
Censorproofing School Library Collections: The Fallacy and Futility

Alvin M. Schrader

*School of Library and Information Studies,
University of Alberta, Canada*

Introduction

I have never heard of school librarians anywhere in the world claiming to look forward to the opportunity of experiencing a public uproar over something in their collection. At the extreme, it is well known that some staff will go to almost any lengths to avoid criticism over which titles and which kinds of materials should be made available to students. The purpose of this article is to set out several reasons why such avoidance behavior, although understandable, is eventually doomed to failure and to suggest alternative strategies that might make more effective use of the time, energy, and resources of school library staff.

There is no doubt that the pressure to censor materials is widely experienced by school librarians. Much more so than public librarians in the United States and Canada, school librarians find themselves functioning in a political climate that is becoming increasingly volatile, acrimonious, and adversarial. Censorship studies show that, on an annual basis, at least one in four school libraries is requested to withdraw or restrict materials, whereas over a three- to five-year period the proportion may be as high as half or more of all educational institutions in a given geographic area. For example, in a nationwide survey of the relationship between censorship and the larger selection process in United States elementary and secondary school libraries in the late 1970s, 30% of responding librarians reported challenges to classroom or library materials over a period of two school years (Limiting What Students Shall Read, 1981). At the end of the 1980s, in another nationwide study of factors influencing the outcomes of challenges to materials in a random sample of US secondary school libraries, Hopkins (1991) reported that 28% of the respondents had experienced collection challenges in one school year, and over three school years the rate was 36%. In a survey of the four southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee, the overall rate was 31% (Kegley & Guerrero, 1986). In Canada, a survey of Manitoba school libraries revealed the same rate of challenges, 31%, during two school years (Jenkinson, 1994). In Minnesota, 40% of school librarians reported challenges during three school years, with higher rates at the elementary level than at the secondary level, 52% versus 29% (McDonald, Stark, & Roath, 1993). In Arkansas, the rate was 45% over a five-year period, with a similarly higher

rate in elementary schools than in secondary ones, 58% versus 38% (Johnson, 1993). And in Australia, the rate of challenges reported among a selective sample of school librarians was 57% over a five-year period (Williams & Dillon, 1993).

Not only is the threat of censorship in school libraries across the continent real but, as many of the above-cited studies show, so also is the level of staff anxiety about it. Some 73% of Minnesota school librarians reported that they felt pressured to engage in self-censorship, including 13% who described experiencing that pressure "frequently" and 3% "always." In Arkansas, 82% of school librarians said that they felt compelled to exercise some self-censorship in collection development, and 56% also reported that they treated some questionable or challenged materials differently from other materials. In the nationwide survey of the late 1970s mentioned earlier, 38% of responding librarians said that challenges had resulted in changes in the materials used or in the educational process or environment. On the other hand, the nationwide survey by Hopkins (1991) showed that only 15% of secondary school librarians in the US in the late 1980s felt under pressure from others in the selection of library media materials. In the Manitoba survey, comments made by survey respondents suggested that "a sizable number" regularly used the selection process and the processing period as opportunities to precensor books. And, of course, previous landmark studies have documented the prevalence of self-censorship in school and public libraries.

Still another indicator of staff anxiety must surely be the proportion of challenges that result in removal or restriction—one quarter to one half of all challenges. In Minnesota, 26% resulted in removal or restriction of materials. In Indiana, the rate of removal or restriction was 38%. In the nationwide survey of the late 1970s, 52% of challenged titles were removed or restricted, and the proportion was similar in the late 1980s survey by Hopkins, 48%. The overall rate in the four southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee was 63%. In the Manitoba survey in Canada, it was 61%. And in selected Australian school libraries, 67% of challenged materials were removed, restricted, or altered.

With all these pressures and anxieties, it is no wonder that some school library staff practice "very careful selection," whereas others simply avoid potentially controversial purchases, perhaps by watching for red flags in reviews or by taking careful note of the titles on a published list of challenged books, and still others restrict access to such materials by means of one mechanism or another. These are some of the practices that I have called *censorproofing*, that is, the attempt to safeguard a library collection against challenges, criticism, and controversy through such strategies as self-censorship in the selection process, weeding, classification, shelf location, labeling, and age restrictions. Caywood (1994) used the term in a quite different sense in an article: censorproofing as active preparation for challenges through the

development of library policies, services, complaint handling skills, and community awareness.

However, what I am arguing in this article is that successful self-censorship and related practices are mostly an illusion, and that challenges to materials in school library collections are in the long run more or less inevitable. Moreover, these censorproofing practices represent a perhaps dangerous illusion because they give library staff a false sense of security and serenity.

The principal reason why these practices are illusory is simple: all of them require school librarians to be prophets and clairvoyants, to be able both to predict the future about censorial targets and to read the minds of would-be censors. But even if professional education or ingenious recruitment could produce staff with these supernatural qualifications, it would still be futile: given the passage of enough time, every school library collection is eventually vulnerable to criticism and challenge. Nilsen and Donelson (1993) made this point in their *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, arguing that

any work is potentially censorable by someone, someplace, sometime, for some reason. Nothing is permanently safe from censorship, not even books most teachers and librarians would regard as far removed from censorial eyes—not *Hamlet* or *Julius Caesar* or *Silas Marner* or *Treasure Island*, or anything else. (p. 505)

Reader Response Theory

The reasons why censorproofing is, in the long run, a fallacious and futile strategy relate to sociological phenomena that find their theoretical underpinnings in reader response theory. In this theory, a response to any text—whether narrowly defined as print or pictures on the page or broadly understood as any symbolic representation from which we draw meaning—is seen as a confluence of the reader's personal history, the reader's reading history, and the text itself (Chambers, 1993). To a certain degree, therefore, readers participate in creating the meaning of a text based on their own reading history and their own personal filter of cultural, moral, and aesthetic values. In this dynamic, the meaning that a particular reader ascribes to a text may or may not approximate the author's original conception—or, for that matter, any other reader's conception. Reader response theory suggests that there are multiple readings for every text. The theory is captured in a familiar expression: It's in the eye of the beholder.

