

Welcome to Tuesday Topics, a monthly series covering topics with intellectual freedom implications for libraries of all types. Each message is prepared by a member of OLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee or a guest writer. Questions can be directed to the author of the topic or to the [IFC committee](#).



Intellectual
Freedom
Committee

Oregon Library Association

Tuesday Topic: Intellectual Freedom Beach Reads for 2019

Summer vacation beckons – road trips, plane rides, long days at the beach – ideal times to dig into an intellectual freedom themed adventure! The following titles are sure to captivate, provoke discussion, or perhaps even inspire a policy review.

Suggestions for fiction and non-fiction are listed, with a special section on challenged books. Guess why a book was challenged, then compare your supposition with challengers' reasons, found at the Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse [reports page](#) and the American Library Association's "[Top Ten Most Challenged Books Lists](#)." And enjoy your freedom to read!

Fiction

- ***The Ghost Script: A Graphic Novel*** by Jules Feiffer (2018) is part three in a crime series set in 1950s Hollywood featuring an anticommunist crackdown and rumored script that exposes a blacklist conspiracy—that an array of characters pursue, “In this antic and brilliant assault on our past and present, Jules Feiffer shows us, once and for all, that if there’s one thing Americans hate, it’s learning from past mistakes...Exposing the tragically cyclical path of American history, Jules Feiffer pens the final installment to a noir masterpiece.” –From the publisher’s description
- ***Future Home of the Living God*** by Louise Erdrich (2017), in the same vein as *The Handmaid’s Tale*, includes themes of censorship and government surveillance. “A chilling dystopian novel both provocative and prescient, it is...a moving meditation on female agency, self-determination, biology, and natural rights that speaks to the troubling changes of our time.” –From the publisher’s description
- ***Mister B. Gone*** by Clive Barker (2007) grabs the reader immediately with its first sentence, “BURN THIS BOOK.” If you disobey that directive, you’ll be engulfed in a sympathy-for-the-devil type of story narrated by the demon, Jakabok Botch, with gory details, a clever ending, and of course that Clive Barker je ne sais quoi. (Ross Sempek)
- ***The Twenty Days of Turin*** by Giorgio De Maria (2017) was named one of NPR’s best books of 2017. “In the spare wing of a church-run sanatorium, some zealous youths create “the Library,” a space where lonely citizens can read one another’s personal diaries and connect with like-minded souls in “dialogues across the ether.” But when their scribblings devolve into the ugliest confessions of the macabre, the Library’s users

learn too late that a malicious force has consumed their privacy and their sanity.” –From the publisher’s description

- ***Words We Don’t Say*** by K. J. Reilly (2018) is a young adult novel about Joel, a high school student struggling with grief and bonding with unlikely new friends serving in a soup kitchen. “In this dazzling, hilarious, and heartbreaking debut, Joel grapples with the aftermath of a tragic loss as he tries to make sense of the problems he’s seen all around him with the help of banned books, Winnie-the-Pooh, a field of asparagus, and many pairs of socks.” –From the publisher’s description
- ***The Library of Ever*** by Zeno Alexander (2019) is the first book in a two-book middle grade series that features Lenora, who “discovers a secret doorway into the ultimate library. Mazelike and reality-bending, the library contains all the universe’s wisdom... To save the library, Lenora will have to test her limits and uncover secrets hidden among its shelves.” –From the publisher’s description
- ***Property of the Rebel Librarian*** by Allison Varnes (2018). “When twelve-year-old June Harper’s parents discover what they deem an inappropriate library book, they take strict parenting to a whole new level. And everything June loves about Dogwood Middle School unravels: librarian Ms. Bradshaw is suspended, an author appearance is canceled, the library is gutted, and all books on the premises must have administrative approval.” –From the publisher’s description (Basically, every library worker’s nightmare)

Nonfiction

- ***Beyond Banned Books: Defending Intellectual Freedom throughout Your Library*** (2019) is by Kristin Pekoll, staff at the ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom. Chapters address issues related to displays, programs, social media, and databases through case studies of all different types of libraries The State Library has a copy that can be borrowed.
- ***Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*** by Safiya Umoja Noble (2018). “Through an analysis of textual and media searches as well as extensive research on paid online advertising, Noble exposes a culture of racism and sexism in the way discoverability is created online. As search engines and their related companies grow in importance—operating as a source for email, a major vehicle for primary and secondary school learning, and beyond—understanding and reversing these disquieting trends and discriminatory practices is of utmost importance.” –From the publisher’s description
- ***The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America*** by Sarah Igo (2018) “reveals how privacy became the indispensable language for monitoring the ever-shifting line between our personal and social selves. Igo’s sweeping history, from the era of “instantaneous photography” to the age of big data, uncovers the surprising ways that debates over what should be kept out of the public eye have shaped U.S. politics and society.” –From the publisher’s description

Challenged Books

- **George** by Alex Gino (2015) was on our 2018 beach reads list, but if you haven't read it yet, it's time to join the hundreds of third to fifth graders in Oregon who did read it for the Oregon Battle of the Books competition.
- **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic** by Alison Bechdel (2007) appears on ALA's 2015 top challenges list. "Distant and exacting, Bruce Bechdel was an English teacher and director of the town funeral home, which Alison and her family referred to as the "Fun Home." It was not until college that Alison, who had recently come out as a lesbian, discovered that her father was also gay. A few weeks after this revelation, he was dead, leaving a legacy of mystery for his daughter to resolve." –From the publisher's description
- **Make Something Up: Stories You Can't Unread** by Chuck Palahniuk (2016) was challenged in Oregon in 2016. In his book, Mr. Palahniuk "gives us twenty-one stories and one novella...a compilation that disturbs and delights in equal measure...Funny, caustic, bizarre, poignant, these stories represent everything readers have come to love and expect from Chuck Palahniuk. You'll never forget them. Just try." –From the publisher's description

Find other intellectual freedom titles at the [IFC's Goodreads page](#).

Krista Reynolds, IFC co-chair