



Dealing With The Unexpected: First Amendment Audits, Book Challenges, and Incivility in Libraries

SWAN Expo 2023

Dealing With The Unexpected

- First Amendment Audits
- Book Challenges
- Incivility & Protests



Panel introduction



Julie Milavec, Downers Grove Public Library



Su Reynders, Mount Prospect Public Library



Josephine Tucci, Batavia Public Library District

BOOKS

Chicagoans of the Year for Books: Librarians and library workers of Illinois fight for dignity during a year of challenges

By Christopher Borrelli
Chicago Tribune • Published: Dec 21, 2022 at 5:30 am

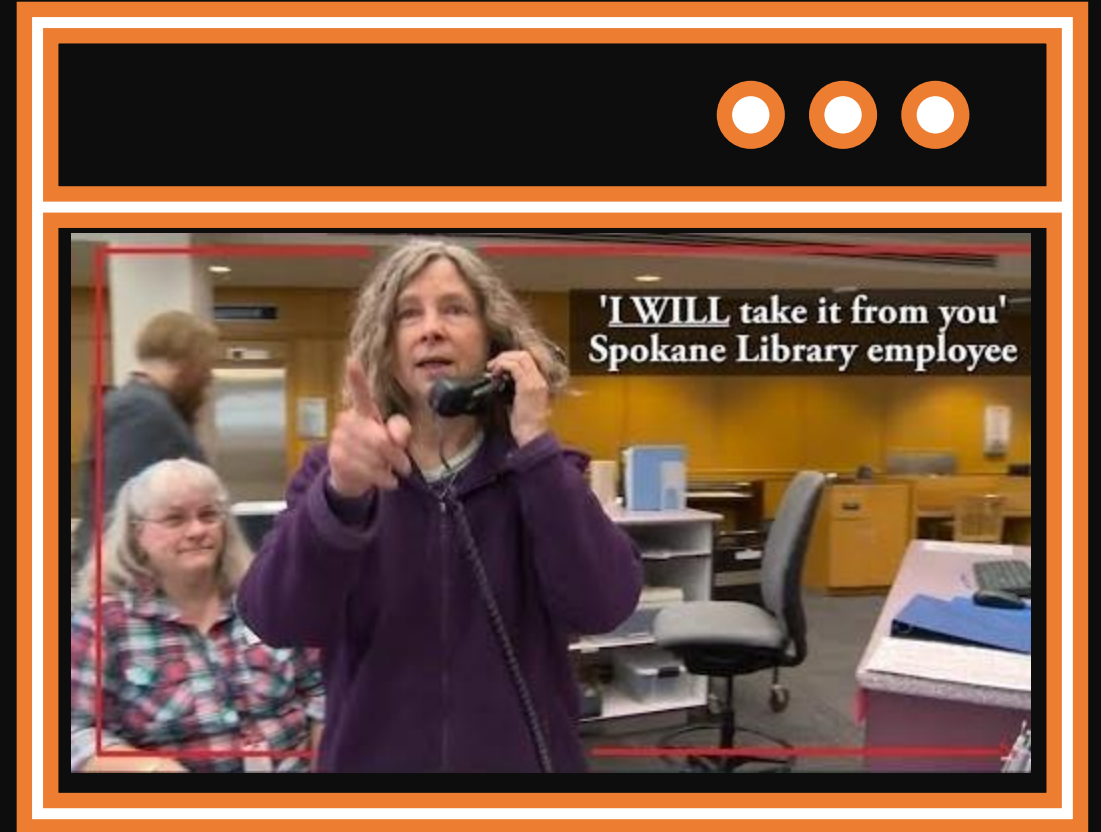


First Amendment Auditors



First Amendment Auditors

- **What?**
- People who film in public spaces to see if they are challenged on their constitutionally protected right to film in public places.
- **Why?**
- Ostensibly to test their rights but likely want to provoke a reaction that will create a sensational video that they can post on their social media accounts.



Illinois Law: Public Act 098-1142

In 2014 the Act amended the two-party consent law.

You can legally record someone if you are not doing it surreptitiously

AND

You are doing it in a place where there isn't a reasonable expectation of privacy, i.e., in a public place.

