



# THE BOOK STALL

September 2023  
Vol. XXXV, No. 7  
Nancy Dreher, *Editor*



## THE FRONT LINE



September marks the beginning of the school year and the start of The Book Stall's busiest season. Our September newsletter typically focuses on our robust event calendar and exciting new fall books. But this month, in addition to events and new books, we have decided to devote some space to banned books, an increasingly important subject for all of us who love books and reading. We don't see book banning as a partisan issue, and at The Book Stall we stock books representing a wide range of views.

In years past, we've highlighted banned books in the window, and every year I am stopped in the street by customers who are stunned at some of the titles that are displayed: F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (sex, violence, adultery, and language), Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (language and allegation of rape,) J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (profanity), Judy Blume's *Are You There God It's Me, Margaret?* (sexuality), to name just a few. This year feels very different from prior years as states, municipalities, and school districts pass increasingly stringent laws forcing teachers, librarians, and even bookstores to remove books from their shelves. Banned Books Week is October 1 – 7, and we urge you to consider the importance of this issue to a healthy democracy.

The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 2,571 unique titles targeted for censorship in 2022, a 38% increase from the 1,858 unique titles targeted in 2021. News reports show images of empty bookshelves in libraries in schools; and librarians and teachers are under attack by those who want to police reading choice for everyone. Inside these pages, you will find booksellers highlighting banned books that meant something to them, information about banned books, and actions that you can take to become involved in this important issue. And because September is back-to-school month, it seems appropriate to look at how books are being banned in schools: of the 1,648 titles on the banned book list in the 2021-2022 school year:

- 41 percent explicitly address LGBTQ+ themes or have protagonists or prominent secondary characters who are LGBTQ+ (This includes a specific subset of titles for transgender characters or stories—145 titles, or 9 percent);
- 40 percent contain protagonists or prominent secondary characters of color;
- 21 percent directly address issues of race and racism;
- 22 percent contain sexual content of varying kinds, including novels with some level of description of sexual experiences of teenagers, stories about teen pregnancy, sexual assault, and abortion as well as informational books about puberty, sex, or relationships.

Please scan the QR code on the outside of this mailing for more information about book banning and what you can do.

And stop by the store—we'll help you find a banned book (check out our displays) or just the latest great read!

*Steph*

*Many of our events require registration.  
Go to "Events" on our website to sign up.*

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

6:30 pm, Regina Dominican High School Auditorium  
701 Locust Rd, Wilmette

Co-sponsored by Wilmette Public Library

MEG KISSINGER

*While You Were Out: An Intimate  
Family Portrait of Mental Illness  
in an Era of Silence*

Award-winning journalist (and Wilmette

native) Meg Kissinger discusses *While You Were Out*, with author Christie Tate (BFF: A Memoir of Friendship Lost and Found and Group: How One Therapist and a Circle of Strangers Saved My Life). Meg's book is a searing memoir of a family besieged by mental illness, as well as an exploration of the systems that failed them and a testament to the love that sustained them.



### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

10-30 - 11:30 am at the store, Book Release Party

ALEX WILLAN, *Elves Are the Worst!*

Gilbert the Goblin infiltrates Santa's workshop to prove that goblins are better workers than elves in the latest installment in *The Worst!* picture book series. Great for kids age 4-8.

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

2 pm at the store

BARBARA MAHANY

*The Book of Nature*

In her new book, Barbara

Mahany—a former pediatric oncology nurse and a staff writer at the *Chicago Tribune* for nearly 30 years—invites readers to discover an ancient theology. It focuses on the text God first revealed through creation: nature in all its kaleidoscopic turnings.



### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

4:30 – 5:30 pm at the store

LOWEY BUNDY SICHOL

*Cookie Queen: How One Girl Started Tate's Bake Shop*  
Eleven-year-old Kathleen King was positively obsessed with baking the perfect chocolate chip cookie. And when she grew up, Kathleen started a cookie company called Tate's Bake Shop. Perfect for kids ages 4 to 8.

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

11:30 am, a Music Box Event

3733 N. Southport Ave., Chicago

KATHLEEN ROONEY

*From Dust to Stardust*

Kathleen Rooney will be at The Music Box discussing her new book, *From Dust to Stardust* following a screening of the movie *The Power and the Glory*! A sweeping journey from the dawn of the motion picture era through turbulent



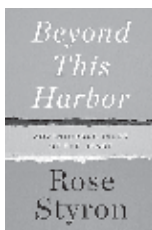
Calendar continues on page 7

# THE INSIDE LINE

LEAH GORDON



***Beyond This Harbor: Adventurous Tales of the Heart*** by Rose Styron (\$32). In this stunning memoir from Rose Styron, we are swept into her early childhood in Baltimore, then to her years spent in Roxbury, and finally brought to the current day in Martha's Vineyard. Her life is one of

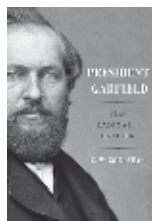


countless adventures and necessitates multiple double takes as you read the names of her wide social circle, political contacts, and art colleagues amidst her story telling. Her college studies and poetry writing are detailed early in the book, leading to her meeting, and marrying famed author William (Bill) Styron. Their story is the centerpiece of *Beyond This Harbor*, a love that is felt throughout her recounting of their years together, even in the most difficult of circumstances, as illustrated in her honest look at both his breakdowns and subsequent depressions. While Bill's career framed their relationship, four children and countless friends and contemporaries filled in the life they built together. Notwithstanding her dedication to their family, the decades of work Rose did with Amnesty International and numerous human rights and arts organizations highlight the pride she took in fighting for social justice and giving a voice to those whom she felt needed to be heard. The vivid retelling of the missions and trips she took, be it to South America, Poland, or Botswana paired with her personal travels, truly take the book to another level as her experiences read as something you would expect from a great novel rather than a memoir.

