

Spotlight

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President's Message

Happy 2023! Welcome to the first NFRC Spotlight of 2023 and a brand new year! Did you set any New Year Resolutions? Maybe one of those resolutions includes reading more or reading a certain book. As a busy professional with three small children (aged 9, 7, & 4), I am not able to sit down and read for pleasure like I used to. Years and years ago, I used to spend a few nights each week reading in the evening. Curled up in my favorite chair in the evening with a cup of tea and reading a good book was one of my favorite things to do and something I really looked forward to all day long. These days, though, when I sit down to read in the evening, I usually fall asleep before finishing one page! And, some evenings, when I'm reading to my children at bedtime or they are reading to me, I fall asleep!!!

My resolution this year is to be more purposeful with my time and make it a priority to read more books for pleasure. I picked up a few "fun" books after Christmas and was able to read for a few minutes each day during my break as a way to relax during the day. Not only do I find great pleasure in reading and want to read, but I want my young children to see their mom reading and see the enjoyment that comes from reading a good book. In Western New York, I have found that winter is a great time to slow down and do something that you love. With what looks like a cold and snowy winter ahead of us, I plan to spend time catching up on some good books. I hope you are able to slow down and spend time doing what you love.

For all of you who love reading and love books, please plan to join NFRC's Spring 2023 Professional Book Discussion Group. We will be reading and discussing the book *YOU CAN'T SAY THAT!: Writers for Young People Talk about Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell*. Not only will we read this book and discuss censorship of literature for children and teens, but we will also get a chance to hear directly from the book's author, Leonard S. Marcus, and ask him questions. Please check

the [NFRC website](#) for more information and to register. This event is free for all NFRC members to attend and is offered at a discount rate for students and NYSRA members.

Thanks, Ashlee



Ashlee Campbell

Happy New Year!!!!

NFRC is looking for members who are interested in taking more of a leadership role in the organization. We have three Board Member positions open. Individuals serving in these roles attend NFRC meetings (September, November, January, March, May, & June), provide feedback on NFRC matters, and help NFRC plan and hold various literacy-related events throughout the year.

We welcome teachers and school leaders for these open positions.

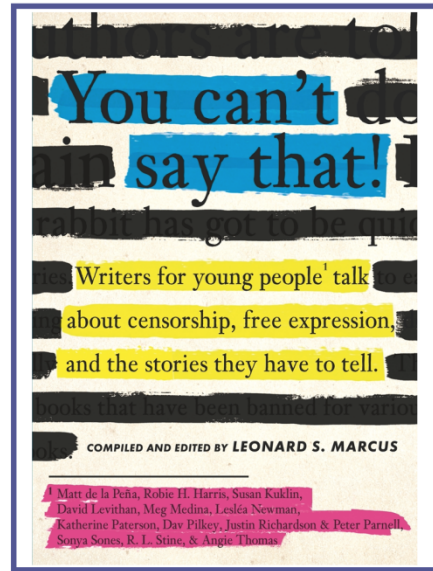
If you are interested in learning more about a Board Member position, please email the NFRC president, Ashlee Campbell, at ashleeeb@buffalo.edu

Niagara Frontier Reading Council
Professional Book Discussion Group
Spring 2023 Opportunity

- **YOU CAN'T SAY THAT!: Writers for Young People Talk about Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell** compiled and edited by Leonard S. Marcus
- Meetings will take place on Zoom from 6:00-7:30 PM
 - **3/7/23** Session 1 Discussion of the book
 - **3/21/23** Session 2 Slide Presentation/Q&A with author Leonard S. Marcus: "YOU CAN'T SAY THAT!: Censorship, Young People, and the Right to Read"
 - Earn 1.5 CTLE credits for each session
- Cost
 - NFRC Members: **Free!**
 - NYSRA Members: **Free!**
 - Non-Members: \$25 (Students: \$15) – **OR** – Join NFRC for only \$35/yr (Students: \$15/yr) and attendance is **free!**