One anecdote that illustrates the persuasiveness of reader response theory is found in the reactions to a recent announcement that a local radio station in my own area was planning to "go gospel," that is, to play Christian-based religious music of various kinds that would appeal to a wide range of age groups. In a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, one writer was outraged:

The station is going to cover everything, to everybody, starting with the so-called gospel rock, which in itself is an affront to God, and the ears of a true

believer. Pushing the word "Christian" right to the edge of blasphemy, they speak of pushing "rock" with all its deadly variations, with ghetto-blasting noise, with its devilish lyrics and filthy language. (*Edmonton Journal*, April 11, 1994)

This denunciation prompted several contrary views:

Oh please, not more antiquated and ignorance-spawned prejudice. This denouncement is so obviously without firsthand knowledge, it's embarrassing.

The music that this station plays is an attempt by Christian bands to spread the words and teaching of Jesus Christ to today's youth. They don't use the word "Christ" all the time, but that doesn't make this rock and roll music any less valuable. In fact, like Christ, gospel bands convey His message with stories, symbolism, and comparative devices, which take the form of songs.

It would seem that some think that gospel music innovation and creativity ended with their generation, but an open and balanced Christian will realize that every generation has its own form of music with which to praise our Lord. Let us not harden our hearts to music which speaks for the people who were not raised on Pat Boone or Lawrence Welk. Church hymns are wonderful praise, but we can also expand our worship with any music that sings our hearts' gratitude towards our forgiving Father.

To communicate effectively in the 1990s, you need to relate to people in their own environment. This is all that the contemporary gospel musician is trying to accomplish. They want to get their message out to a specific group of music listeners. It is not for everyone, but it is for a large and ever growing percentage of gospel music listeners. Don't get hung up on the word "rock" in gospel rock. It does not (as some would have you believe) equal satan worship and vulgar lyrics. (*Edmonton Journal*, April 18, 1994).

Letters to the editor are not the only source of evidence of how reader response theory helps to explain differences in the myriad ways in which people uniquely interpret texts. Other examples are found in any library censorship survey that includes the grounds on which complainants have challenged materials. A survey of Canadian public libraries asked respondents to document the grounds for challenges in the actual words of the complainants as much as possible, in order to get at the reasoning and nuances behind objections. Examples involving materials for children or young adults were as follows:

I don't think homosexuality is something to be witty about. [*Buried on Sunday* by Edward Phillips]

Nudity, unpleasant story no child could enjoy. [*In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak]

Discovering the mother and father had sex and the feelings of girls for girls, etc. [*Flick* by Wendy Kesselman]

Graphic representation of birth of puppy offended mother. [*The Last Puppy* by Frank Asch]

Female nudity would corrupt children. [*Tell Me Grandma, Tell Me Grandpa*, author not given]

Mention of masturbation, periods, wet dreams could make children experiment early (prepuberty). [*What's Happening to Me: A Guide to Puberty* by Peter Mayle]

Too violent. Showed parents in a bad light. [*Jim Who Ran Away from His Wife and Was Eaten by a Lie* by Ailaine Zelloe]

Book deals with incest, child abuse. [*Abby, My Love* by Hadley Irwin] (Schrader, 1995)

In many cases the same title triggers quite different concerns for different people. Take *Lizzy's Lion*, for example, Dennis Lee's award-winning children's picture book that tells the story of a little girl and a pet lion she keeps in her bedroom. A "rotten robber" sneaks into Lizzy's room in the middle of the night to steal her piggy bank, but by the time the lion is finished with him, Lizzy and her pet have only to stuff the robber's "toes and tum and head" in the garbage, and go back to bed.

Among the concerns that were reported about *Lizzy's Lion* in both the Canadian public library censorship survey (Schrader, 1995) and the survey of Manitoba school libraries (Jenkinson, 1994), opposition to violence was a common theme, but a variety of nuances can be found in the reasoning of complainants who sought its suppression on this ground:

Whole book objectionable—caused children to have nightmares.

Violent and scary.

Very violent—may frighten children aged 3-6.

Violence—body parts dumped in trash.

Unnecessary exposure to violence that a young child does not need to be subjected to.

Lion eating up robber—frightening—inappropriate material for young children.

Violence was too graphic.

The responses of two other complainants revealed additional, rather different grounds for censorship:

Break and enter ideas; insensitive and uncaring about people in general.

Promotes cannibalism.

Another example of reader response theory at work is demonstrated in the variety of reasons offered by complainants for removing *Where Did I Come From?* by Peter Mayle. This picture book, with the subtitle *The Facts of Life Without Any Nonsense and With Illustrations*, describes the reproductive process from intercourse to birth, but first recounts some of the ideas that girls and boys have about where they think they came from. The reasons that people gave for objecting about the book were as follows:

Patron felt book was too explicit and damaging to her nine-year old son who was going into the priesthood.

Unsuitable for children without parental supervision ... writing in poor taste ... pictures presented in a poor manner ... encourages children to experiment.

Patron said chapter "Making Love" was too much of a how-to and inappropriate for age of readers to which it was directed.

Patron felt book should be housed in office because children shouldn't be able to get at it themselves; subject matter should be dealt with by parent. (Schrader, 1995)

Still another example is illustrated in the objections voiced by complainants to the presence in Manitoba school libraries of Robert Munsch's *Giant, Or Waiting for the Thursday Boat*. This picture book tells the story of the largest (and only remaining) giant in Ireland, who goes on a quest to find God in order to complain about His directive to St. Patrick to chase out all the snakes, elves, and other giants from the island. People objected to the book on the basis of:

Morality, religion.

Religion.

He beats up God.

Violence. (Jenkinson, 1994).

And in the same Canadian jurisdiction, *Thomas' Snowsuit* by Robert Munsch was challenged on the grounds of "implied" nudity—a rather amusing twist on the much more typical grounds for its censure, encouraging disrespect for authority and specifically for the authority of the school principal. This picture book recounts Thomas's ongoing struggles with adults (first his mother, then his teacher, and finally the school principal) over his nice new brown snowsuit that he says is the ugliest thing he's ever seen—struggles that end up with some hilarious scenes of cross-dressing at school.