JON GRAND



***President Garfield: From Radical to Unifier*** by C.W. Goodyear (\$35). Many of you read Candace Millard's *Destiny of the Republic*, which focused on the attack and death of President James Garfield. That book rightly sparked an interest in Garfield that is now met



with Goodyear's fantastic biography. Garfield's father died, leaving a widow and four young children. Through a series of humble jobs, James helped to support and keep the family together. Farm hand, carpenter, canal boat worker, teacher...Garfield did it all. He funded his own education, working as the school janitor. He would become a lawyer, a college president, Civil War general, and the second-youngest serving Congressman. The Republican convention of 1880 was the longest convention in its history. In the end it would nominate a reluctant James Garfield. Great hopes were riding on his shoulders. Reconstruction in the South had foundered, and growing divisions were again a threat. Could Garfield reknit the nation? An assassin's bullet found him shortly after his election. He died, less from the bullet and more from his doctor's incompetence, but he was dead all the same, and with him went the hopes of national unification. Rutherford Hayes would say of him: "The truth is no man ever started so low, who accomplished so much in our history...not Franklin nor Lincoln."

***The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder*** by David Gann (\$30). In 1740, the British naval ship *Wager* set off on a mission to capture Spanish galleons filled with treasure. Chasing one Spanish vessel, the *Wager* foundered and marooned its crew on a desolate island off the coast of Patagonia. What happened on that island during the months the crew was stranded is a gruesome tale of violence and survival. Two groups of survivors managed to leave the island. One group, travelling in an open boat for over 100 days, washed up on the coast of Brazil and was greeted as heroes. But six months later, a crew of three washed up on the shores of Chile. Their story was much different



than that told by first group. What happened to the *Wager* and its shipwrecked crew is a tale of horror and heroics that will draw you in and leave you unsettled.

***The Wrath to Come: Gone with the Wind and the Lies America Tells*** by Sarah Churchwell (\$40). *Gone With the Wind* debuted in 1936. It quickly became a run-away best seller. The book won a Pulitzer Prize, has sold millions of copies worldwide, and been translated into 35 languages. The movie version was no less successful, breaking box office sales and garnering eight Academy Awards, including the first Oscar awarded to a Black actor, Hattie McDaniel ("Mammy"). Its popularity spawned a wide acceptance of the belief in the myth of the "Lost Cause," and a history of the South that never existed. The novel creates an alternative history of the period, which assuages the consciences of Southerners and Northerners alike. In this world, enslaved people are treated well and benefit from the care they get as slaves. This may remind you of recent revisionist history. And the cause of the war is now assigned to states' rights or economic independence. Of course, the right the states were fighting for was the right to keep enslaved people. But then Blacks weren't really people, and bondage was their natural state. This carefully constructed alternate history continues to impact racial relations. White supremacy is more prominent than ever, and the ubiquitous presence of the "Stars and Bars—the Confederate battle flag—Is supposed to hark back to the noble struggle of the South. Churchwell masterfully dissects the premises of the alternate history and traces how our denial has given credence to the myth of the Lost Cause. Real history gives us the opportunity to understand, learn, and progress. Alternative history leads to denial and lies.



ELIZABETH HUBBARD



***The Quiet Tenant*** by Clémence Michallon (\$28) is a haunting thriller with a big twist. Instead of being told from the perspective of a detective or police officer, this story of a serial killer is told by the victims. We know almost from the beginning who the killer is and, in



addition to hearing from the victims he killed over the years, we hear from his daughter, his current girlfriend, and the one victim he spared...or did he? This book is addictive. You want to read it all in one sitting to find out what happens to the characters you have grown to both worry and care about. Take this one on vacation but maybe not if you're visiting the woods of Upstate NY!

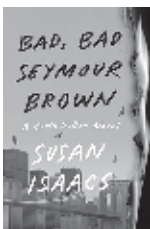
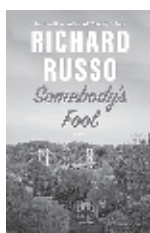
***Crow Mary*** (\$28.99) is the newest work of historical fiction written by Kathleen Grissom, author of *The Kitchen House* and its sequel, *Glory Over Everything*. Grissom paints a beautiful, yet heart-breaking, picture of northern Montana in this story, based on a real Native American woman, who married a white fur trader. As with her previous books, the author is so good at teaching about a period in history while making the story relatable and engrossing. I read this book with my heart, as I hoped for *Crow Mary's* happiness and safety. The Montanan and Canadian landscapes feature heavily in this poignant novel.