Examples of public places:

- Municipal buildings
- Parks
- Police offices
- Post offices
- Public Libraries

Private Areas

- Not all areas in the library are “public”
- Restrooms
- Clearly marked (ideally locked) staff areas
- You cannot record or photograph in “private” areas



How to Handle

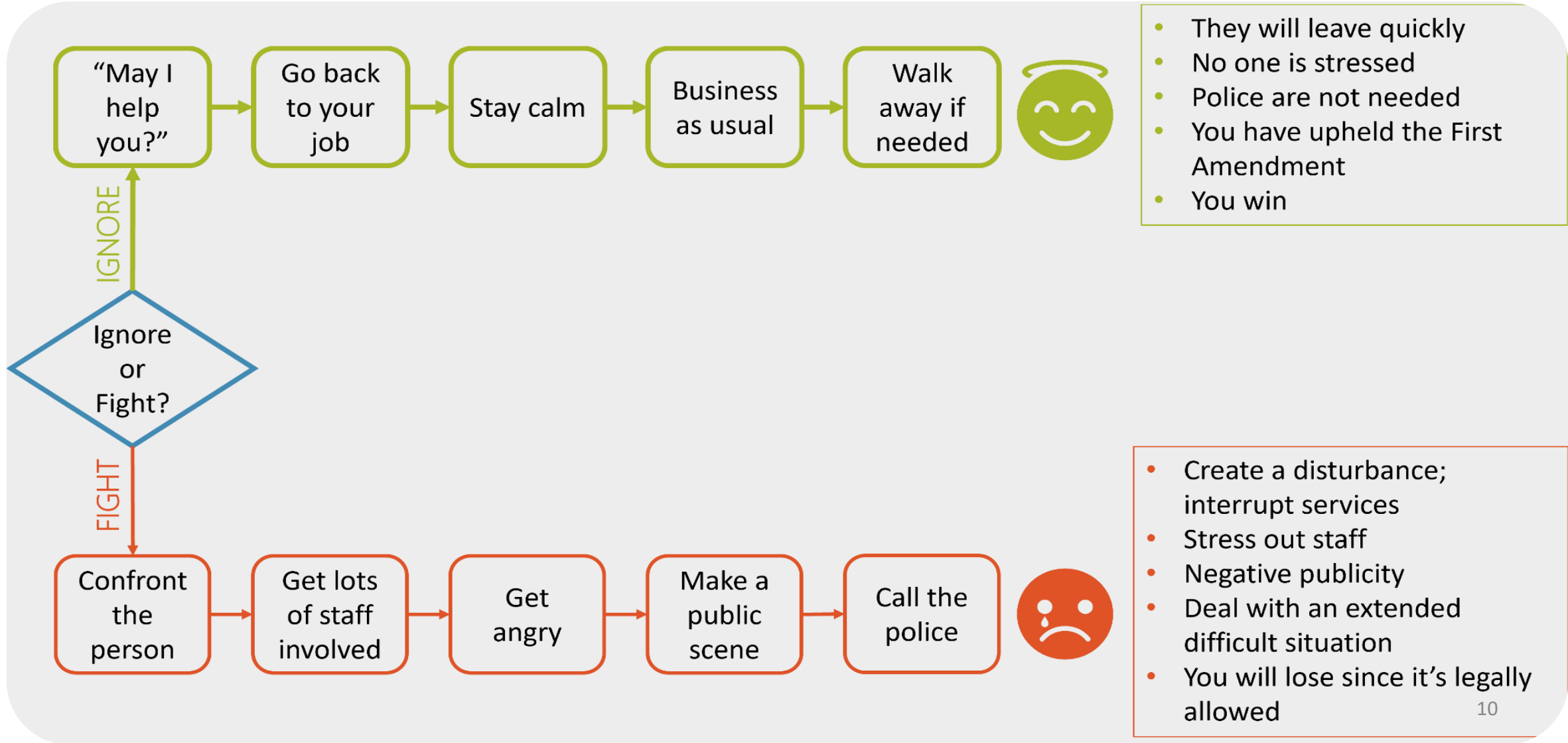


Do not engage with First Amendment auditors who are not violating library policies (privacy, harassment)

Allowing them to film without incident means that they will not get the dramatic video they want, and they will leave quickly

Except for private areas, photos/recording are permitted in public spaces – even if the person stares at you with their camera for 10 minutes. It's infuriating and feels wrong, but it's legal.