REGISTER TODAY!
<https://www.nysreading.org/event-5110113>



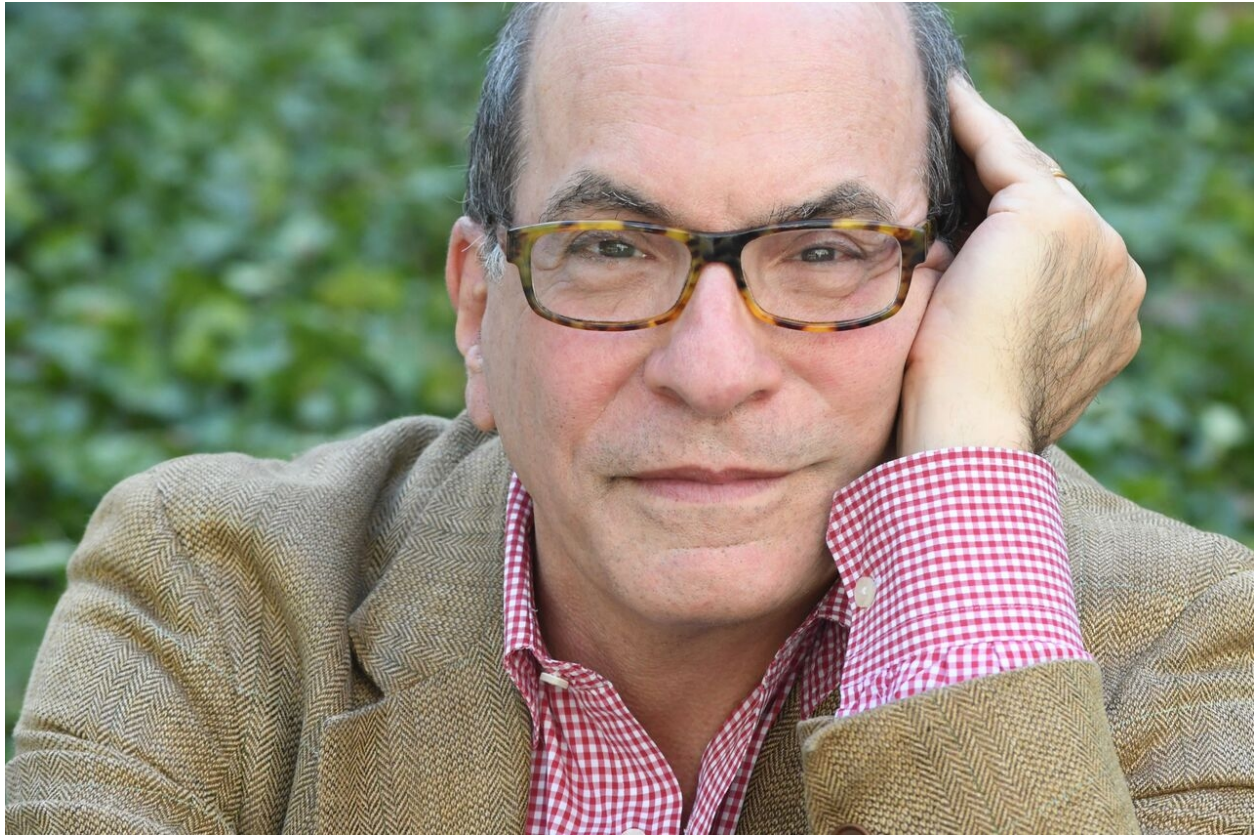
Literature for children and teens has long been the most frequently banned category of books in the US, and recent events across America have only intensified the trend.

The Niagara Frontier Reading Council has chosen ***YOU CAN'T SAY THAT!: Writers for Young People Talk about Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell*** for its Spring Professional Book Discussion...

AND we are delighted to announce that renowned historian, author, and international lecturer Leonard S. Marcus will join our virtual Spring 2023 Professional Book Discussion Group to discuss this important topic.

What happens when freedom of expression comes under threat? In his illustrated talk, Mr. Marcus will offer an eye-opening look and much needed perspective on book censorship past and present—its patterns and consequences, and what can be done to protect young people's right to read. An opportunity for questions and answers will follow.

Please see below for more information and click [here](#) to register for this exciting CTLE-credit event! Questions? Contact Judy Bradbury at judybradburywrites@gmail.com.