In addition, there are readers whose principal response to reading is fear of the power of words and ideas. To such individuals, the treatment of a subject is almost irrelevant to the literal word. *Word fear* is characteristic of those who reject outright any distinction between narrative and indoctrination, between portrayal and instruction and promotion, between description and how-to, between disclosure and endorsement and advocacy, between statement and encouragement and glorification, between exposure and seduction, between telling and teaching, between storytelling and condoning, between discussion and recruitment, between knowledge and action, between word and deed. It is characteristic of those who dismiss irony, parody, satire, sarcasm, innuendo, and even humor in favor of literalism. It is characteristic of those who see no difference between censorship and selection, or between institution and parent. It is characteristic of those who hold the view that the mere knowledge of ideas is by definition to be already proselytized and harmed by them, of those for whom tolerating an idea or

lifestyle is to support and endorse it, of those for whom the word is already corruption and degradation and dehumanization. It is characteristic of those who value belief over evidence in matters of empirical reality.

And it is also characteristic of those who cast wide the net of the chronological "child" and the legally circumscribed "minor," of those who eschew developmental theories and who are content—not to mention relieved—to have 18-year-olds confined to the world depicted in preschool picture books or the Dick-and-Jane pabulum of my own elementary school age years (a pabulum laced with arsenic, incidentally, in the stories about North American aboriginal peoples, who were routinely referred to as *savages* and *redskins*). In most of the calls for censorship, respect for wide variations in maturity among children and young people are ignored in favor of a single-minded uniformity in their treatment regardless of age and psychological maturity.

These ramifications of reader response theory—multiple readings of texts, word fear, and variant notions of reader maturity—make the prospects for successful censorproofing by school librarians rather dim.

Censorproofing Follies

In light of the reality of multiple readings of texts, there is one overriding reason why censorproofing will not succeed and every school library collection is eventually vulnerable to challenge: reader unpredictability. This unpredictability relates to three categories in which specific complaints are typically made about school library collections: titles, authors, and subjects.

Titles

One of the ways in which school librarians might try to censorproof their collections is to avoid, restrict, or remove titles that have been challenged elsewhere. However, complainant targeting of titles for censorial action is remarkably unpredictable, almost random. Burress (1979) went so far as to call it "capricious and irrational" in his 1977 school survey conducted for the National Council of Teachers of English (p. 31). Nilsen and Donelson (1993) describe censorship as "capricious and arbitrary" (p. 505).

Censorship surveys consistently show that nine out of 10 challenged titles are targeted only once in any given period of time. In Hopkins' (1991) survey of US secondary school libraries, for example, secondary analysis of the data shows that 10% of all challenged titles were complained about two or more times during the three years under study, whereas 90% were targeted only once, as Table 1 demonstrates.

In Minnesota school libraries, secondary analysis of the data shows that only 6% of all challenged titles were targeted two or more times during the three school years under study, whereas 94% were targeted only once (McDonald et al., 1993, see Table 2).

In Manitoba school libraries, analysis of unpublished data shows that only 11% of all challenged titles were targeted two or more times during the

Table 1
Titles Challenged in US Secondary School Libraries, 1987-1990

<i>Challenges per Title</i>	<i>Titles</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	759	90
2-4	70	8
5	5	2
6	-	
7	2	
8	1	
9	-	
10	3	
11	-	
12	-	
13	1	
Total	841	100

two school years under study, whereas 89% were targeted only once (Jenkinson, 1994, see Table 3).

Similarly, in a study of censorship in selected Australian school libraries, secondary analysis of the data shows that 22% of all challenged titles were targeted two or more times during a five-year period, whereas 78% were complained about only once (Williams & Dillon, 1993, Appendix 1).

These surveys reveal that, of all titles challenged in a collection, a very small proportion of titles is targeted several times, whereas the vast majority of titles are only ever complained about once in any given period of time. This phenomenon of one-time complaints demonstrates the futility of trying to single out which handful of the thousands of titles published annually are most likely to bring offence in the future. If the vast majority of targeted titles

Table 2
Titles Challenged in Minnesota School Libraries, 1989-1991

<i>Challenges per Title</i>	<i>Titles</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	137	94
2	7	5
3	1	1
Total	145	100

Table 3
Titles Challenged in Manitoba School Libraries, 1991-1993

Challenges per Title	Titles	
	Number	Percent
1	174	89
2	12	6
3	4	2
4	3	2
5	1	1
Total	196	100

are complained about only once in a given period of time, then how would the cautious school librarian predict the most likely targets of future criticism in order to avoid, restrict, or remove them?

It has been suggested that compiled lists of challenged titles could be used for this purpose. Incidentally, reservations have often been expressed, mostly by school library staff, about the mere existence of such lists and whether they should even be compiled, much less distributed. The fear is not so much that librarians might use them as checklists to avoid controversial acquisitions, but that would-be censors will use them to decimate library collections.

What should be kept in mind about such lists is that they are by their very nature historical information—they are a record of past targets and past events. But prior experience is a questionable model for predicting future events of any kind, and even more questionable as a basis for predicting future censorship targets when statistical evidence shows that most challenged titles are only one-time targets. Moreover, such lists are not compiled and published for every jurisdiction on a timely and regular basis; most of the time, the cautious librarian would have to resort to lists prepared as a result of the experience of other communities, communities that may or may not be demographically similar.

If prior experience and prior lists are flawed and ineffective strategies for censorproofing school library collections, there is still another alternative way of dealing with titles: avoid or eliminate those that have attracted multiple complaints. Because censorship surveys show that a small proportion of titles is challenged more than once over a given period of time, it might be anticipated that these same titles will occasion local controversy in the future.

Unfortunately for the cautious school librarian, there is a catch: such titles are almost always among the most popular with school library users of various ages. For example, Judy Blume's *Forever*, which is a frequent target of complainants, is also a novel favored by young adult readers and owned

widely by school libraries. Other examples are *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.

School librarians should also recognize that the blanket targeting of titles for censorship assumes a uniformity in reader maturity, experience, interests, belief systems, and attitudes that does not exist. Individuals of the same age vary quite markedly. One 12-year-old will possess considerably less emotional and psychological maturity than another, so how will school librarians judge materials for "reader immaturity"? Maturity is not a simple function of biological age.

Moreover, school libraries serve not only readers of the same age with widely differing levels of maturity, but they also serve many different age levels ranging from 5 to 18. To accommodate the vast diversity of needs represented by such broad age groups means that young people must individually seek out their own level of reading interest. It cannot be imposed through artificial rules and recipes.

