



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Public Library

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, September 10, 2004

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Arian Collins

619-236-5848

### **City Libraries Celebrate Freedom to Read During “Banned Books Week,” Sept. 25 through Oct. 2**

**SAN DIEGO** – To help raise awareness regarding the censorship of books, the City of San Diego Public Library will present exhibits and activities during national Banned Books Week, Saturday, Sept. 25 through Saturday, Oct. 2. The theme of this year’s Banned Books Week is “Elect to Read a Banned Book.”

“We must take into account that not every book will be right for every reader,” said City Library Director Anna Tatár. “However, the freedom to choose for ourselves is a hard-won right that we must not take for granted. Reading, speaking, thinking and expressing ourselves freely are core American values.”

Members of the public will be invited to read aloud excerpts from banned or challenged books at a special event on Wednesday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. at the Mira Mesa Branch Library. The program is free. In addition, an exhibit of books will be on display at the branch, located at 8405 New Salem St., 858-538-8165.

Also, two Banned Books Week exhibits will be on display at the Central Library, one in the Literature section and a second outside the Children’s Room. The Central Library is located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego, 619-236-5800.

In addition, there will be displays of banned and challenged books at the following branch libraries:

- Balboa, 4255 Mt. Abernathy Ave., 858-573-1390.
- Mission Hills, 925 W. Washington St., 619-692-4910.
- North Clairemont, 4616 Clairemont Drive, 858-581-9931.
- Rancho Peñasquitos, 13330 Salmon River Road, 858-538-8159.

Observed since 1982, the Banned Books Week campaign is sponsored by the American Booksellers Association, American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, American Library Association, American Society of Journalists and Authors, Association of American Publishers and National Association of College Stores. The campaign is endorsed by the Center for the Book of the Library of Congress.

-- more --

Between 400 and 500 book challenges are recorded each year by the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom. However, it is estimated that less than one-quarter of all challenges are reported and recorded by public and school libraries. A "challenge" is defined as a formal, written complaint filed with a library or school about a book's content or appropriateness. The majority of challenges (roughly 60 percent) are brought by parents, followed by library patrons and administrators. Each challenge represents an effort to remove books from school curricula or library shelves.

For more information on Banned Books Week, visit the American Library Association on the Web at <http://www.ala.org>.

###

*The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future*



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Public Library

### Top 10 Most Frequently Challenged Books in the United States

Banned Books Week will be held Sept. 25 through Oct. 2 to help call attention to censorship. The American Library Association (ALA) collects information about challenged books from two sources: newspapers and reports submitted by individuals, some of whom use the Challenge Database Form. All challenges are compiled into a database. According to the ALA, the following books were the most frequently challenged in 2003:

1. Alice series by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, for sexual content, using offensive language, and being unsuited to age group.
2. Harry Potter series, by J.K. Rowling, for its focus on wizardry and magic.
3. "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck, for using offensive language.
4. "Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture" by Michael A. Bellesiles, for inaccuracy.
5. "Fallen Angels" by Walter Dean Myers, for racism, sexual content, offensive language, drugs and violence.
6. "Go Ask Alice" by Anonymous, for drugs.
7. "It's Perfectly Normal" by Robie Harris, for homosexuality, nudity, sexual content and sex education.
8. "We All Fall Down" by Robert Cormier, for offensive language and sexual content.
9. "King and King" by Linda de Haan, for homosexuality.
10. "Bridge to Terabithia" by Katherine Paterson, for offensive language and occult/satanism.

The most frequently challenged authors in 2003 were Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, J. K. Rowling, Robert Cormier, Judy Blume, Katherine Paterson, John Steinbeck, Walter Dean Myers, Robie Harris, Stephen King, and Louise Rennison.

# # #

*The City of San Diego Public Library – Your Link to the Past and Gateway to the Future*