



Freedom to Read Week (February 21-27, 2016) is an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom, which is guaranteed them under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Library Association provides funds to libraries to help support special projects that draw attention to issues related to Freedom of Expression. For writers the issue is an important one as it is almost impossible for many of us to imagine the suppression of our language and literature. For more information about Freedom to Read Week, please visit their website at <http://www.freedomtoread.ca/>

Here in Saskatchewan we encourage you to visit your local library and check out a challenged book or take in one of the following special events:

Chinook Regional Library is focusing on a largely unserved segment of the rural population-LGBTQ. Working with Swift Current & Southwest Saskatchewan Pride, they will focus on leading discussion groups in Leader, Maple Creek and Shaunavon. In Saskatoon, the **Frances Morrison Library** will host local authors who will read from banned books at 7 p.m. on February 22. The readers will be led by Dee Hobsbawn-Smith, SPL's Writer-in Residence. Also in Saskatoon, **Horizon College & Seminary** is hosting Poetry Through Subtraction: Creating Art Through Censorship at 7 p.m. February 27th. If you are in Humboldt, **Reid –Thompson Public Library** has planned events for children, a Blind Date With a Book and a discussion with Gail Bowen on the history of censorship. **La Ronge Public Library** will be hosting high school students and adults at a public discussion about censorship, and will also be providing word searches and acrostics based on FTR themes. A Banned and Challenged Book Wheel and "Spin to Win" have been planned for **Meadow Lake Library**. A FTR panel at **Moose Jaw Public Library** will discuss relevant issues including the Hebdo attacks and the ramifications for Intellectual Freedom. The third annual Banned Books Café at **Regina Public Library** features a distinguished panel including Ashley Martin, Mirelda Fiddler, Randy Lundy, Gail Bowen and Writer in Residence Nilofar Shidmehr. Southwest Saskatchewan Pride and **Swift Current Public Library** will discuss challenges to LGBTQ library materials at a local café. On February 24, **Turtleford Public Library** will be screening *1984* and holding a draw for a copy of the book.

There is a lot happening right across the province. I hope that you can take the time to visit your local library, and take a moment to think about how important Freedom of Expression is in your work and life.