*Leonard S. Marcus is one of the world's leading writers about children's books and the people who create them. He is the author of more than 25 critically acclaimed books including **Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon**; **Dear Genius: The Letters of Ursula Nordstrom**; **You Can't Say That!: Writers for Young People Talk about Censorship, Free Expression, and the Stories They Have to Tell**; and coming in March, **Pictured Worlds**, an international history of the illustrated children's book.*

*Leonard is a frequent contributor to the New York Times Book Review and has been a commentator on radio and television. He is a founding trustee of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art and was the curator of the New York Public Library's landmark exhibition, *The ABC of It: Why Children's Books Matter*. He is currently curating an exhibition on the idea of home in children's literature at the National Building Museum.*

Leonard received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from the Bank Street College of Education in 2007 and is the only American to have won China's Chen Bochui Award for special contributions to the development of Chinese children's literature. Leonard lives in Brooklyn, NY, and lectures about his work across the world.

REGISTER TODAY! (<https://www.nysreading.org/event-5110113>)



Opinion

Censorship is a hotter than usual topic these days. The NFRC has plans to discuss censorship in its Professional Book Discussion Group based on the book, *You Can't Say That!*, by Leonard S. Marcus. I started reading it and my mind went to its critical thinking spot, going beyond the print to politics and the world. It's been clear for a while that certain factions would want to censor ideas because those factions don't like the thoughts presented. Many of those ideas include racism, propriety, cultural "taboos", and gender, to name some.

But shouldn't there be some kind of protective action? I am thinking about proven lies. When false information is printed, stated, communicated, harm is often the result. We see examples of unrest in our country and much of it is from information that has been proven untrue. But there are those who hold onto this information as truth. On the other hand, I know of teachers and others who have given out truthful information, only to be told that their info was not to be believed!

So, we have the truth vilified while the lies are promoted. I would like to see *proven lies* censored because we need damage control. I know the argument here would be – you can't censor some information without endangering the truth. This seems to be a catch-22 situation. With no control over prevarication, the struggle will go on and those who hate the truth, or can't understand it, will be in line to threaten society.

--Jack Agugliaro, editor

Study Reveals Learning Loss ‘Tornado’

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November 7, 2022



Last month, the Education Recovery [Scorecard](#), a collaboration with researchers at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University (CEPR) and Stanford University’s Educational Opportunity Project, released the first comparable view of district-level learning loss during the pandemic utilizing the recently released 2022 NAEP data and data from the states that have publicly reported their district proficiency rates on their spring 2022 assessments. These interactive district-level maps include data from 29 states (plus DC)—where the necessary data was available.

The new research uses the 2022 NAEP scores to make state assessment results comparable and incorporates data on weeks remote and the federal recovery dollars (ESSER) received per district, equipping state and local leaders with the information they need to recalibrate their current recovery plans.

Interestingly, some school districts with higher poverty rates—such as Los Angeles, which instituted remote learning for longer than most other districts—performed comparatively well in the assessments. In fact, even with its long closures, California performed better than most other states and the nation from 2019–22, but the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact student achievement overall and across all student groups.

“California focused on keeping kids safe during the pandemic while making record investments to mitigate learning loss and transforming our education system,” said Governor Gavin Newsom.

“While California’s students experienced less learning loss than those in most other states during the pandemic, these results are not a celebration but a call to action—students are struggling academically and we need to keep getting them the resources they need to thrive. That’s why we’ve made record investments in education, created a new pre-K grade, implemented universal free meals, expanded before- and after-school programs, bolstered mental health, and more.”

“The pandemic was like a band of tornadoes that swept across the country,” said CEPR faculty director Thomas J. Kane. “Some communities were left relatively untouched, while neighboring schools were devastated. The Education Recovery Scorecard is the first high-resolution map of the tornadoes’ path to help local leaders see the magnitude of the damage and guide local recovery efforts.”

“One of the things we found is that even within a district, there is variability. School districts are the first line of action to help children catch up. The better they know about the patterns of learning loss, the more they’re going to be able to target their resources effectively to reduce educational inequality of opportunity and help children and communities thrive,” said Sean Reardon, professor of poverty and inequality in education at Stanford University and director of the Educational Opportunity Project.

In response to the findings, US secretary of education Miguel Cardona said, “We must muster the political will at the state and local level to match the urgency and federal investment in our students through the historic \$122 billion in the American Rescue Plan. The latest Nation’s Report Card results must serve as a call to action to revisit our existing plans and scale up proven academic recovery strategies such as ensuring a robust and qualified teacher and leader workforce, intense and frequent tutoring aligned to high-quality curriculum, and after-school and summer enrichment programming. While the recent data is alarming, catching our students up to the 2019 achievement levels is a low bar. We must aim higher. Our students should be leading the world.”