Choose Your Own Adventure



First Amendment Audits: Questions

- 1. How do I know if someone is doing a first amendment audit vs just filming randomly?**
- 2. What if someone is filming/photographing children?**
- 3. Don't I, as a staff member, have a right to privacy? What if they post a video/picture online without my permission?**

An open book with a dark red cover is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. The pages are numerous and appear slightly aged. The background is a blurred array of colorful book spines in shades of blue, red, yellow, and grey, suggesting a library or bookstore setting. The text 'Book Challenges' is overlaid in white on the left side of the book's pages.

Book Challenges

1,269

**attempts to ban or restrict
library materials in 2022**

ALA American Library Association

**Number of Attempts
to Ban or Restrict
Library Materials in
the U.S. by Year**

ALA American Library Association

1,269
2022

1,000

729
2021

464
2012

500

458
2003

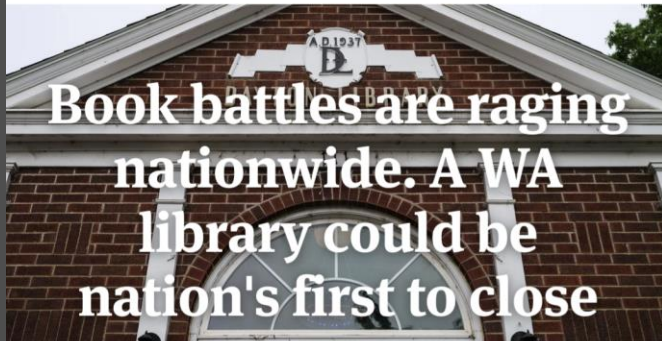
156
2020

Book challenges increased by 614% from 2020-2022!

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/by-the-numbers>

The Seattle Times


Local News ▾ Log In | Subscribe



Book battles are raging nationwide. A WA library could be nation's first to close

Voters in November could close the only library in Columbia County, the result of a yearlong dispute over the placement of young adult books that address gender, sexuality and race. (Dean Rutz / The Seattle Times)

Aug. 13, 2023 at 6:00 am | Updated Aug. 13, 2023 at 6:00 am

By **David Gutman** 
Seattle Times staff reporter

DAYTON, COLUMBIA COUNTY — Book battles are raging across the nation, but none have carried the kind of stakes as the one here in Dayton, a one-stoplight farming community in the southeastern corner of Washington.

For the county's only library, the battle has turned, quite literally, existential: Voters will

BAN BOOK BANS 

Illinois becomes first state to penalize libraries that ban books.

"While it's true that kids need guidance, and that some ideas can be objectionable, trying to weaponize local government to force one-size-fits-all standards onto the entire community for reasons of bigotry, or as a substitute for active and involved parenting, is wrong."

The Hill — June 13, 2023



Story at a glance

- Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D-Ill.) signed a bill into law that withholds state funding for libraries that do not adopt the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights," which indicates "materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."
- Alternatively, libraries can draft their own written policy "prohibiting the practice of banning books or other materials within the library or library system."
- The new law comes as pressure across the country has been mounting for schools and library systems to ban books that contain certain themes that some parents and lawmakers deem inappropriate, especially in conservative states.

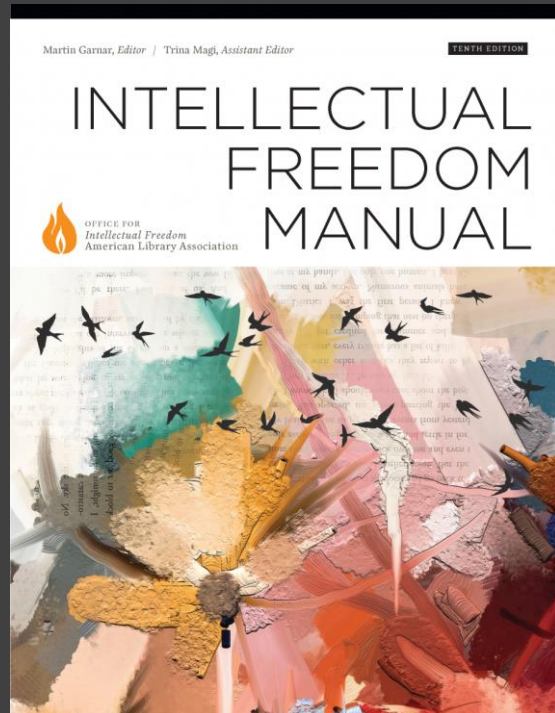
Book bans in Illinois

- In the state of Illinois, there were 67 attempts to ban books in 2022
- Currently, the five states most prevalently outlawing books are Florida, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah. Approximately one-third of these book bans went into effect due to state laws.
- Illinois has a new law, Public Act 103-0100, that goes into effect January 1, 2024 that restricts book bans in public libraries