Richard Russo has done it again. In his new novel, ***Somebody's Fool*** (\$29), a companion to his previous novels *Everybody's Fool* and *Nobody's Fool*, we are once again in fictional Schuyler Springs and Bath, NY. Bath has recently been annexed by its larger and more prosperous neighbor, and things are changing fast. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed immersing myself in the lives of Peter Sullivan and all the characters in his orbit. Small town life during a recession means struggles and some serious introspection. Russo



is the master of storytelling when it involves flawed, but beloved, characters with real problems. Each character intersects somehow with the others, and Russo is like a weaver, crafting a tapestry of humanity. This book touches on some current societal issues like race but is also timeless, as it talks about love, parenting, families, and one's life purpose. I sincerely didn't want this book to end.



**Bad, Bad Seymour Brown** by Susan Isaacs (\$28) is the second in the Corie Geller series. Corie is a former FBI agent and freelance literary scout specializing in Arabic fiction. Post-Covid, Corie's actress mother and retired homicide detective father move into the Geller's Long Island house with her and their teenaged daughter. When a cold case from her father's past returns, Corie sees an opportunity to get her father off the couch and just possibly bring some excitement into her own life. What follows is an investigation dating back 20 years, but also the current day, when their client is almost run over by an SUV.

### MAGGIE JAMES



**Shark Heart: A Love Story** by Emily Habeck (\$28) is a very unusual, but very deep book. The story's world is seemingly exactly as ours is but with one catch: There are genetic mutations that turn normal people into animals. The protagonist, Wren, has just married her husband,



Lewis, when he gets the incredibly rare diagnosis that he is turning into a great white shark. The first half of the book is then about how Wren and Lewis cope with this diagnosis, and then how difficult the transformation is on both of them. The second half of the book goes back in time to Wren's mother and how Wren grew up. The idea of physically changing into something else is a beautiful metaphor for growing apart. While the premise may be very odd, this book was very heartfelt and emotional.

### SHARMAN MCGURN



**Prom Mom** by Laura Lippman (\$30). What really happened during the Towson High School prom in May of 1997? Is the "official" police version the truth, or perhaps is it something else? That is the mystery at the center of Lippman's most recent novel. The undisputable fact



is that a premature baby was born and died that night. Twenty-plus years later, Prom Mom and Cad Dad, as the parents of the baby came to be called, meet again and their stories unfold. Set in and around Baltimore, "Cad Dad" Joe, a commercial real estate developer, is now happily married to Meredith, a plastic surgeon. "Prom Mom" Amber is an increasingly successful gallery owner, with a robust online presence selling visionary art. Lippman deftly incorporates the pandemic into the story, reversing financial fortunes of both Joe (the market for commercial real estate tanks) and Amber (in their isolation people shop online, buying new objects to decorate their dwellings). The world is turned upside down. The night of the prom still looms large in the lives of both characters. The things they perceived to have happened then propel the choices they make now. The book is filled with examples of life's paradoxes—physicians specializing in liver cancer drink too much; status-loving striver Joe detests his new Peloton. At its core, **Prom Mom** is about how the past, especially one's understanding of the past, affects the future. The novel is an enjoyable read, not only entertaining but thought-provoking, as well.

### KATHY RILEY

**Crook Manifesto** by Colton Whitehead (\$29). A manifesto is a statement declaring publicly the interactions, motives, and views of social history issues. **Crook Manifesto** is the second book in



his trilogy about Harlem, New York. The first one was **Harlem Shuffle**, which is set in the 1960s. In **Crook Manifesto**, it is now 1971. Ray Carney is still a successful furniture salesman, who has retired from his illegal side hustles until his daughter wants to go to a Jackson 5

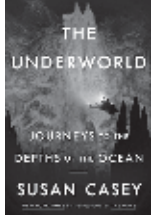


concert. Ray reconnects with the crooked cop, Munson, to acquire the tickets, but not without reentering the corrupt side of bad cops. The next section, in 1973, revolves around making the movie "Nefertiti TNT," part of which is filmed in Ray's furniture store. The local girl, made good as a star, is kidnapped by a drug dealer. Forward to 1976, which is filled with bicentennial celebrations and fires throughout the city. There are all kinds of crooks, thieves, hustlers, politicians, killers, and showbiz types included, each with their own specialty and manifesto for their business. Colson Whitehead has already won Pulitzer Prizes for **Underground Railroad** and **The Nickel Boys**. His writing is engaging, expressive, and entertaining. There is dark humor and a window into the ways to thrive and survive in Harlem. I look forward the third book in this trilogy!