Authors and Artists

Avoiding, restricting, or removing all works by particular authors and artists is another strategy that school librarians might follow to try to censorproof their collections. It is the shotgun approach. A few examples from the Manitoba school library survey were as follows:

- all books by Stephen King because of reader immaturity, obscenity, profanity, and violence;
- "Flowers in the Attic series" by V.C. Andrews because of abortion and incest;
- "The Stupids series" by Harry Allard because of the word *stupid*;
- various titles by Dean Koontz because of reader immaturity;
- various titles from the "Sweet Valley High" series by Francine Pascal because of reader immaturity, sexism/role stereotypes;
- all "Fear Street" series books by R.L. Stine because of profanity, violence, witchcraft/supernatural;
- various titles by John Saul because of reader immaturity;
- *Impressions Reading Series* because of evolution, creationism, morality, witchcraft/supernatural, violence, new age focus;
- several titles by John Bellairs because of witchcraft/supernatural;
- various titles by Danielle Steel because of reader immaturity. (Jenkinson, 1994, unpublished data).

Other examples documented in the Canadian public library survey that involved materials for children and young adults were:

- all books by V.C. Andrews because of the topic of incest and horror;
- older children's books by Natalie Savage Carlson because of sexism, cruelty to animals, and spanking;

- all books by Kevin Major because they shouldn't be in the children's section;
- all books by Harold Robbins because a patron did not want her son reading them (Schrader, 1995).

But school librarians should recognize that targeting authors and artists casts a wide and indiscriminating net. The strategy of blanket challenges to authors and artists assumes a uniformity and consistency in their creative output that simply does not exist (with the possible exception of the kind of work produced by formula fiction writers such as R.L. Stine).

On the contrary, an author's works vary. One author's first book is a best seller, the next is a disaster. Content varies. One author's first book has a sexual theme; the next is about dolphins. One author produces three murder mysteries, then a work about the occult. One author specializes in nonfiction for adults, then produces a series of children's picture books. The creative output of authors and artists is variable, inconsistent, and unpredictable.

The problem of identifying which authors and artists to target is a further fallacy in the success of this censorproofing strategy. Who will be targeted? Those who have already been challenged in other jurisdictions? Prolific authors and artists, just to be on the safe side? Or new authors and artists?

Like the difficulty with the censorproofing strategy of avoiding, restricting, or removing popular titles, the blanket censorship of authors and artists is almost always directed at the most celebrated—V.C. Andrews, Judy Blume, Robert Cormier, Roald Dahl, Stephen King, Norma Klein, Dean Koontz, Kevin Major, Robert Munsch, Harold Robbins, J.D. Salinger, Gertrude Samuels, Alvin Schwartz, Maurice Sendak, John Steinbeck, R.L. Stine, Mark Twain, and Kurt Vonnegut. And when the family from *The Simpsons* of television cartoon fame is featured on the cover of *American Libraries* (September 1990) in the most deliciously improbable pose of book readers, popular culture should not be ignored. Of what value to the reader, listener, or viewer is the school library that does not carry the works of at least some of these authors and artists? (And if they were unknown before, then being challenged gives them public notoriety and at least fleeting if not enduring popularity.)

There is a further obstacle to successful censorproofing by this method. This obstacle is the annoying reality that new authors and artists are always emerging to provide new targets for offending critics. More than 6,000 new children's books alone are published in North America every year. In light of this prolific, emergent creativity, how would the cautious school librarian anticipate which are the safe new authors and artists and which should be shunned?

Although wholesale condemnation of authors and artists, whether old or new, is an infrequent approach by complainants or school librarians, the effects of this strategy are disproportionately egregious—creative voices are silenced, reputations are smeared and destroyed.

School librarians should also recognize that the blanket targeting of authors and artists ignores reader maturity just as much as the blanket targeting of titles does. Although one 4-year-old may not be psychologically and emotionally ready to read *Lizzy's Lion*, another will have already gone beyond it.

Subjects

Another way in which school librarians might try to censorproof their collections is to avoid, restrict, or remove all materials treating certain subjects, ideas, and themes that have in the past proven vulnerable to challenge. But this is an impractical and uncertain approach for two reasons. First, accurate information about past controversies is rarely available on a timely basis. Second, capriciousness and unpredictability in local differences would make reliance on information from other jurisdictions a rather risky proposition. No list would be all-inclusive.

The most common grounds given for complaints about elementary and secondary school library materials in the US nationwide survey of the late 1970s were the following: sex, sexuality, obscenity, and objectionable language, including "dirty words" and profanity ("Limiting What Students Shall Read," 1981). In Hopkins' more recent study of secondary school libraries, similar grounds were documented: sex, profanity, obscenity, morality, and witchcraft (Hopkins, 1991). In the survey of school libraries in the four southern states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Tennessee, the grounds were profanity, morality, obscenity, immaturity of user, human reproduction, and nudity (Kegley & Guerrero, 1986). In Minnesota, on the other hand, witchcraft was the most frequent reason for challenges, followed by language, immaturity of user, violence, obscenity, and human reproduction (McDonald et al., 1993). In Indiana, the most common reason for challenges was also the occult, followed by inappropriate language, sexuality, and violence ("Indiana School Censorship Survey," 1994).

One solution to these differences in local patterns would be to adopt an even more radical censorproofing strategy: avoid, restrict, or eliminate all subjects that have been controversial in the past in any jurisdiction. In Minnesota, for example, the following blanket demands for withdrawals were reported:

- occult books;
- books about cults;
- "398.4 section folktale" containing devils or witches (McDonald et al., 1993).

In the Manitoba survey, the following blanket demands were noted:

- all titles on witchcraft/supernatural;
- titles which purport to be "true" stories of witchcraft or the supernatural;
- any materials on witches;

- various books on anatomy and the human body because of human reproduction, reader immaturity, nudity;
- various books on prehistoric man and life because of evolution/creationism, reader immaturity, nudity;
- all books on AIDS because of reader immaturity (Jenkinson, 1994, unpublished data).

In the Canadian survey of public libraries, the following blanket demands for withdrawals of materials for children or young adults were reported:

- all heavy metal groups such as AC/DC and Twisted Sister, because of references to "sin and killing" and because they "destroy respect for life and people";
- paperbacks with "lurid covers" not suitable in a school-public library;
- all books on astrology, because "truth is not in astrology but in the Catholic religion";
- all books dealing with the occult, because "satanic books damage the minds of the youth and could turn people away from Christianity";
- all books on witchcraft, magic and parapsychology, "the work of the devil";
- all books on witchcraft and homosexuality, which would "lead young people into a lifestyle that was not normal and damaging";
- general books on drugs, of which there were too many in the library, "thus making drug information available to teens";
- a series of Westerns called "The Gunsmith," because of a parent's concern that his son was reading explicit sex material before reaching puberty;
- various groups of adult Western paperbacks, because of explicit sex that was "demoralizing to young minds" (Schrader, 1995).