Illinois becomes first state in U.S. to put a ban on book bans with new law

https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/ban_book_bans/news/essence-061423.html

You Are NOT Alone



There are organizations and resources that will help you navigate these murky waters:

- [Banned & Challenged Books \(ALA\)](#)
- [Office for Intellectual Freedom \(ALA\)](#)
- [Intellectual Freedom \(ALA\)](#)

- [Challenge Support \(ALA\)](#)
- [Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
- [Censorship & Book Challenges \(IHLS\)](#)
- [Intellectual Freedom Round Table \(ALA\)](#)
- [National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
- [Materials Challenges \(RAILS\)](#)
- [How to Respond to Challenges \(ALA\)](#)

You Are NOT
Alone



Seeking Volunteers for Regional Response Teams

August 14, 2023

Are you passionate about intellectual freedom and defending the freedom to read? With censorship efforts surging at unprecedented levels across the country, a coalition of library support organizations including [ILA](#), [AISLE](#), [IHLS](#), and [RAILS](#) are seeking to create a network of regional response teams to support libraries and their staff. These volunteer-led teams will be available as a resource for libraries experiencing a challenge to library materials and may provide support in a variety of ways: letter writing to a governing body; attending board meetings; connecting with a library staff member experiencing a materials challenge for advice, consultation and/or moral support; or researching and providing specific information/resources around a particular challenged book or resource.

If you are interested in getting involved, please complete this short [Regional Response Team Volunteer form](#).

We will be recruiting volunteers from across Illinois over the next couple of months, with the hopes of launching this service early in 2024.

Thank you for considering this volunteer opportunity, and thank you for all you do to protect the freedom to read in Illinois!

For questions about volunteering, please email RRTeam@ila.org.

<https://railslibraries.org/news/106261>

Suggestions on How to Prepare for these Difficult Questions

First, know your policies:

- Collection Management Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Meeting Rooms Policy
- Conduct/Behavior Policy
- [Library Bill of Rights](#)
- [Freedom to Read](#)
- [Freedom to View](#)

Talking Points You Can Use:

“We provide choices but don’t endorse any single point of view.”

“We know that among the range of materials we provide, there will be those of interest to and valued by some that are considered controversial by others; however, one person’s idea of “controversial” is not necessarily the same as another’s.”

“Parents and guardians are the single most important influence as a child makes choices about what to read - we not only encourage but expect them to guide their own children’s reading.”

“We support our community members’ recreational reading and research interests by providing access to thousands of books and other materials on a wide range of topics reflecting many aspects of the world in which we live.”

Questions library staff may have regarding book & material challenges

- 1. How do I handle difficult conversations with individuals seeking to ban books, especially parents concerned about what their kids are reading?**
- 2. What if someone says that children are too young to begin reading a book that addresses sexually explicit topics?**
- 3. Why don't you have this book?**

An open book with a dark red cover is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat. The pages are numerous and appear slightly aged. The background is a blurred array of colorful book spines in shades of blue, yellow, red, and grey, suggesting a library or bookstore setting. The text 'Incivility & Emboldened Opinions' is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the book's pages. A solid orange horizontal bar is positioned at the bottom of the image, partially overlapping the book's pages.

Incivility & Emboldened Opinions

Library Protests

- Downers Grove: Drag Queen Bingo
- Elmhurst: LGBTQ+ Book Displays
- Niles: Library Budget Cuts
- Park Ridge: Masks
- St Charles: Masks

On-site protests in libraries are on the rise

They were once extremely rare but now they occur much more frequently

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Join us during National Library Card Sign-up Month!
 Celebrate National Library Card Sign-up Month this September with the Downers Grove Public Library! Signing up for a library card is the first step to discover, grow, play, and learn!



At DGPL, patrons can find a variety of resources and activities, ranging from research databases to game nights. The library is proud to provide programming that helps patrons of all ages and stages succeed, including e-books, storylines, games and activities, computer and internet access, crafting tutorials, and more. With a collection of over 100,000 items, there is something for everyone!

