

Central Illinois Libraries Celebrate Our Freedom to Read

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a historic measure into law in June, making Illinois the first state in the nation to outlaw book bans.

Illinois public libraries that restrict or ban materials because of "partisan or doctrinal" disapproval will be ineligible for state funding as of Jan. 1, 2024 when the law takes effect.

The law, guided by Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, the state librarian, is a direct response to the surging censorship in other parts of the country. The American Library Association in March announced that attempts to censor books in schools and public libraries reached a 20-year high in 2022 — twice as many as 2021, the previous record.

Peoria Public Library has a strong record in promoting the essential right of intellectual freedom. In response to the rise in censorship, Peoria Public Library invited other Central Illinois libraries to join us in uniting against book bans. Instead of our traditional one city, one book initiative, we and our sister libraries are inviting everyone to read outside their comfort zone by choosing a banned or challenged book.

Library, Dunlap Public Library District, Fondulac District Library, Illinois Prairie District Public Library, Morton Public Library and Pekin Public Library. Our other partners are Bradley University, Methodist College and Neighborhood House.

Our partner libraries include: Chillicothe Public

Our efforts with Central Illinois Reads were noticed by Sec. Giannoulias, and Peoria Public Library was among only three libraries in the state invited to Springfield to witness HB 2789's passage in the Senate.

Peoria Public Library's leadership, including our Board of Trustees, also has a track record of

supporting First Amendment rights.

recipient of the ACLU's Harry Kalven Freedom of Expression award. Van Auken, now a retired attorney, was asked years ago by the Peoria ACLU chapter to work with Peoria Public Schools' attorney to establish a book removal policy, stemming from the schools' total removal of Judy Blume's book, Deenie. Many of Judy Blume's books, which often contain frank coming-of-age themes, are still banned or challenged today. "In 1984, removing a book from a school library

PPL's new Board President Barbara Van Auken is a

created public pushback, so much so that the removal of *Deenie* was covered in the press from Peoria to Chicago," recalled Van Auken. "There was even a locally televised debate over the situation between me and the school's attorney. Fortunately, the matter was amiably resolved by returning the book to higher shelves so that only older students could reach it."

Added Van Auken: "While it's truly disheartening to see book bans in record numbers in other states, I'm very honored to be leading Peoria Public Library's board in a state that safeguards intellectual freedom."

In joining forces, Central Illinois Reads is able to provide a variety of events to empower patrons to stand against censorship, including bringing in an internationally renowned author recognized for her both her literature and her battles against censorship.



Check out the list below for some upcoming events, but <u>visit our web page</u> for more details.

Wednesday, July 12 The Hate U Give Book Discussion 6 p.m., Fondulac Library, 400 Richland St., East Peoria

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas topped the New York Times best seller list for 50 weeks after it was released in 2017 before topping another list – the American Library Association's Top 10 Most Challenged and Banned Books list. It continues to be challenged. Join us as we discuss some of the complicated, but important, issues explored in this book. Free and open to all.

Wednesday, July 19 **Protecting the Freedom to Read: A Panel Discussion** 6 p.m., Peoria Public Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand Pkwy.

Even though Illinois passed the first nationwide "ban" on banning books, that doesn't mean that libraries in Illinois doesn't experience censorship. Come hear from a panel of librarians from across the state as they share their personal experiences. Free and open to all.

The Controversial World of Harry Potter 6 p.m., Peoria Public Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand Pkwy. Beloved by millions, but also

Thursday, July 27

continually challenged by many, the *Harry Potter* series is controversial for many reasons. Join us as we discuss why. Adults.

Laurie Halse Anderson is a New York Times bestselling author who was recently awarded Sweden's Astrid Lindgren Award, the world's largest children's book prize. Her writing spans young readers, teens and adults. Her books, which often cover tough topics, have been the subject of censorship. **Central Illinois Reads is** honored to host her next month at Peoria Public Main

Tuesday, Aug. 29 **Central Illinois Reads Presents** Laurie Halse Anderson 6:30 p.m., Peoria Public Main **Library, 107 NE Monroe**

Library.

Central Illinois Reads is pleased to present Laurie Halse Anderson, an author known for award-winning, but targeted work. Two of her novels, Speak and Chains, were National Book Award finalists, and *Chains* was short-listed for the prestigious Carnegie medal in the United Kingdom. She also just won the Astrid Lindgren award, the world's largest children's book prize.

We'll hear Ms. Anderson discuss her works, as well as her continuing battles against censorship.

Books will be available for sale and signing after the program. For ages 13 and older.

More Upcoming Events

Summer Reading Parties

Just a friendly reminder to keep logging your Summer Reading time through July 15.

Once you've reached 25 days of reading, you can pick up your party pass at your favorite PPL location. You'll need your pass to attend our parties. (Adults, you are welcome to join us at BOTH parties.)



Tuesday, July 18, 5-8 p.m. Peoria Zoo - All ages

Friday, July 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Peoria Public Library North Branch - Ages 18+

Murder in Sin City Friday, July 7 @ Main Library, 107 NE Monroe.

Join us for our latest murder mystery... Vegas-style. Whether you're looking for a great, FREE date night or you just want to show off your detective skills, Peoria

Public Library has got you.