### CHARLOTTE ROBERTSON



**The Underworld: Journeys to the Depths of the Ocean** by Susan Casey (\$32). More than 70 per cent of the earth's surface is ocean, containing mountain ranges, deep crevasses, and smoldering volcanic vents, and while we have mapped Mars and the moon, only about 20



percent of the ocean floor has been studied to the degree that the planets have! How can we exist surrounded by water that is the basis for much of life on earth and know so little about it and what it contains? Susan Casey, who has been fascinated by the ocean all her life, set out to find out more about the deep ocean and the people who are exploring it, and this book is a fascinating recounting of all the scientists and explorers who shared their time and journeys with her. She describes the history of deep-sea exploration from tales of terrifying sea monsters to the discovery of shipwrecks long thought missing, to modern day submersibles that can dive into the deepest crevasses and collect samples of the incredible creatures that inhabit a place long thought to be devoid of life. This book is full of information and heart-racing narrative (submersibles, anyone?) as well as being a clarion call on climate change and resource extraction. It is news we can all use, presented in an accessible and engaging book.

### MIKE WY SOCK



Tersely lyrical, Peter Heller's **The Last Ranger** (\$27) updates the concept of frontier justice, by examining the moral and ethical ambiguities of 21st century life "out West," where National Park rangers mete out feeble laws, while overzealous tourism and shady,



anti-government types threaten federally protected lands and animals. Heller excels at showcasing the majesty of Yellowstone National Park and its surrounding areas, while adeptly rounding out what reads as a thriller with interesting and well-developed characters. When a local wolf biologist's leg gets pinned in an all-too conveniently located poacher's trap, law enforcement ranger, Ren, sets out to solve the crime and regulate against what appears to be a cabal of right-wing conspirators, hellbent on defending their "rights." All the ingredients for a series of western thrillers with a rakish hero are here: stunning natural setting, interpersonal conflicts by the dozen, love interests, and the plumbing introspection afforded to those spending lengthy amounts of time outdoors and in solitude. Heller doesn't disappoint; he tidily resolves the action of this novel, but leaves the reader with a sense that more is yet to come. I truly hope so; this one is a fantastic enjoyment.

## Book Bans: Here and Across America

Earlier this year, Illinois passed legislation to protect Illinois public and school libraries from pressure to ban, remove, or restrict access to books based on "artisan or doctrinal disapproval." Illinois became the first state to enact anti-book ban legislation tying library funding to open access policies. Other states are looking to us as an example of how to address attempts to remove or censor books in schools, libraries, and even bookstores.

We asked our friends at the Winnetka-Northfield Library for their thoughts, and here's what they said:

*"In recognition of Banned Books Week, the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District celebrates the fundamental right to access a wide range of ideas and perspectives. We endorse the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement and believe that the freedom to read is essential to an informed and open society. Banned Books Week serves as a reminder of the ongoing need to protect intellectual freedom and promote respectful dialogue. We encourage our community to engage with challenged and banned books, fostering a deeper understanding of complex issues, and promoting critical thinking."*

### Book Stall Staffers Remember...

#### JON GRAND

I've read many of the books on the various lists of banned books. Three come to mind:

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The book was judged to be "immoral" for its discussion of rape and sexuality. It was further targeted for its discussion of racism and the use of the word "n-----." It remains on banned lists to this day.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. This is considered to be the first U.S. book to be banned on a national scale. The depiction of slavery horrified some readers, while others denounced it as an exaggeration.

But the third book is curious. It depicts slavery as a kind and beneficial institution. It contains smoldering eroticism and some threats of rape. It uses the word "n-----" unashamedly. And it glorifies a world that never was. The book, of course, is *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell. Though it contains all the elements that led to banning of the other two (above), the book was only banned once in the US. It was, however, banned and burned in Nazi Germany (though Hitler is said to have screened the film three times). The Nazi's had no objection to the enslavement of African-Americans, or the KKK, or the depiction of Blacks as caricatures. No, the book was considered dangerous because it portrayed survival and freedom for whites.

#### ROBERT McDONALD

I must have been 11 or 12 when I read John Donovan's groundbreaking novel for young people, *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip*. About 45 years ago, my beloved children's librarian in the small town where I grew up recommended it to me. Now, this title certainly didn't turn me gay. Books, for all their reach and impact, don't have that kind of power. What it did do was show a lonely, closeted, and scared kid that there were people like me in the world, and a life out there that I could actually live. In librarian terms, this book was a mirror for me. Current laws around the country seek to deny young queer children any way to see themselves in books. It's crazy to me that if my friend Mrs. Borysko were alive today, in many states in this country she could be prosecuted for sharing Donovan's book, or even keeping it on the library shelves.



#### ELIZABETH HUBBARD

As someone who grew up in Wilmette, I experienced the famous New Trier High School Junior Theme. I wrote about the Sinclair Lewis novel *Elmer Gantry*, which "exposed" religious hypocrisy and satirized the evangelical movement. I spent months reading, researching, and composing, and was amused to learn that the author had been accused of being Satan's Cohort! This novel opened my eyes to a world unfamiliar to me and challenged me to think about religion in a whole new way.

*The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas has been banned in schools across America. I read this amazing young adult novel and then promptly shared it with my mentee in a college readiness program. That a book could bond a middle-aged white woman and a teenaged Black girl gives it power, in all the best ways. We learned so much about each other discussing this book, and it inspired both of us to seek out similar titles.