Technology, media resources, and educational materials give students the tools to succeed in the 21st century. We offer a variety of opportunities to pursue their passions and interests, and find their voice.

Sign up for a library card today! The first 100 adults to sign up for a card will receive a complimentary tote bag. All cardholders are invited to enter to win a gift raffle basket (multiple available) featuring gift certificates for popcorn and drinks. Sign up at the front desk!

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STAFF PICKS
 Find your next title with the library's Staff Picks collection. Staff members from all departments share their favorite books, movies, music, and video games. Look for Staff Picks in the library and online. Follow and use the hashtag #DGPLreads to keep up with the freshest picks.



Director's Note
 What do Nick Offerman, Kwame Onwuachi, and Michelle Zauner have in common? They have all presented virtual programs for Illinois Libraries Present! Illinois Libraries Present is a cooperative of libraries that brings high-quality, high-profile events highlighting national names that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive for single libraries to hold on their own. Working together, these libraries leverage their buying power to share big name, nationally-recognized speakers on high profile topics in social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion. With funding from the Downers Grove Public Library Foundation, our library's membership in Illinois Libraries Present drew hundreds of attendees from DGPL to its first seven events during the inaugural six-month season.

As Illinois Libraries Present enters its second season in September, the Downers Grove Public Library Foundation continues its support of the library's participation. Upcoming events will feature:

- **Marlee Matlin** - academy award winner, author, and activist
- **Jesmyn Ward** - award-winning novelist and professor
- **Gaijin Doughty** - mortician, author, YouTube personality, and advocate
- **Ross Gay** - award-winning poet, essayist, and professor

I look forward to these fabulous programs that showcase the power and value of libraries working collaboratively to bring access to these author events to our community.

In association with Illinois Libraries Present

A Conversation with Marlee Matlin From Oscar to West Wing and Beyond
 Wednesday, September 14, 7 p.m.

In celebration of Deaf Awareness Month, Marlee Matlin shares the highs and lows of her Hollywood career and journeys as an activist. The youngest recipient of the Best Actress Oscar, Matlin's acting career recently achieved another milestone as her 2021 film CODA swept every category it was nominated in at the 2022 Academy Awards.

In Conversation With Jesmyn Ward
 Wednesday, October 12, 7 p.m.

Join us for an evening with Jesmyn Ward, two-time National Book Award winner and youngest person to receive the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction.

Teen Programming Highlights

Programs are held in Teen Central unless otherwise noted.

Introducing: Teen Maker Kits
 Maker kits are new project boxes for teens in grades 7 – 12 to complete anytime the library is open. Project boxes will be at the Ask Us Desk and can be used in Teen Central. Projects will rotate each month and librarians will be in Teen Central at times to demonstrate all of the projects.

- September Kits**
- Air Clay Crafts
 - Fidget Bracelets
 - Fall Acrylic Keychains
- October Kits**
- Guatemalan Worry Dolls
 - Fidget Bracelets
 - Fall Acrylic Keychains

Maker Kit Drop-Ins
 Grades 7 – 12. Explore the new maker craft kits that are available to create any time the library is open. A librarian will be available to demonstrate the projects.

Tuesday, September 6: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Thursday, September 8: 6 – 7 p.m.
Monday, October 3: 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 6: 4 – 5 p.m.

Service Project: Color-a-Smile
 September 1 – 8
 Grades 7 – 12. Step into Teen Central to create bright, colorful images to send out through the group Color-a-Smile. All supplies provided.

ONLINE: FAFSA Changes and the College Planning Process
 Wednesday, September 7: 7 – 9 p.m.
 Grades 7 – 12, Parents. Learn about FAFSA changes and new strategies for college admission and scholarships/financial aid.

QPR Suicide Prevention Training
 Thursday, September 15, 6 – 8 p.m.
 Meeting Room
 Grades 7 – 12. Learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer (QPR) someone to help.

ACT & SAT Math Help
 Saturday, September 17, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
 Meeting Room
 Grades 7 – 12, Parents. Math sections on the ACT/SAT got you stressed? Join us for test prep tips. For students and parents. Presented by MathPlays LLC.

Registration opens two weeks prior to event date.

