BANNED BOOKS WEEK: CENSORING SCIENCE

SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 1, 2011

BANNED, CHALLENGED AND CONTROVERSIAL BOOKS

*On the Origin of Species*

*by Charles Darwin*

SEL QH365 .O2 2004

English biologist T.H. Huxley said upon reading the Origin, "How extremely stupid of me not to have thought of that." It's hardly necessary to mention that the book is still controversial: Darwin's remark in his conclusion that "Light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history" is surely the pinnacle of British understatement. --Mary Ellen Curtin

**Banned:** Banned by Trinity College in Cambridge, UK (1859), Yugoslavia (1935), Greece (1937). The teaching of evolution was prohibited in Tennessee from 1925 (Scopes trial) to 1967.

*Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems—Ptolemaic & Copernican*

*by Galileo Galilei*

LCD QB41 .G1356 1967

Galileo's Dialogue ranks high among the classics of science, and is deservedly even more famous as a chapter in the struggle for freedom of thought.—Translator's Preface

**Banned:** An immense success upon publication, Dialogue caught the attention of Rome and the Inquisition. The book was consequently added to the Church’s Index of Prohibited Books. As a result of the Inquisition trial, Galileo wrote his Letter of 1615, recanting statements made in Dialogue. Technically imprisoned for the remainder of his life, he was permitted to continue his research and even completed Discourses and Demonstrations Concerning Two New Sciences, his supreme contribution to physics.—Translators Preface

*Biology: Living Systems*

*by Raymond Oram*

Reading Resources Room 9-24-125 1991

Textbooks have long been challenged by concerned parents or groups seeking to limit or promote particular points of view. This work is one example of a textbook that has frequently been challenged for its perceived errors.

**Challenged:** Challenged by the parent of a student at a Washington state high school, claiming the book taught evolution as fact rather than theory and should have creationism presented as a balance. The challenge was denied.
Libraries include books like *Of Pandas and People* to provide readers access to controversial topics. Inclusion in the SEL collection does not signify acceptance of its content. The majority of science organizations in the country have determined that it does not qualify as a science text. Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District determined that Pandas “is not [science], and moreover that ID [Intelligent Design] cannot uncouple itself from its creationist, and thus religious, antecedents.”

**Controversial:** In 2006, The Discovery Institute requested that the American Library Association (ALA) place *Of Pandas and People* on the banned books list. The ALA determined that, though several schools had declined to use it as a science textbook, the book did not qualify for banned book status since no libraries had removed it from their collections.

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**BOOK CENSORSHIP**

*Censoring Science*

by Mark Bowen

SEL QC981.8 .G56 B69 2008

Drawing on interviews, e-mails and documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, Bowen tells a chilling story of deliberate efforts by senior NASA managers, acting in concert with the Bush White House, to play up uncertainties and minimize dangers regarding global warming.—Publisher’s Weekly

*Burning Books*

by Haig Bosmajian

Central Z 659 .B67 2006

Haig Bosmajian’s comprehensive work, *Burning Books*, explores worldwide incidents of book burnings throughout history and the roles that authors play in these destructive rituals. As he states in the Preface, “The horrific history of exterminating books, sometimes exterminating the authors at the same time, is as much a part of current history as it was of earlier times.” Bosmajian continues by outlining the history of book destruction around the world from the 15th to the 20th century.

*Indices Librorum Prohibitorum “List of Prohibited Books”*

Central PT 1101 .L5 v.176 1970

Prior to the printing press, the Roman Catholic Church exercised nearly total control over publishing in Europe. Since texts were copied by scribes who were virtually all monks, the church ensured that nothing deemed unacceptable would be circulated.

The printing press allowed anyone with money to print anything. The Church, concerned about unflattering or heretical materials, produced the Indices to inform the faithful which books the Church had condemned. Appearing in the 16th Century, it was “one of the most widely-implemented and successful examples of censorship ever devised.”