I went through a young adult reading spree several years ago...while already a full-grown adult. John Green's books captivated me, especially *Looking for Alaska*. Banned in way too many school districts, it depicts a very realistic look at the teen years—particularly for teens in boarding school. While disturbing to me as a parent, it likely looks familiar to many going through adolescence. Yes, there is smoking, drugs, and more "bad" behavior, but there is also friendship, angst, and growth. Teens need to see themselves represented in books, wars and all!

#### SHARMAN MCGURN

*The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende was first published in Chile in 1982. I read it soon after the English translation was released. Allende's debut novel made me a fan of hers, of magical realism, and propelled me to read other Latin American authors. Its political and autobiographical elements contribute to the book's power.

#### MIKE WY SOCK

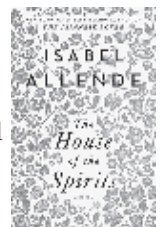
I was lucky enough to have a high school English teacher introduce a whole new world of serious fiction when assigned Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. I credit reading this book with my decision to major in English and my desire to seek out writers not afraid to confront the darker realities shaping the American experiment.

#### BETSY BALYEAT

*The Giver* by Lois Lowry. By banning this beautiful story, readers are being denied the importance of memory and the individual. The book was banned when it was reported to contain depictions of suicide, murder, and euthanasia. But banning it denies us, the reader, the freedom to make our own choice to read it or not.

#### ISABEL MANGUM

While I was lucky enough to read *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates during my junior year at New Trier, Texas state lawmaker Matt Krause aims to ban it due to concern that it, and 850 other titles, might make "students feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress because of their race or sex." And certainly, I did feel some discomfort and





anguish reading the book, not due to guilt, but from Coates' heart-wrenching descriptions of the Black experience to his son and his meditations on racial prejudice. The banning of *Between the World and Me* would undoubtedly be a loss for students across America who would lose an invaluable opportunity to expand their empathy, be exposed to other experiences, and learn more deeply about how to dismantle prejudice in America. For that, I thank and applaud Illinois' lawmakers for signing HB 2789, fittingly, in Chicago's Harold Washington Library.

#### KATHLEEN CRAWFORD

*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. I read this imaginative and exhilarating story in 5th and 6th grade a great number of times. A teen-age girl learns courage and ingenuity as she searches for her missing father. She is brave, loyal, and devoted to her family. I loved everything about Meg Murry and her brother, who taught me the importance of being true to oneself, while simultaneously caring for and looking after loved ones, even when things are unknown and seem frightening. Meg helped me to find courage and confidence, and she did the same for my daughter many years later, when she read this remarkable story. This book is considered a literary classic by most, and you will find it shelved in that section of our store. (This book has been banned by some for its magical realism which they felt undermined religious beliefs.)



#### MADELEINE LANDON, Teen Reviewer

I was 11 when I originally read Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, and it changed how I saw the world. *Persepolis* follows Marjane's life in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution, something I was never taught about in school. I wouldn't have known of such an important event in history without Satrapi's book, since the Islamic Revolution is not taught in most high schools. *Persepolis* was banned in Texas public libraries in January of 2022.



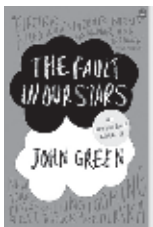
#### CAITLIN MARZ

I encountered Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* for the first time as a 20-something experiencing a post-college reading slump. I don't remember how it found its way into my hands (a welcome mystery), but I have a crystalline memory of the way it reminded me that the immersive magic of reading was not lost to childhood by engaging my imagination as well as my intellect and reactivating my curiosity for worlds known and unknown.



#### SUSAN DAVIS

Just this past week, a library in an Indiana town I am personally very familiar with, made the decision to remove from the Young Adult section John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. This love story between two teens fighting cancer is a quintessential read for young readers, yet, it was being pulled from the shelves as it was deemed inappropriate. John Green responded by saying, "This is ludicrous. It is about teenagers and I wrote it for teenagers. Teenagers are not harmed by reading TFiOS (*The Fault in Our Stars*)." While the author's public fight with the library board garnered support to move the book back to the Young Adult section, the fight continues, including this very library where several other Young Adult works are still being relegated to other sections.



#### MAGGIE JAMES

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison is one of the most influential books I have ever read. I read it for my English class, not expecting much going into it, but it deeply impacted me. It gave me a view of



slavery that I had never experienced, but truly forever changed my mindset on the history I was taught.

*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi is truly an amazing book. I picked it up because it seemed interesting, but was totally blown away by how much I didn't know about Iran in the 1980s. My great-grandparents on my paternal side were refugees from Iran, so it was especially meaningful to connect with that side of my culture through this astonishingly beautiful book.



#### CHRISTINE FERDINAND

Jeffrey Eugenides's Banned Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Middlesex* taught me what it's like to question your own gender identity in the face of familial and societal disapproval, and to find the courage to look for the answers. As a reader I was alongside Calliope when she discovered that her body contained both male and female reproductive organs and faced rejection from society and her loved ones. I was able to cheer her on as she left her old-world home to find a community that offered her belonging, and the chance to develop radical self-acceptance. Reading stories through the eyes of people very different from ourselves helps us to expand our worlds, and develop empathy, something our society could use a little more of.



