. *Krik! Krak!* Soho Pr. Challenged by a parent at the Arrowhead High School in Merton, Wis. (2004) as an elective reading list assignment because the book contains “sexually explicit and inappropriate material.” Source: Jan. 2005, p. 11.

Davis, Deborah. *My Brother Has AIDS*. Atheneum. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

de Haan, Linda and Stern Nijland. *King & King*. Tricycle Pr. Restricted to adults at the Freeman Elementary School in Wilmington, N.C. (2004) because the children's book is about a prince whose true love turns out to be another prince. Moved from the children's section to the adult section at the Shelbyville–Shelby County, Ind. Public Library (2004) because the book's homosexual story was considered inappropriate by a parent. Challenged by seventy Okla-

“Censorship is crippling, negating, stifling. It should be unthinkable in a country like ours.”

– Norma Fox Mazer

homa state legislators calling for the book to be removed from the children's section and placed in the adult section of the Metropolitan Library System in Oklahoma City (2005). Source: May 2004, p. 97; July 2004, pp. 137–38; May 2005, pp. 108–09.

Drill, Esther. *Deal with It! A Whole New Approach to Your Body, Brain, and Life As a Gurl*. Pocket Bks. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Removed from the Gilbert, Ariz. Unified School District (2004) despite the book's recommendation by the ALA Young Adult Library Services Association “Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.” Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32; Jan. 2005, pp. 5–6.

Duncan, Lois. *Daughters of Eve*. Little. Challenged at the Lowell, Ind. Middle School (2005) because of the book's profanity and sexual content. Source: May 2005, pp. 109–10.

Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies*. Doubleday. Challenged at the Arrowhead High School in Merton, Wis. (2004) as an elective reading list assignment by a parent because the book contains “sexually explicit and inappropriate material.” Source: Jan. 2005, p. 11.

Ferris, Jean. *Eight Seconds*. Harcourt. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Fierstein, Harvey. *The Sissy Duckling*. Simon. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System

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(2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Fox, Paula. *The Slave Dancer*. Bradbury Pr. Challenged at the Shelbyville, Ky. East Middle School (2005) because a parent found the book to be a too-graphic depiction of the slave trade. Source: May 2005, pp. 110–11.

Frank, E. R. *Life Is Funny*. DK Ink. Pulled from the shelves of two Merced, Calif. middle-school libraries (2005) because of an “X-rated” passage describing two teens’ first experience with sexual intercourse. Source: May 2005, p. 107.

Frank, Mel, and Ed Rosenthal. *Marijuana Grower’s Guide*. Red Eye Pr. Challenged at the Teton County Public

Library in Jackson, Wyo. (2004) because “tax dollars are being used to purchase a how-to crime manual.” Source: May 2004, p. 98.

Freyman-Weyr, Garret. *My Heartbeat*. Houghton. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Garden, Nancy. *Good Moon Rising*. Farrar. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

_____. *Holly’s Secret*. Farrar. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Greene, Bette. *The Drowning of Stephan Jones*. Bantam. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Don’t You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey*. Simon. Banned from the Galt Joint Union Elementary School District classrooms in Sacramento, Calif. (2003) and restricted to students with parental permission in the middle school libraries. The novel discusses parental



IT'S YOUR FREEDOM WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

neglect, sexual harassment at an after-school job, and other stresses experienced by the young-adult fictional character. The novel is on the ALA Best Books for Young Adults list. Source: Mar. 2004, p. 52; May 2004, p. 98.

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. Random. Challenged, but retained in the Normal, Ill. Community High School sophomore literature class (2004) despite objections that the play is degrading to African Americans. Source: Sept. 2004, pp. 177–78.

Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book about Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health*. Candlewick Pr. Challenged, but retained at the Holt Middle School parent library in Fayetteville, Ark. (2005) despite a parent's complaint that it was sexually explicit. Source: May 2005, p. 131.

Hautzig, Deborah. *Hey Dollface*. Greenwillow. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Jain, Linda. *Eat Me*. Broadway Bks. Removed from the Marion County Public Library in Ocala, Fla. (2003). The library director noted that the Australian best-seller was removed because the library lacks a designated erotica collection, and the novel met only three of seventeen criteria used to evaluate books for acquisition. The Marion County Public Library Advisory Board recommended that the library director retain the novel. The board's vote was only a suggestion and the final decision went back to the library director. In Feb. 2004, the director reversed her earlier decision, reinstated the novel, and stated that her personal dislike for the book overshadowed her objectivity and adherence to policy. Source: Jan. 2004, pp. 7–8; Mar. 2004, pp. 47–48; May 2004, pp. 115–16; Sept. 2004, pp. 175–76.