- Advance registration required
- Drop-in program
- Virtual program

Secrets of a Haunted House
 Wednesday, October 5, 7 – 8 p.m.
 Kids, Program Room
 Grades 7 – 12. Get a behind the scenes look at how haunted houses are created, check out props, and even get a chance to try some horror makeup!

Make & Take Crafts
 Grades 7 – 12. Pick up a craft to complete in Teen Central or take home. Available while supplies last.

Create Like: Nancy Rouke
 Wednesday, September 21, All Day
Spooky DIY Cloche
 Wednesday, October 19, All Day

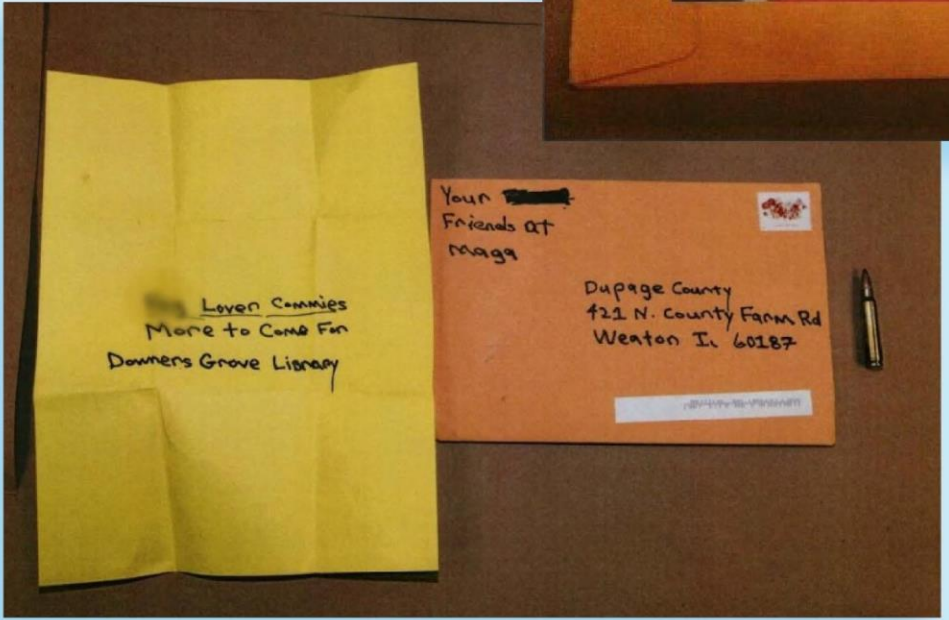
College Application Workshop
 Sunday, October 9, 1:30 – 3 p.m.
 Meeting Room
 Local independent College Counselors will be available to assist HS seniors with college applications and essay brainstorming.

Drag Queen Bingo
 Tuesday, October 11, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
 Meeting Room
 Grades 7 – 12. Join Aurora Divine for some classic bingo! Multiple games will be played for prizes with a short drag performance included.

ACT Practices Test
 Saturday, October 15, 1 – 5 p.m.
 Meeting Room
 Grades 9 – 12. Bring #2 pencils, a calculator, and a snack for half day.

After Hours: Scary Movie
 Saturday, October 15, 4:45 – 7:30 p.m.
 Kids, Program Room
 Grades 6 – 12. Stay after the library closes if you dare and watch the movie **Insidious** (PG-13). Pizza and snacks will be served.

Game On!
 Teen Central has a fun new addition! Teens can now play a collection of arcade titles from the early 1980s through the late 1990s. Built and designed by library staff, it's equally fun and educational. Teens can see first-hand how video games and technology have evolved throughout the years and the clear cover shows how it is wired. Stop by and play some fan-favorites today!



Love Commies
More to Come For
Downers Grove Library

Your ~~_____~~
Friends at
maga

DuPage County
421 N. County Farm Rd
Weaton Il 60187





Lessons Learned:

- Build your relationships NOW!
- Be consistent in your message.
- Ask for help.



Protests at the library

1. The protesters are my friends and neighbors. How should I react to them?
2. What if community members express concern about the protesters? Is there anything the library can do?
3. What if protesters interfere with library users entering the library?

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, with its pages fanned out. The background is a blurred array of colorful book spines in shades of blue, red, yellow, and grey. The text "Discussion & Questions" is overlaid in white on the book's pages. A solid orange horizontal bar is positioned at the bottom of the image.

Discussion & Questions