### Top 13 Most Challenged Books of 2022

The American Library Association tracked 1,269 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2022. Of the 2,571 unique titles that were challenged or banned in 2022, here are the top 13 most challenged:

*Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

*All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

**Reasons:** rape, incest, claimed to be sexually explicit, EDI content

*Flamer* by Mike Curato

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

*Looking for Alaska* by John Green

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit, LGBTQIA+ content, rape, drugs, profanity

*Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, claimed to be sexually explicit

*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity

*Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit

*A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit

*Crank* by Ellen Hopkins

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit, drugs

*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews

**Reasons:** claimed to be sexually explicit, profanity

*This Book Is Gay* by Juno Dawson

**Reasons:** LGBTQIA+ content, sex education, claimed to be sexually explicit

# the children's line...



KARI PATCH

September is here again, which means fall is on the way and students are back in school. It also means Banned Book Week is around the corner. You might wonder what those two things have in common. Sadly, the answer is quite a bit.



Banned Books Week was founded in 1982 after an uptick in challenges to books across the country. Its purpose is to celebrate the right to read, while drawing attention to attempts to stifle that freedom in schools, libraries, and bookstores. According to the Office for Intellectual Freedom, the number of reported book challenges in 2022 was *nearly double* those reported in 2021. A Study from PEN America found that overwhelmingly, book banners continue to target stories by and about people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals. Those are just the reported challenges. When silent censorship is considered, there is no real idea just how many more books have been censored. "Quiet or silent censorship is insidious and dangerous, and it emerges in two distinct ways. The first is when a librarian or educator purposefully doesn't include material in their collections because it counters their own beliefs. The second is when those gatekeepers elect not to purchase or promote materials because of the fear they may be challenged."<sup>1</sup> A study from Wheelock Educational Policy Center at Boston University's Wheelock College of Education & Human Development found that of 6,000 school libraries, school districts that had a book challenge last year were 55% less likely to stock new LGBTQ books the following year. The number of challenged titles also matters. Each new book challenged in a district reduced the probability that the district would buy a new book about LGBTQ characters by 4 percent.<sup>2</sup>

In the face of ever-increasing book challenges and legislation, librarians and booksellers are having to look deeply at how they select materials for their shelves. "In one Texas school district, school librarians have ordered 6,000 fewer books this year than the year before, because under a new rule parents must have 30 days to review the titles before the school board votes to approve them. In Pennsylvania, a school librarian who must now obtain her principal's okay for acquisitions has bought just 100 books this school year, compared with her typical 600."<sup>3</sup> Legislation in Arkansas and Texas passed this year would make it illegal for booksellers to sell nebulously defined "explicit" titles to schools or young people. A federal judge has struck down the Arkansas law, and a coalition of booksellers and publishers are suing Texas over the READER Act. But the courts take time, and the READER Act is set to take effect September 1st.

One might think, "But that's Texas! (or Arkansas! or Florida!) That can't happen here, Illinois just passed a law against book banning!" Books are already being challenged and banned in Illinois, even with the new law. Within the last year, the store has had schools decline author visits for fear of community push-back. There have been authors who partner with The Book Stall who have been uninvited from school visits. These things occur with no notice in the news. Soft censorship is happening in this state, in our communities. Now more than ever, it is time to speak up against censorship and stand up for underrepresented youth. Banned Books Week isn't just about a front window display once a year. It is a chance to actively highlight ways in which the fight against censorship is changing, and to encourage people to be aware at the local level that this fight happens year-round. **Check the QR code on the outside of this newsletter to find more information and resources for helping fight book bans.**

<sup>1</sup> -Kelly Jensen, *BookRiot*, Oct. 7, 2021 *How to Fight Book Bans and Challenges: An Anti-Censorship Tool Kit*

<sup>2</sup> -Eesha Pendharkar, *edweek.org*, Jan. 6, 2023 *What Book Bans Are Doing to School Library Purchases*

<sup>3</sup> -Hannah Natanson, *Washington Post*, Jan 22, 2023 *Students want new books. Thanks to restrictions, librarians can't buy them.*

## BETSY BALLEAT



**Camp Sylvania** by Julie Murphy (\$18.99). After years of waiting, best friends and aspiring actors, Maggie Hagen and Nora are jazzed to be heading to camp Rising Star for three summer weeks. But on the last day of school, Maggie's parents announce that they are instead



sending her to Camp Sylvania, a place for big dreams, fun, and weight loss. Maggie's mom is obsessed with weight, and since her mom's friend Sylvia Sylvania has just bought the camp, she wants Maggie to attend. Most of the counselors prove to be taken with Influencer Sylvia and her scarlet diet. But a rebrand isn't the only change the camp has undergone: the property is now haunted, advertised activities are off-limits, underage campers are asked to donate blood, and soon campers begin to disappear. Through Maggie's witty first-person narration, Murphy reveals fat camps horrors, both benign and supernatural, as Maggie realizes her body is just right the way it is. A fun and spooky celebration of fat kids and friendship. *Ages 8-12*

