

Censorship Challenge Report – Quarter 3 FY2011
Millie Davis

We fielded seven challenge reports during Quarter 3 FY2011 as we did during Quarter 3 FY2010. Three challenges were on texts that have been challenged frequently of late: *Of Mice and Men*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*, and *The Kite Runner*. The other challenges were on texts we haven't seen challenged before. Cheryl Rainfield, the author of *Scars*, wrote us about a challenge to her book in a public library in Kentucky. We joined the [National Coalition Against Censorship](#) and other first amendment groups to sign [a letter](#) protesting the elimination of *Water for Elephants* from the curriculum. Because we also sent our letter of protest to the local paper, the incident and our complaint against the censorship fueled [a news story in the Bedford Unionleader](#).

Millie Davis fielded one reporter call about censorship this quarter, from the [Student Press Law Center](#). The focus was on challenges to texts, plays, and other materials in high school.

The good news is that several challenges noted in previous reports have worked out for the better, either with the challenge being dropped or the text being retained. You'll find a list of these below.

Also below is a chart comparing the Quarter 3 FY2011 and the Quarter 3 FY2010 challenges and numbers of challenged texts. Below that a list of the works challenged this quarter.

CENSORSHIP CHALLENGES COMPARISION Q2 FY11 AND Q2 FY10
A few things to know as you compare the numbers are the following:

- *Number of challenges = number of individuals who reported challenges.*
- *Number of works challenged is usually higher because often challenges involve more than one work.*
- *The Censorship Challenge Reports by quarter are posted on the NCTE website. See <http://www.ncte.org/action/anti-censorship/reports>*

January 2011	February 2011	March 2011	Q3FY2011 Totals
2 challenges/2 texts	1 challenge/1 text	4 challenges / 4 texts / signed on 1 letter of support with NCAC and friends/1 request for interview	7 challenges / 7 texts / signed on 1 letter of support with NCAC
January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	Q3FY2011 Totals
2 challenges / 2 texts / signed on 1 letter of support with NCAC	3 challenges / 3 texts / signed on 1 letter of support with NCAC	2 challenges / 3 texts	7 challenges / 8 texts / signed on 2 letters of support with NCAC

Listing of 3rd Quarter Challenges Reported - January–March 31, 2011

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian, Sherman Alexie (senior English, WA). Sent rationale and resources.

Bonesetter's Daughter, Amy Tan (high school, NC). Selection policy not followed. Sent resources.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, J.K. Rowling (5th grade, IL). Assistance offered. Turned out not to be a challenge.

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini (9th grade, CO). Offensive language, sexual content. Sent rationale and resources.

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (11th grade honors, IL). Language. Sent rationale and resources.

Scars, Cheryl Rainfield (public library, Kentucky). content.

Water for Elephants, Sara Gruen (high school, NH). Sexual content. Signed on letter w/MCAC & ABFFE.

Outcome of Previous Challenges

Breakfast of Champions, Kurt Vonnegut (12th grade honors literature class, MI). Resolved, contesters went away quietly.

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (9th grade, IL). Resolved, parent did not pursue.

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (9th grade, Taiwan). Resolved.

Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingsolver (senior AP summer reading, NH). No resolution, course dropped due to budget cuts.

Speak, Laurie Anderson (private school, MO). Removed from suggested title list.

So Far From the Bamboo Grove, Yoko Walkins (MA). Retained as part of curriculum. We will continue to read it in its entirety. We added excerpts from *My Name is Keoko* by Linda Sue Parks in order to provide a more balanced viewpoint.

Sound of Waves, Yukio Mishima (9th grade, MA). Retained

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee (9th grade English, PA). Retained on 9th grade curriculum.

Water for Elephants, Sara Gruen (high school summer reading list, VA). Resolved, nothing ever came of the challenge once we gave the parent all the paperwork to fill out.