Civil rights leaders see this new research as a call to action for state leaders to rise up a much bolder, more aggressive response.

“Learning losses among minority students over the last two years have put the long-term vitality of the nation at risk. Latino and African American students make up nearly half of all students, making it a national imperative to invest in their academic recovery,” said Janet Murguía, president and CEO of UnidosUS.

“If there is a sparkle of light during these dark times, it’s our nation’s historic infusion of funds through ARP and ESSER,” said John B. King, president of the Education Trust. “To address unfinished learning, we implore district leaders to invest in evidence-based strategies, including increased access to strong, diverse teachers, targeted intensive tutoring, expanded learning time, and strengthening socioemotional supports and relationships weakened during the pandemic.”

(Article submitted by Lisa Insalaco)

Join NFRC

NIAGARA FRONTIER READING COUNCIL

Become part of a community dedicated to promoting literacy education, encouraging professional development, and providing community service to the WNY area.



NFRC members include

Educators
Administrators
Parents
Education Students
Library Media Specialists
Community Members

Register at

<https://www.thenfrc.org/>

Membership Includes

- Complimentary membership to the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA)
- opportunity to attend other NYSRA events
- Reduced pricing for NFRC events
- Reduced registration for NYSRA's annual conference
- Digital newsletters from NFRC and NYSRA
- PD/CTLE credits
- Professional Book Discussion Group
- Professional Networking

Questions- contact Ashlee
ashleeb@buffalo.edu



NFRC Local Awards

Every year the Niagara Frontier Reading Council presents two prestigious local awards, the Service to Reading Award and the Certificate of Appreciation Award.

We would love to hear who you think deserves the awards.

Nominations are due March 31, 2023

The Service to Reading Award

- Will be given to a person, involved in literacy education, who has made a significant contribution promoting literacy in the community.
- **The recipient should be a member of the Niagara Frontier Reading Council.**

*****Please send nominations to
Renee Andrzejewski at
randrzejewski@buffaloschools.org

Certificate of Recognition

- Will be awarded to a person or a group **not affiliated with the Niagara Frontier Reading Council and not a paid, professional educator.**
- The Certificate of Recognition is for service to, or promotion of, the council's goals.



NFRC 2022-2023 Officers & Board Members

NFRC Officers 2022-2023

- President - Dr. Ashlee Campbell
- Past President – Heidi Clarke
- Secretary - Jack Agugliaro
- Treasurer - Dr. John Strong
- Director of Membership - Carol Bush

Board Members 2022 - 2024

- Judy Bradbury
- Patty Oliphant
- (open)
- (open)

Board Members 2021 - 2023

- Renee Andrzejewski
- Lisa Boyd
- Christine Woodcock
- Mary Beth Scumaci

Chairperson Positions

Editor of Spotlight- Jack Agugliaro

Web Designer & Editor- Mary Beth Scumaci

Social Media Chair- Blythe Anderson

Council Awards Chair- Renee Andrzejewski

Professional Development Chair- Judy Bradbury

Outreach Chair- VACANT; **Co-Chair:** Judy Bradbury to oversee Little Free Libraries project

CTLE Chair - Patricia Oliphant

Finance / Budget Chair-

Nominating Chair - Comprised of the Board

Liaison Chair- Jack Agugliaro

Audit Chair - VACANT

Western Regional Director 2018-21, NYSRA - Cherie Gerych

About the NFRC:

- We are non-profit educational organization chartered by The International Literacy Association since 1958.
- We are dedicated to the professional development and enhancement of literacy in our community.
- We are involved in professional issues affecting literacy.

NFRC Mission:

Our mission is to promote literacy education, encourage professional development, and provide community service, which fosters literacy within Western New York. We hope to instill a passion for lifelong learning and encourage readers to build a vision of the future.

Upcoming Events

3/7/23 – Professional Book Discussion Group Session #1 discussion *You Can't Say That!* 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. (zoom)

3/21/23 – PBDG Session #2 presentation by author Leonard S. Marcus 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. (zoom)