## Miles Morales Suspended—A Spider Man Novel

by Jason Reynolds, illustrated by Zeke Peña (\$19.99). Picking up the day after Miles saved the world from heinous criminal The Warden, this sequel begins with Miles suspended for telling his racist teacher, Mr. Chamberlin, that he is sick of his crap. Miles Morales is not a pin-cushion, punching bag, puppet, or pawn. He is a Boricua Black teen living on a block very different from the Brooklyn Visions Academy boarding school he attends. At the academy, Black and Brown kids are discriminated against and steered toward a pipeline leading to mass incarceration that makes statistics out of those students. When Miles begins seeing termites at school, his Spidey sense alerts him to a sinister plot. As Miles is trying to concentrate on a day's worth of homework, he hears a constant buzzing that is messing with his concentration, and it seems to be coming from something in the wall—something that might want to not only erase history but permanently destroy it. As tensions build, the termites embody censorship, a powerful topic often brought up via current events in schools and prisons across the country. Miles courageously argues for books "to try to read and write themselves free." Spidey senses are tingling—this is a must read. *Ages 12 and up*



## The Night in Question—an Agathas Mystery

by Kathleen Glasgow and Liz Kawsin (\$19.99). Last October, Alice Ogilvie's ex-best friend, Brooke Donovan, was killed, and if it weren't for Alice's unlucky alliance with her tutor, Iris Adams, and her library of the complete works on Agatha Christie, the wrong person would certainly be sitting in prison for the crime. The Castle Cove police are not exactly great at solving crimes. In fact, they are notorious for not solving crimes, which is why, on the night of Castle Cove High's annual Sadie Hawkins dance, Alice takes the opportunity to explore Levy Castle—the site of one of Castle Cove's most infamous deaths. Mona Moody—the classic film star—died there almost a century ago, and Alice is pretty sure the police got that investigation wrong, too, but before she can even think of digging deeper, she walks right into the scene of a new crime—Rebecca Kennedy on the ground in a pool of blood. And standing over Kennedy is another of Alice's ex-friends, Helen Park. The Castle Cove police think it is an open and shut case, but Alice and Iris are sure it can't be that simple. Park isn't a





murderer, and the girls know all too well that in life and in mysteries, things are rarely what they appear to be. To understand the present, sometimes you need to look to the past. Castle Cove is full of secrets and Alice and Iris are about to uncover one of its biggest and most dangerous secrets of all. *Ages 14-17*

#### AMY TROGDON

*I Have a Question* by Andrew Arnold (\$18.99).



For young Stevie, asking a question in school is scary! So, when the teacher, Ms. Cecil, asks if there are any questions, he is hoping someone else will ask his question. But, no one else does. Should he take the risk? The risk of being laughed at? The risk of



being thought of as silly? Stevie discovers that many other kids want to hear the answer to his questions too! Wonderfully reassuring with humor and empathy. A great back-to-school read! *Ages 3-6*

*Doris* by Sarah Jacoby (\$18). A dapple gray circus horse named Doris has always loved to perform, but she often wonders what lies outside the big top? She wanders outside, dancing her way into the woods. Doris dances deeper into the woods and begins to wonder if she has come too far? But, in the moonlight, she spots a small brown pony who loves prancing and watching Doris dance. They spend the night exploring and as the sun rises wonder, "What else is out here?" A perfect back-to-school book about stepping out of our comfort zones and welcoming new experiences. *Ages 5-7*



*Dogtown* by Katherine Applegate and Gennifer Choldenko, illustrated by Wallace West (\$18, out September 19). Dogtown is a shelter for dogs that are homeless, abandoned or...robots. Yes, robotic dogs have become quite popular because they don't shed, don't eat, and don't have to go out. The real dogs at the shelter aren't fond of the robotic dogs, as they are usually chosen first. Chance, a three-legged dog who has been at the shelter for a long time, along with his buddies Metal Head, a robotic dog who desperately wants to go home, and Mouse, loyal to both Chance and Metal Head. Their adventures and misadventures are both funny and heartwarming. Hope this becomes a series! *Ages 8-12*



*The Lost Library* by Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass (\$17.99).

This timely and suspenseful story is told in three voices: the voice of Evan, an 11-year-old boy, just finishing fifth grade and quite nervous about his new school and sixth grade; a large, beautiful cat named Mortimer; and Al, the ghost who was the assistant librarian at the town's library, which burned down years ago. A little free library pops up in the middle of the night, and Evan discovers it, delightedly checking out two books. When he discovers his father's name on the library card, he asks his father about the books, but his father is very evasive. Evan and his friend Rafe decide to find out what exactly happened to the library. Libraries are the seat of the community. We should cherish and protect them...and the books in them. *Ages 8-12*



*Calendar continued from page 1*

20th-century America, *From Dust to Stardust* is a breathtaking novel about one determined woman navigating change, challenging the price of fame, and sharing the gift of real magic. **The Power and the Glory** is a 1933 masterpiece starring Spencer Tracy and silent film actress Colleen Moore. **To purchase tickets, please go to "Events" on our website.**

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

7 pm on Zoom

#### Go Green Reads Discussion

*Secondhand: Travels in the New Global Garage Sale*

Adam Minter's new book delves into the vast, multibillion-dollar industry that resells used stuff around the world. He follows the trail of "one's-trash-is-another's-treasure" objects from the closets, garages, and storage units of Middle America to epic used-goods markets around the world.

#### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

6:30 pm at the store

JAMES KENNEDY, *Bride of the Tornado*

KATHLEEN ROONEY, *From Dust to Stardust*

We host Kathleen Rooney and James Kennedy, in-conversation about their new novels respectively, *From Dust to Stardust* (see September 16 event at Music Box Theatre) and *Bride of the Tornado*. In Kennedy's mind-bending horror-thriller, a young woman's secretive midwestern town is engulfed by a mysterious plague of tornadoes every generation—and she must escape it before it claims her.

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

4:30 at the store

REMY LAI, *Ghost Book*

Indonesian-born Australia resident Lai presents her strikingly illustrated, contemporary fantasy graphic novel about a girl who can see ghosts and befriends a boy who is stuck between the worlds of the living and the dead. For ages 8-12.

6:30 pm at the store

JULIO GAMBUTO

*Please Unsubscribe, Thanks!*

*How to Take Back Our Time, Attention, and Purpose in a World Designed to Bury Us in Bullshit*

Julio Vincent Gambuto appears in conversation with our friend, author Ali Wenzke, as they discuss Gambuto's new book. It gives us a radical blueprint for the ways we can take a deep breath, renew and commit to a life that we really want, individually and collectively, from unsubscribing to emails and automated subscriptions to re-evaluating the presence of people, ideas, and habits that no longer serve us or make us happy. Infused with the practical advice and humor!

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

6:30 pm at the store

MARK GUARINO

*Country and Midwestern: Chicago in the History of Country Music and the Folk Revival*

We partner with The Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District for an event here at the store with acclaimed journalist and author Mark Guarino. He will be discussing his new book, *Country and Midwestern: Chicago in the History of Country Music and the Folk Revival*, a riveting look at the untold story of Chicago's pivotal role as a country and folk music capital.



#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

10:30 – 11:30 am at the store

Meet and Greet with DOG MAN

We host a family-friendly meet and greet with everyone's favorite superhero canine, **Dog Man!** Kids of all ages are invited to meet the character from the Dog Man series, created by worldwide bestselling graphic novelist, **Dav Pilkey!** **There will be a photo-op!** We also will have plenty of fun activities, cookies



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baked by our bookseller, Leah, and copies of the Dog Man series for sale, including the newest graphic novel, *Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea!*

1 pm

**WILLIAM KENT KRUEGER**  
*The River We Remember*

We welcome back acclaimed author **William Kent Krueger** for a discussion about his new novel. In 1958, a small Minnesota town is rocked by the murder of its most powerful citizen, pouring fresh fuel on old grievances in this dazzling standalone novel from the bestselling author of the "expansive, atmospheric American saga."



**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

6:30 pm at the store

**MELANIE BENJAMIN**  
*California Golden*

We partner with the **Winnetka-Northfield Public Library District** to host acclaimed author **Melanie Benjamin** at the store for a discussion about her new novel, *California Golden*. Southern California, 1960s: In an era when women are expected to be housewives, Carol Donnelly is breaking the mold as a legendary female surfer struggling to compete in a male-dominated sport—and her daughters, Mindy and Ginger, bear the weight of her unconventional lifestyle.



**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

5 – 7:30 pm at Anne Loucks Gallery  
309 Park Ave., Glencoe

**FAN** Our friends at Family Action Network (FAN) have another amazing line-up of speakers this fall, addressing a widerange of topics, with events both in-person and online. September brings Anupam Bapu Jena (9/19), Jennifer Wallace (9/21,) and Bettina Love (9/27). For the most up-to-date information, check out [www.familyactionnetwork.net](http://www.familyactionnetwork.net). And read our weekly e-news for the latest info, too.

**PAUL MARTINEAU**

*Rodney Smith: A Leap of Faith*

**Paul Martineau**, curator in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum, will be present for the gallery's new exhibition. Martineau's new book explores the sophisticated compositions and stylish characters in Rodney Smith's photography (1947-2016).



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

10:30 – 11:30 am, Storytime at the store

**CANDACE FLEMING and ERIC ROHMANN, *Mine!***

Renowned children's author **Candace Fleming** and celebrated children's illustrator **Eric Rohmann**, read their new picture book, *Mine!* This rhythmic read-aloud about sharing features a series of hilariously selfish forest animals. **Free and open to the public and perfect for kids ages 3 – 7.**

2 - 3 pm

**MATTHEW CORDELL**

*Cornbread & Poppy at the Museum*

Our pal **Matthew Cordell** debuts the latest in his early reader series, *Cornbread & Poppy at the Museum*. His visits to the store are always a blast! Perfect for ages 5 - 95.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1**

3 – 4 pm, Poetry Reading at the store

**KATHRYN P. HAYDON, *Unsalted Blue Sunrise***

We host area author **Kathryn P. Haydon** for a poetry reading and book signing for her new book, *Unsalted Blue Sunrise*. Susan G. Wooldridge, author of *poemcrazy*, says, "I love Kathryn Haydon's poems. They're both playful and profound, transporting us to Lake Michigan's shores. Let this book inspire you to paint your own word pictures of a place you love."