

## Book Banning

David White - Seminar Leader

PEN America writes: *A book ban occurs when an objection to the content of a specific book or type of book leads to that volume being withdrawn either fully or partially from availability, or when a blanket prohibition or absolute restriction is placed on a particular title.*

and

*School book bans take varied forms and can include prohibitions on books in libraries or classrooms, as well as a range of other restrictions, some of which may be temporary. It is important to note that some decisions to remove or restrict books can be the outcome of established, appropriate processes, but nonetheless are of concern because they result in diminished access to literature for young people, or the diminished ability of librarians or teachers to use particular educational materials. Book removals that follow established processes may still improperly target books on the basis of content pertaining to race, gender, or sexual orientation, invoking concerns of equal protection in education.*

For the purposes of our discussion, please become familiar with the following:

<https://pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Island\\_Trees\\_School\\_District\\_v.\\_Pico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Island_Trees_School_District_v._Pico)

<https://www.wypr.org/show/midday/2023-05-31/banning-books-a-look-at-national-and-local-perspectives>

<https://litreactor.com/columns/conservative-v-liberal-book-bans>

Then please write a short essay of at least 200 words in response. Submit this to us at [lewesseminar@gmail.com](mailto:lewesseminar@gmail.com) by Sunday, October 8. We will post all the responses at our website, [www.lewesseminar.com](http://www.lewesseminar.com) where you may read the responses in advance of our meeting on October 11.

Some writing prompts you might want to consider are:

1. What role should parents play in choosing materials to be used in public schools?
2. Should student access to some reading material be limited by school personnel? What would be the criteria for such limitation?
3. Should all written materials be available to the general public without restriction?
4. In writing on *Island Trees School District v. Pico*, justices Powell, Rehnquist, Berger, and O'Connor all make a similar point in that local school boards should have the right to set curricula and purchase materials. Does this point hold true today in the politically-charged arenas of school board meetings?
5. On Tom Hall's radio show, community activists Jolie McShane and Jeff McDonald put on a rather poor showing in opposition to Deborah Caldwell Stone. Several of the points the activists make are easily disproven or are shown by the show host to be irrelevant to the issue at hand. Could a stronger case have been made by the activists?
6. Peter Derk's column is rather pointed and somewhat crass. Does he make his point? Is this a both-sides issue?

We look forward to an invigorating discussion at our meeting, Wednesday, October 11 at 3:00 at the Lewes Public Library.