Jameson, Jenna and Neil Strauss. *How to Make Love Like A Porn Star: A Cautionary Tale*. Regan Books. Houston, Tex. mayor ordered city librarians (2005) to keep the book behind the counter. After committee review, the best-seller was returned to the open shelves. Source: Mar. 2005, pp. 55–56; May 2005, pp. 131–32.

Kellogg, Steven. *Pinkerton, Behave!* Dial. Challenged, but retained at the Evanston, Ill. Public Library (2004) despite complaints that the image of a masked burglar pointing a gun at woman is too violent for young readers. Source: July 2004, p. 157; Nov. 2004, pp. 255–56.

Kotzwinkle, William, and Glenn Murray. *Walter the Farting Dog*. Frog, Ltd. Challenged, but retained on the library shelves of the West Salem, Wis. Elementary School (2004) despite the book's use of the word "fart" and "farting" twenty-four times. Source: May 2004, p. 118; July 2004, p. 138.



"If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."

– Robert H. Jackson



Larson, Rodger. *What I Know Now*. Holt. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lippincott/Harper; Popular Library. Challenged at the Stanford Middle School in Durham, N.C. (2004) because the 1961 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel uses the word "nigger." Challenged, but retained in the Normal, Ill. Community High School sophomore literature class (2004) despite concerns the novel is degrading to African Americans. Source: May 2004, pp. 98–99; Sept. 2004, pp. 177–78.

Lipsyte, Robert. *One Fat Summer*. Harper. Pulled from the Ansonia, Conn. Public Library local schools' display (2004) following a parental complaint about a paragraph describ-

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

— Benjamin Franklin

ing the masturbation fantasy of a teenage boy. Source: Nov. 2004, p. 229.

Lowry, Lois. *Anastasia Again!* ABC–Clio. Removed from the Lake Wales, Fla. elementary school library (2005) because of a complaint that the book’s references to beer, *Playboy* magazine, and Anastasia making light of wanting to kill herself were inappropriate for children. Source: May 2005, p. 107.

_____. *The Giver*. Dell; Houghton. Challenged as a suggested reading for eighth-grade students in Blue Springs, Mo. (2003). Parents called the book “lewd” and “twisted” and pleaded for it to be tossed out of the district. The book was reviewed by two committees and recommended for retention, but the controversy continues in 2005. Source: Mar. 2005, pp. 57–58.

Mezrich, Ben. *Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions*. Arrow; Free Press. Challenged in the Beaverton, Oreg. schools as supplemental reading (2004) because it contains profanity and abundant references to prostitution and gambling. In 2004, the book was number eighteen on *The New York Times*’s paperback nonfiction best-seller list. Source: Mar. 2005, pp. 58–59.

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. NAL. Challenged, but retained at the Kern High School District in Bakersfield, Calif. (2003) despite complaints of the book’s sexually explicit material. Source: Mar. 2004, pp. 50–51; May 2004, pp. 118–19.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Alice on the Outside*. Atheneum. Available with parental permission in the librarian’s office at Shelbyville, Ky. East Middle School (2005) because the book is “too sexually explicit” for middle-school students. Source: May 2005, p. 108.

_____. *Alice the Brave*. Atheneum. Challenged in the Mesquite, Tex. Pirrung Elementary School library (2004) due to sexual references. Source: Nov. 2004, p. 231.

Park, Barbara. *Mick Harte Was Here*. Knopf. Challenged, but retained at the Centennial Elementary School library in Fargo, N. Dak. (2004) after parents complained to school officials that the book contains themes and language inappropriate for elementary students. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 229–30; Jan. 2005, p. 27; May 2005, p. 131.

Rennison, Louise. *On the Bright Side, I’m Now the Girlfriend of a Sex God: Further Confessions of Georgia Nicolson*. Avon. Retained in the Bozeman, Mont. School District’s middle-school libraries (2005) despite a complaint that an unstable person seeing a girl reading the book might think from the title that the girl is promiscuous and stalk her. Source: Mar. 2005, p. 74.