There are several difficulties with this strategy for censorproofing. Given the dynamics of social and cultural change, old subjects and old titles that have never before attracted controversy can also suddenly become new targets for criticism and censorship. Examples of such old subjects are witchcraft and violence, and homosexuality in books for young readers. The Manitoba survey documented changes over the last decade in complainant reasons for challenges to school library materials (Jenkinson, 1994). Table 4 shows substantial shifts in offending subjects in Manitoba school libraries. Although witchcraft and violence were mentioned infrequently as grounds for collection challenges in the early 1980s, a decade later these were the top reasons. At the same time, the earlier concerns with profanity, reader immaturity, and explicit sex had lost the attention of complainants.

And among old titles that have become new targets are the following examples: the *Bible*, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *Gulliver's Travels* to Lilliput by Jonathan Swift, *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, and *The Wars* by Timothy Findley.

A couple of years ago some parents in Grand Saline, Texas pressured school officials to remove a picture of Santa Claus from a school because the letters in *Santa* also spell *Satan*.

How would the cautious school librarian identify which of the old subjects and old titles to withdraw, restrict, reclassify, relocate, label, or otherwise avoid on the premonition that they are likely to offend in the future? And what about new titles on these old subjects—how would the potentially controversial titles be identified?

Avoiding old subjects, however, is merely a half-measure in the quest to censorproof school library collections. Just as new titles, authors, and artists emerge, so too are new issues constantly being given expression. Some of these take several years to catch the public eye, while others are born virtually overnight. During the past 10 years or so, we have been witness to many new—or newly framed—social issues and concerns, among them:

- political correctness;
- AIDS and AIDS awareness;
- traditional family values;
- gay positive parenting;
- homophobia;
- self-esteem programs for schoolchildren;
- creationism;

Table 4
Changes Over 10 Years in the Reasons Given for Challenges to School
Library Materials in Manitoba

1982-1984	1991-1993
profanity*	witchcraft
immaturity*	violence
explicit sex	immaturity
witchcraft	explicit sex
violence	profanity

*tied in rank

Reason for Challenge	Percentage of All Reasons		Rank of All Reasons	
	1982-84	1991-93	1982-84	1991-93
profanity	20	7	1	5
immaturity	20	12	1	3
explicit sex	16	10	3	4
witchcraft	12	24	4	1
violence	8	18	5	2

- new ageism;
- alternative spirituality;
- environmentalism;
- unemployment in picture books;
- mothers working outside the home depicted in picture books.

New genres emerge too, in fiction and in music, that seem to specialize in particular topics that are of particular concern to young adults, such as rap music and ecological mystery novels.

If you had been a school librarian trying to censorproof your collection 25 years ago, you would also have been caught off guard by some of the social issues and concerns then beginning to find expression in publications for children and young adults, such as one-parent households, divorce, working mothers, living on welfare, racism, ghetto life, death and dying, ethnicity and pluralism in society, realistic dialogue and nonstandard English, secular humanism, changing roles of males and females, homosexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, drug education, dissident youth culture, new age and punk rock, questioning of parental authority, abusive parents, corrupt public officials, gang violence, murder, brutality and sadism, teenage sexuality, sex education, pregnancy, birth, and adolescent physical change. (Nilsen & Donelson, 1993, provide an overview of some of these historical trends in "A Brief History of Adolescent Literature," Chapter 13 in their textbook on young adult literature.) One specific example was the first reference to menstruation in juvenile literature, which appeared in Louise Fitzhugh's *The Long Secret* in 1965, and was immediately censured (Lurie, 1990).

The appearance of the themes listed above gave birth to the literary genres of young adult problem novels and a new realism in children's fiction. In a discussion of why S.E. Hinton's landmark novel *The Outsiders* continues to be challenged almost 30 years after its appearance in 1967, Simmons (1993) observed that:

In earlier years, the appearance of language deemed to be vulgar, profane, or obscene was most often found unacceptable as well as the inclusion of explicit descriptions of sexual activity. In the past 15 years, that focus has been replaced by a preoccupation with any attack (in text materials) on those institutions held dear by the attackers. Any explicit or perceived degrading of organized religion, capitalistic philosophy, parental authority, patriotic zeal, or other elements of the orthodox social order was likely to receive the single minded targeting of these zealots. (p. 439)

Particularly in the realm of fiction, new subjects, new issues, new concerns, and new themes will continue to emerge as authors and artists express what they are experiencing, observing, analyzing, and reflecting upon. Creative expression is always emergent, and therefore unpredictable; for example, according to Tillapaugh (1993), *Night Kites* by M.E. Kerr broke the ground for the young adult AIDS novel in 1986. Given the continuity of the creative enterprise, therefore, how would the cautious school librarian iden-

tify that creative expression that is likely to attract controversy and criticism? Of course, everyone has some sense of norms, but it is always limited by one's personal experience and information, and by time and cultural shifts that cannot be stopped by the institutional sanction of school libraries and librarians.

A more radical strategy for censorproofing might be simply to avoid all new topics, issues, and concerns, however "new" might be identified, until community attitudes and standards could be ascertained. Censoring "all books on AIDS" is an example reported in the Manitoba school libraries survey (Jenkinson, 1994). But under this strategy, would even those titles that argued in favor of the status quo or used the subject to promote or defend "traditional" values also be avoided? That is to say, if a publication argued that AIDS was God's vengeance on (male) homosexuals or that it was a reason for sexual abstinence, would this work also be caught in the censorship net?

Further, it should be recognized that no idea, no issue, no concern is entirely novel. New forms and new ideas interweave with old forms and old ideas to challenge and stimulate, to provoke thought and reaction, and yes, to shock and offend. For example, we are faced today with increasing rhetoric about media violence at a time when it has never been more popular. And in the 1990s, complaints about secular humanism and communism have been replaced by national hysteria over the exposure of young people to the mere idea of homosexuality.