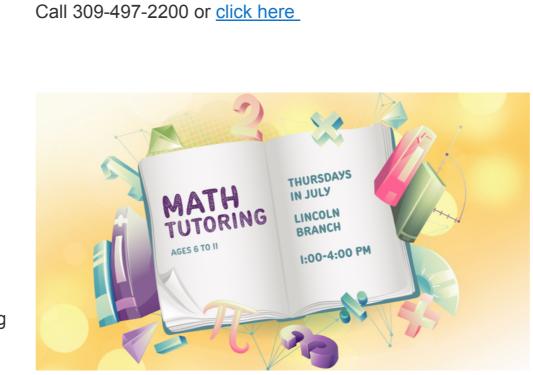


Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; Everything starts at 7 p.m. Yes, Elvis will be in the house. Yes, we'll have a lounge singer and blackjack. Yes, we want you to come in

costume! Free. Ages 18+ Registration is highly suggested.

Get Back-To-School Ready. Easy as 1-2-3 & Math Tutoring!

New data show U.S. reading and math scores are the lowest in decades, in large part due to how COVID interrupted learning. Full article



Reading throughout the summer is a great way to stop the "Summer Slide," but Peoria Public Library is also offering one-on-one math tutoring in July for ages 6 to 11. Call (309) 497-2600 to reserve a session on Thursday afternoons at Lincoln Branch, 1312 W. Lincoln Ave.

Students of all ages can also take advantage of BrainFuse, an online learning platform that offers live tutoring on many subjects, test prep, a writing lab and more. All you need is your Peoria Public Library card to access

Caregiving Series Continues in July Thursday, July 20 6 p.m., Peoria Public

Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand Pkwy. Free and open to all.

Peoria Public Library's fourpart series on Caregiving with local author and advocate Monica Vest Wheeler continues this month with a program on how to react in a crisis situation.

Caregiving
IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD North Branch July 20 6:00-7:30 PM

Save the Dates: Thursday, Oct. 12

6 p.m., Peoria Public Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand Pkwy. Caregiving: Don't Hide Everything from the Kids

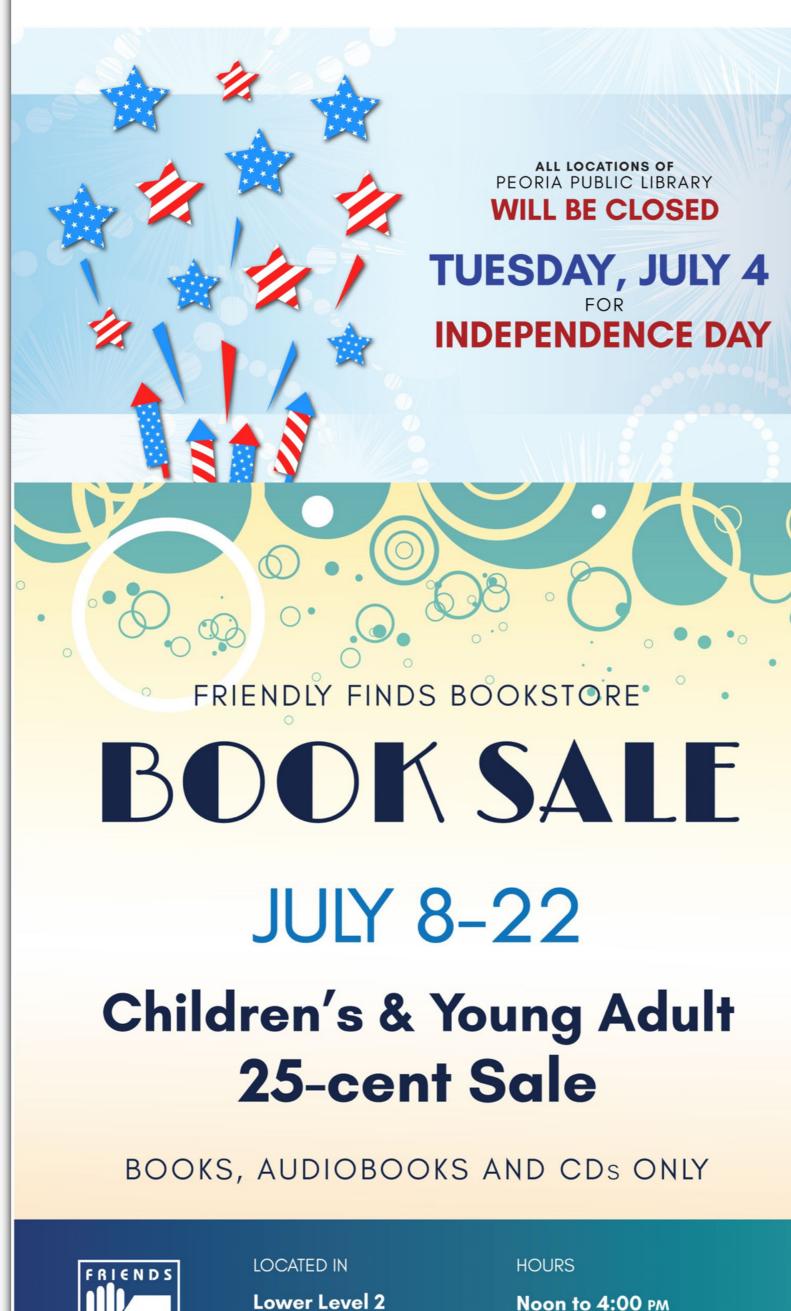
6 p.m., Peoria Public Library North Branch, 3001 W. Grand

Thursday, Nov. 16

Caregiving and Surviving the Holidays Learn to the ask the "right" questions of professionals and how to navigate the red

tape. Discover how to put together a "dream team" of supportive family and friends.







Lower Level 2 Peoria Public Library Main Library 107 NE MONROE

and 2nd & 4th Saturdays (309) 497-2145

Mondays - Wednesdays