Rodriguez, Luis J. *Always Running*. Curbstone Pr. Pulled from the Santa Barbara, Calif. schools (2004) after a parent complained about graphic passages depicting violence and sex. Source: Jan. 2005, p. 7.

Salinger, J. D. *Catcher in the Rye*. Bantam; Little. Challenged, but retained as an assigned reading in the Noble High School in North Berwick, Maine (2004). Teachers will provide more information to parents about why certain books are studied. Source: Jan. 2005, pp. 8–9; Mar. 2005, pp. 73–74.

Sanchez, Alex. *Rainbow Boys*. Simon. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Sijie, Dai. *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*. Knopf; Chatto. Pulled from the Federal Way’s, Wash. Todd Beamer High School English classes and library (2004) by the superintendent, who overruled a committee of educators and parents that unanimously recommended keeping the book. The novel about censorship was considered sexually explicit and inappropriate for high-school students. Source: July 2004, p. 139.

Silverstein, Charles, and Edmund White. *The Joy of Gay Sex*. Crown; Simon & Schuster/Fireside. Challenged, but retained in the Marple Public Library in Broomall, Pa. (2004) along with several sexual instruction manuals including: *Sex Toys 101: A Playfully Uninhibited Guide*, by Rachel Venning; *Great Sex Tips*, by Anne Hooper; *Ultimate*

Guide to Fellatio, by Violet Blue; and *The Illustrated Guide to Extended Massive Orgasm*, by Steve Bodansky because the books are “seriously objectionable in text and pictures due to the sexually explicit material.” Source: Mar. 2004, p. 50; May 2004, p. 117.

Sones, Sonya. *What My Mother Doesn't Know*. Simon. Challenged at the Bonnette Junior High School library in Deer Park, Tex. (2004) because the book includes foul language and references to masturbation. The book was selected as a “Best Book for Young Adults,” by ALA in 2002; “Young Adults Choice,” by the International Reading Association in 2003; and included on the Texas Lone Star State Reading List. Source: Jan. 2005, p. 7.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. Bantam; Penguin; Viking. Challenged in the Normal, Ill. Community High School (2003) because the book contains “racial slurs, profanity, violence, and does not represent traditional values.” An alternative book, Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, was offered but rejected by the family challenging the novel. The committee then recommended *The House on Mango Street* and *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as alternatives. Source: Jan. 2004, p. 11, Sept. 2004, pp. 177–178.

Stewart, Jon, Ben Karlin, and David Javerbaum. *America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction*. Warner. Returned to circulation at the Jackson–George Regional Library System in Pascagoula, Miss. (2004). The library board had banned the best-selling satirical book because the book contained an image of Supreme Court judges' faces superimposed on naked bodies. The book was named a Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*, the industry trade magazine. Source: Mar. 2005, p. 73.