Presumably, blanket avoidance of new ideas will not appeal to school librarians anywhere. It is a strategy of professional absurdity that would render the school library almost completely irrelevant to the community it purports to serve. The difficulty with blanket avoidance of these subjects and concerns is that most of them are topics of continuing interest to young people, and ignoring or turning off their interest is not consonant with the typical school library goal to serve, in the words of the American Library Association (1992), as "a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills needed in a pluralistic society" (p. 86).

The reality is that the neat dichotomy between old and new is easier to talk about than to define with rigor: old titles can become new targets, as can old subjects, new subjects, and new titles on old subjects. The most challenged works in libraries that were reported by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association and by People for the American Way for the period 1990-1992 reflect a mix of these kinds of creative expression. Twenty of the top 50 titles are listed below in rank order of challenge frequency as reported to these two agencies (Foerstel, 1994):

Impressions, published 1984-1987, series edited by David Booth

Of Mice and Men, published 1937 by John Steinbeck

The Catcher in the Rye, published 1951 by J.D. Salinger

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, published 1885 by Mark Twain
The Chocolate War, published 1974 by Robert Cormier
Bridge to Terabithia, published 1977 by Katherine Paterson
Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, published 1981 by Alvin Schwartz
More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark, published 1984 by Alvin Schwartz
The Witches, published 1983 by Roald Dahl
Daddy's Roommate, published 1990 by Michael Willhoite
Curses, Hexes, and Spells, published 1974 by Daniel Cohen
A Wrinkle in Time, published 1962 by Madeleine L'Engle
How To Eat Fried Worms, published 1974 by Thomas Rockwell
Blubber, published 1974 by Judy Blume
Revolting Rhymes, published 1982 by Roald Dahl
Halloween ABC, published 1987 by Eve Merriam
A Day No Pigs Would Die, published 1972 by Robert Peck
Heather Has Two Mommies, published 1989 by Leslea Newman
Christine, published 1983 by Stephen King
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, published 1969 by Maya Angelou.

School Library Vulnerability

There is yet other evidence of why successful censorproofing can not be achieved: almost every library is eventually vulnerable to criticism, given the passage of enough time. In Indiana, 20% of school libraries experienced challenges in a one year period ("Indiana School Censorship Survey," 1994). In Hopkins' survey of US secondary school libraries, 28% experienced one or more challenges annually, 36% over three years (Hopkins, 1991). In Minnesota, 40% of school libraries experienced challenges in a period of just under three years (McDonald et al., 1993). And in Arkansas, 45% of school libraries reported challenges during a five-year period (Johnson, 1993), a rate similar to that reported in a recent survey of Australian teacher-librarians, which found that 57% of respondents had experienced challenges over a five-year period (Williams & Dillon, 1993; Dillon & Williams, 1994).

It seems likely that, over increasingly longer periods of time, a correspondingly greater proportion of libraries in a given geographic area will experience at least one collection challenge. During a 10-, 20-, or 30-year period, it is quite conceivable that virtually every library will draw fire.

School Library Mission

Finally, and above all, regardless of how unconvincing the logical arguments and statistical patterns might appear to the dedicated censorproofing advocate, there is still another reason to abandon or reject this strategy. And that is the most important reason of all—the philosophical rationale for being a librarian in a school, for being a paid participant in school library service. The basic social mission and professional responsibility of school librarians is to support the school curriculum by facilitating access to information and cultural records. As the American Library Association (1992) put it, in its state-

ment on access to resources and services in the school library media program:

School library media professionals assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media professionals work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society. (p. 86)

Similarly, the Australian School Library Association, in its Australian School Library Bill of Rights, states that school libraries are concerned with "generating understanding of freedom and with the preservation of this freedom through the development of informed and responsible citizens," and that the responsibility of the school library is:

To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.....

To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate to the users of the library. (Williams & Dillon, 1993, p. 141)

Closer to my home, a teachers' resource manual produced by Alberta Education, the provincial government agency responsible for public education policy in the province, states the government's policy on controversial issues:

Alberta Education believes that studying controversial issues is important in preparing students to participate responsibly in a democratic and pluralistic society. Such study provides opportunities to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view, and to reach sound judgments. (Dowler-Coltman, 1995, p. 15)

Although it is recognized that school libraries are not public libraries and may therefore be somewhat more restrictive in their collections and services, any lesser goal than assisting in the development of the critical faculties of students puts the school library at risk of becoming marginal, irrelevant, ignored, and devalued. Broderick (1986), in a textbook on children and books, argued strongly that:

Censorship of books and other learning resource materials sends a mixed message to students. On the one hand, we say, read; on the other, we say, but don't read this, that, or the other title. A major reason we want children to become dedicated readers is so they will develop judgment, the ability to discern the good from the bad, the superior from the shoddy. (p. 614)

And in their textbook on young adult literature, Nilsen and Donelson (1993) stated categorically that:

We believe that the school—classroom or library—must be a centre of intellectual ferment in the community. This implies not that schools should be radical, but that they should be one place where freedom to think and inquire is protected, where ideas of all sorts can be considered, analyzed, investigated, discussed, and their consequences thought through. We believe librarians and English teachers must protect these freedoms, not merely in the abstract but in the practical, day-by-day world of the school and library. To protect those freedoms we must fight censorship, for without them no education worthy of the name is possible. (p. 538)

On the one hand, given these policy statements of educational philosophy and goals, we need to remind ourselves that critics of freedom of expression do indeed have a good point about the power of literature and the magic of imagination: authors and artists do sometimes question and even challenge the status quo. As Lurie (1990), author and critic of children's literature and a professor of English at Cornell University, has observed:

Most of the great works of juvenile literature are subversive in one way or another: they express ideas and emotions not generally approved of or even recognized at the time; they make fun of honored figures and piously held beliefs; they view social pretenses with clear-eyed directness, remarking—as in Andersen's famous tale—that the emperor has no clothes. (p. 4)

On the other hand, should adults fear these truths, these ideas, these books? Madden (1990), literacy and young adult services librarian in Washington state and long-time advocate of young people's right to intellectual freedom, told the Intellectual Freedom Interest Group of the Library Association of Alberta that the public should not fear reading but rather the inability to read:

I was a juvenile court librarian for 7 years. During that time I saw literally thousands of kids, but I never saw one who was in lock-up because of something they had viewed or read. In fact, I would say that over 80% of them were there because they could not read ... wouldst that we could devote as much time to the literacy of our patrons as we do to their protection. (p. 21)

For these authors and other proponents of intellectual freedom for young people, the fear of words and the fear of challenges to the status quo are non-issues, or at the least they are relegated to a secondary status in light of the primary concern with the development of critical thinking skills in our young people.