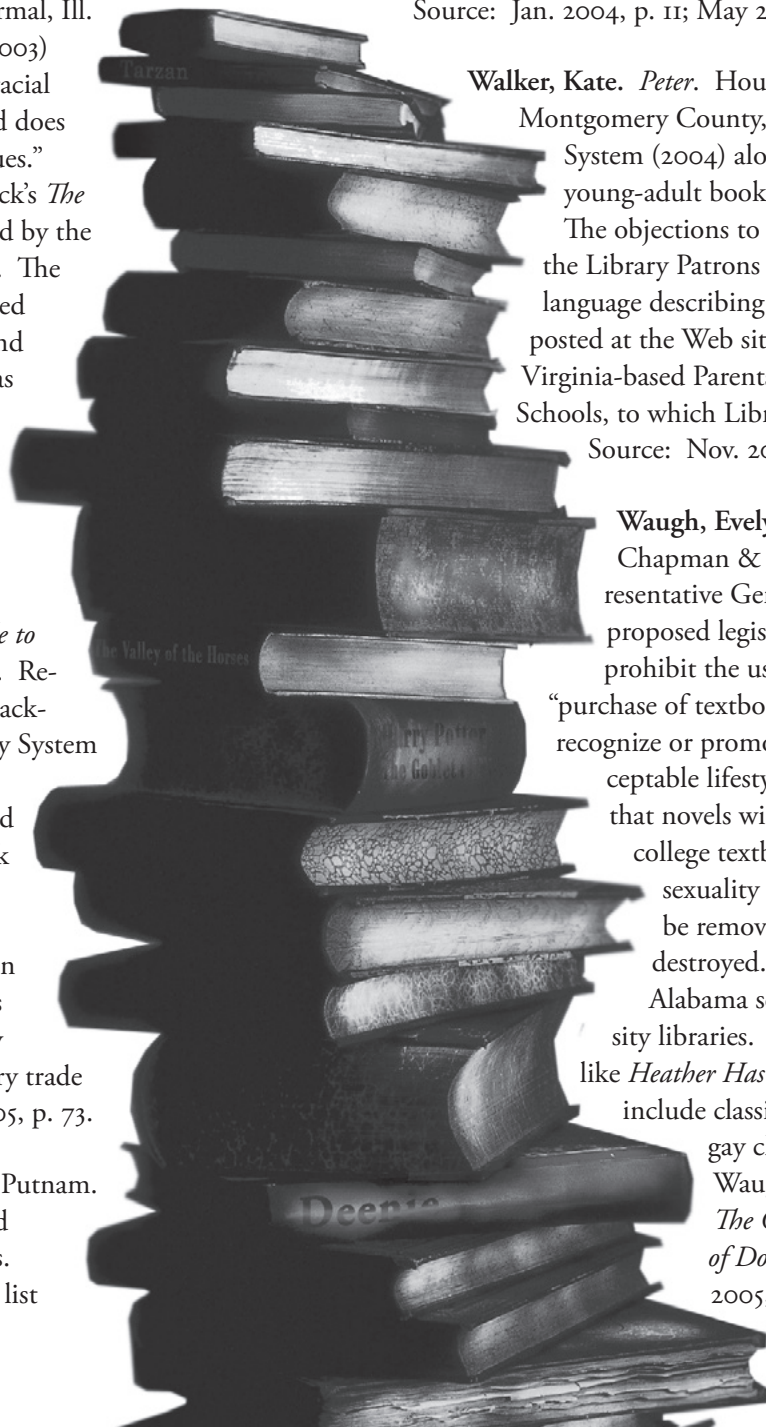
Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Putnam. Challenged at the Arrowhead High School in Merton, Wis. (2004) as an elective reading list

assignment by a parent because the book contains “sexually explicit and inappropriate material.” Source: Jan. 2005, p. 11.

Twain, Mark [Samuel L. Clemens]. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Bantam; Bobbs-Merrill; Grosset; Harper; Holt; Houghton; Longman; Macmillan; NAL; Norton; Penguin; Pocket Bks. Challenged in the Normal, Ill. Community High School sophomore literature class (2004) as being degrading to African Americans. *The Chosen* was offered as an alternative to Twain's novel. Pulled from the reading lists at the three Renton, Wash. high schools (2004) after an African American student said the book degraded her and her culture. The novel, which is not required reading in Renton schools but is on a supplemental list of approved books, was eventually retained for classroom usage. Source: Jan. 2004, p. 11; May 2004, p. 91.

Walker, Kate. *Peter*. Houghton. Challenged at the Montgomery County, Tex. Memorial Library System (2004) along with fifteen other young-adult books with gay-positive themes. The objections to the books were posted at the Library Patrons of Texas Web site. The language describing the books is similar to that posted at the Web site of the Fairfax County, Virginia-based Parents Against Bad Books in Schools, to which Library Patrons of Texas links. Source: Nov. 2004, pp. 231–32.

Waugh, Evelyn. *Brideshead Revisited*. Chapman & Hall Ltd. Alabama Representative Gerald Allen (R-Cottondale) proposed legislation (2005) that would prohibit the use of public funds for the “purchase of textbooks or library materials that recognize or promote homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.” The bill also proposed that novels with gay protagonists and college textbooks that suggest homosexuality is natural would have to be removed from library shelves and destroyed. The bill would impact all Alabama school, public, and university libraries. While it would ban books like *Heather Has Two Mommies*, it could also include classic and popular novels with gay characters such as Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Color Purple* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Source: Jan. 2005, p. 5.



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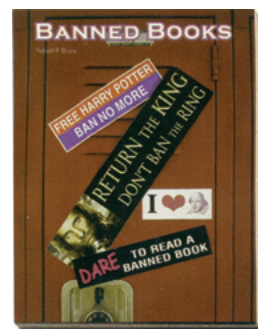
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List of Books Challenged or Banned in 2004–2005



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