Alternatives to Censorproofing

Having abandoned the quest for the powers of prophet and clairvoyant and the false sense of security that comes with the illusion of censorproofing, the good news is that the bad news is not so very bad. Even though collection

challenges are more or less inevitable, it is possible to prepare oneself to deal effectively with most of them and to adopt alternative strategies for avoiding as many challenges as possible in the first place.

The typical strategies for minimizing damage to the collection have been widely discussed in the literature:

- community analysis—both formal and informal, ongoing, to identify information needs of all individuals and groups in the community;
- mission statement—school board approved, regularly reviewed;
- selection policy that includes a statement on intellectual freedom—school board approved, regularly reviewed;
- complaint policy, form, and procedure—school board approved, regularly reviewed;
- staff training—annual refreshers;
- community coalitions;
- public information programs—local, state/province, national;
- political initiatives—local, state/province, national.

Many resources are available to assist in the planning and implementation of these activities, most notably the American Library Association's *Intellectual Freedom Manual* and the kits produced annually to promote "Banned Books Week" in the US and "Freedom to Read Week" in Canada. For ongoing awareness of issues, there is the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* published by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, and, in addition to various internet sites, there are at least two intellectual freedom listservs:

- listserv@uicvm.uic.edu in the US, and
- ifreedom@snoopy.ucis.dal.ca in Canada.

There are also several novels written for younger audiences that revolve around censorship controversies. Nilsen and Donelson (1993) identify two such novels for children, *Maudie and Me* and *the Dirty Book* by Betty Miles and *The Trouble with Mothers* by Margery Facklam, and six for young adults, *The Day They Came to Arrest the Book* by Nat Hentoff, *A Matter of Principle* by Susan Beth Pfeffer, *The Ninth Issue* by Dallin Malmgren, *A Small Civil War* by John Neufeld, *Strike!* by Barbara Corcoran, and *Freddy's Book* by John Neufeld. A somewhat more recent one is *T-Backs, T-Shirts, COAT, and Suit* by E.L. Konigsburg. Pat Scales (1995) adds several other titles: *The Bookstore Mouse* by Peggy Christian, *The Rebellious Alphabet* by Ivind Jorfald, *The Printer's Apprentice* by Stephen Krensky, *Memoirs of a Bookbat* by Kathryn Lasky, *Drummers of Jericho* by Meyer Carolyn, *The Last Safe Place on Earth* by Richard Peck (see also Peck, 1995), *The Trials of Molly Sheldon* by Julian Thompson, and *Save Halloween!* by Stephanie Tolan.

There are also broader strategies for short-circuiting censorship pressures that should be considered. These strategies require varying degrees of collective action beyond the individual school and school library because they are political strategies, designed to influence social and cultural attitudes and

policies in the larger arenas of power. In 1993, for example, the following resolution was presented to and passed by the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association: "that all Alberta school boards have in place a firm, consistent policy that is used whenever resource materials including a textbook and library book is challenged based on content" (letter of December 3, 1993 to Mrs Rita Dempsey from Halvar C. Johnson, Minister of Alberta Education, outlining the government response to the Association's 1993 resolutions). And in his response to this resolution, Halvar C. Johnson, the Minister of Alberta Education, wrote that

The government supports the resolution and does require all school boards to have written policy and selection criteria for library resources. In practice, many of these policies and selection criteria have also included the process to be following in dealing with all challenged materials. (letter of December 3, 1993 to Dempsey from Johnson)

Another strategy, symbolic but nonetheless powerful in raising and promoting community awareness, is to implement a national freedom of expression day or week, such as Canada has had since 1984 in "Freedom to Read Week" sponsored by the Book and Periodical Council and the US since 1982 in "Banned Books Week" by the American Library Association. Going one step further, in Canada, groups in various towns and cities across the country have taken the initiative to secure the issuance of municipal proclamations supporting "Freedom to Read Week." And in an unprecedented initiative at the provincial level, an opposition member of the Alberta Legislature, Gary Dickson, introduced a resolution that "the Legislative Assembly recognize February 27 to March 5, 1995 as Freedom to Read Week and acknowledge the negative impact that censorship has on lifelong learning" (*Alberta Hansard*, February 27, 1995, p. 204). (The resolution was supported in part, although not unanimously, as is generally the case with this kind of resolution—but only after the government party had dismembered it so that the "censorship" aspect could be sidestepped.)

Community analysis, board-approved policy statements, regular staff workshops, keeping current about free speech issues, and initiating and supporting broader political strategies are among the activities that will help school librarians to respond effectively to challenges. Such activities take time and energy and will not always be rewarded with success, but books and other kinds of cultural records are worth the effort.

In the magic of childhood imagination, I can think of no particular reason why one fable made such a strong impression on me that, half my life later, I can still recall it in some detail. This fable came to mind in my reflections on censorproofing school libraries. It is the story of the miller and his donkey, and its moral is a brutal lesson in what happens to people who try to please everybody all of the time, to those whose vision is limited to the views of their last chance encounter with another human being.

The story goes like this (freely adapted from several versions of Aesop's fables). A miller and his son set off to sell their donkey at the market. A passing farmer laughed at them: "You fools, what's a donkey for but to ride?" The miller didn't like that, so he put his son on the donkey. Soon they met someone else, who said: "You spoil that boy. Why don't you ride and make him walk? He's younger than you are." So they changed places. But they hadn't gone far when they passed some women who scolded the man: "How selfish you are! A big strong fellow like you riding while the little boy walks!" The miller didn't know what to do but finally took his son up before him on the donkey. By this time they had almost come to the town, and passersby jeered them: "Look at that poor donkey! You two should be ashamed of yourselves, overloading that sorry animal. You should be carrying it." So they got off the donkey and thought long and hard about what to do and finally they cut down a long pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and carried the donkey upside down. Although some people pitied the miller and his son, and others pitied the donkey, most of them just laughed and shouted at this spectacle. But the donkey was so frightened that it kicked and struggled until the boy dropped his end of the pole—just as they were passing over the market bridge, and the donkey fell into the river below and drowned. "That will teach you," said an old man who had followed them, "Trying to please everybody, you end up pleasing nobody."

But how is an Aesop fable relevant to late 20th-century practices of book selection and access arrangements in school libraries? The relevance is that in both cases experience demonstrates the folly of indiscriminate acquiescence to the wishes of others. In Aesop's fable, it is the experience of the drowning donkey that starkly attests to the disaster of having no convictions of one's own to stand up for. In school libraries, it would be the experience of empty shelves. The lesson is that one might as well make the effort to mediate conflicting viewpoints, because one will never be able to please everybody all the time anyway.

There is yet another spin-off benefit to making the effort, and that is the library's reputation in the community. In the Canadian public library study, several respondents commented that the institution's reputation in the community discouraged people from making complaints about materials in the collection:

Our staff throughout our system know that we will not remove books because of pressure from the public to do so. This probably means that a great many complaints do not get beyond a verbal complaint at the desk.

Verbal complaints always outnumber written—many are not taken seriously by staff and never reach the branch head for action.

Locally it is a well known fact that attempts at censorship of any kind will be met with strong resistance and public media coverage. So far no one has attempted to "bell the cat." I, personally, as a citizen and librarian, would not allow any citizen or group, legal or otherwise, to remove from the library shelf

any book, magazine, video, etc. without a public stand, hue and cry against this kind of censorship. Standing for a principle, and eternal vigilance, is the price and requirement for the preservation of freedom. This type of censorship cannot be allowed in a free nation or society. Censorship in my view is a red flag to most librarians, or should be; it strikes at the very heart of what librarianship is all about. (Schrader, 1995)

Although one cannot avoid all challenges, at least one can avoid the fear of them. This is a worthy goal for any member of the profession whose principal mission is to facilitate access to cultural records and information, to facilitate the hearing of as many voices as possible in the community. As Benne (1991) has argued:

In reality, there is no practical way to avoid controversy, even if avoidance were a professional option. The most innocent-appearing titles have been the object of complaints, leading librarians to conclude that nothing lies outside the purview of the would-be censor. Selection must be a positive action-acquiring materials for a service program and for users—rather than a negative one—keeping out titles that might become controversial in the community. (p. 130)

Recently, I picked up an obviously well-read copy of Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* at a second-hand bookstore in Edmonton. Even though it was published a quarter century ago in 1970, this is one of the books currently being challenged in many communities across the continent and elsewhere in the world. Among other reasons for the complaints is that the book deals with breast development and menstruation and a young girl growing up. For this offence, complainants want it banished from school and public libraries.

My question to librarians about it is this: Will these offended voices be those that are heard by the community? Or will the community also have an opportunity to hear the voices of the loving, confident parents who so many years before had given their daughter the copy that I now have, with the simple inscription:

To Dione, for passing Grade 5. Love, Mom & Dad.

School librarians have the power—and the responsibility—to decide.

References

- Access to resources and services in the school library media program; An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights. In Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association *Intellectual freedom manual* (4th ed., pp. 86-87). Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- Benne, M. (1991). *Principles of children's services in public libraries*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- Broderick, D.M. (1986). Areas and issues: Introduction. In Z. Sutherland & M.H. Arbuthnot (Eds.), *Children and books* (7th ed., pp. 614-615). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Burress, L. (1979). A brief report of the 1977 NCTE censorship survey. In J.E. Davis (Ed.), *Dealing with censorship* (pp. 14-47). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Caywood, C. (1994). Censorproof your library. *School Library Journal*, 40, 44.
- Chambers, A. (1993). *Introducing books to children* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Horn Books.

- Dillon, K., & Williams, C.L. (1994). Censorship, children and school libraries in Australia: Issues of concern. *Emergency Librarian*, 22, 8-14.
- Dowler-Coltman, G. (1995). Homosexual youth in our schools. *Canadian School Executive*, 14(8), 12-16.
- Foerstel, H.N. (1994). *Banned in the USA: A reference guide to book censorship in schools and public libraries*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.
- Hopkins, D.M. (1991). *Factors influencing the outcome of challenges to materials in secondary school libraries: Report of a national study*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Library Programs.
- Indiana school censorship survey. (1994). *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, pp. 43, 47.
- Jenkinson, D. (1994). The changing faces of censorship in Manitoba's public school libraries. *Emergency Librarian*, 22, 15-21.
- Johnson, E. (1993). Stalked by the censors: Intellectual freedom in Arkansas libraries—1993. *Arkansas Libraries*, 50, 13-17.
- Jonson, H.C. (1993). Unpublished letter to Mrs. Rita Dempsey, December 3, 1993. [Government response to the 1993 Alberta Home and School Councils' Association resolutions]. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, Office of the Minister.
- Kegley, S., & Guerrero, G. (1986). *Censorship in the South: A report of four states, 1980-85*. New York: American Civil Liberties Union.
- Limiting what students shall read: Books and other learning materials in our public schools: How they are selected and how they are removed (1981). Summary report on the survey Book and materials section for school libraries and classrooms: Procedures, challenges, and responses. Sponsored by the Association of American Publishers, American Library Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Washington, DC: Association of American Publishers.
- Lurie, A. (1990). *Don't tell the grown-ups: Subversive children's literature*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.
- Madden, S. (1990). The librarian—A quiet censor? In *Letter of the L.A.A.*, 73, pp. 20-21.
- McDonald, F.B., Stark, M., & Roath, W. (1993). *A report of a survey on censorship in public school libraries and public libraries in Minnesota 1993*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Civil Liberties Union.
- Nilsen, A.P., & Donelson, K.L. (1993). *Literature for today's young adults* (4th ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Peck, R. (1995). The last safe place on earth. *Book Links*, 5, 25-26.
- Scales, P. (1995). Studying the First Amendment. *Book Links*, 5, 20-24.
- Schrader, A.M. (1995). *Fear of words: Censorship and the public libraries of Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Library Association.
- Simmons, J.S. (1993). A look inside a landmark: The outsiders. In N.J. Karolides, L. Burrell, & J.M. Kean (Eds.), *Censored books: Critical viewpoints* (pp. 431-441). Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Tillapaugh, M. (1993). AIDS: A problem for today's YA problem novel. *School Library Journal*, 39, 22-25.
- Williams, C.L., & Dillon, K. (1993). *Brought to book: Censorship and school libraries in Australia*. Port Melbourne, Australia: D.W. Thorpe; Deakin, Australia: Australian Library and Information Association.