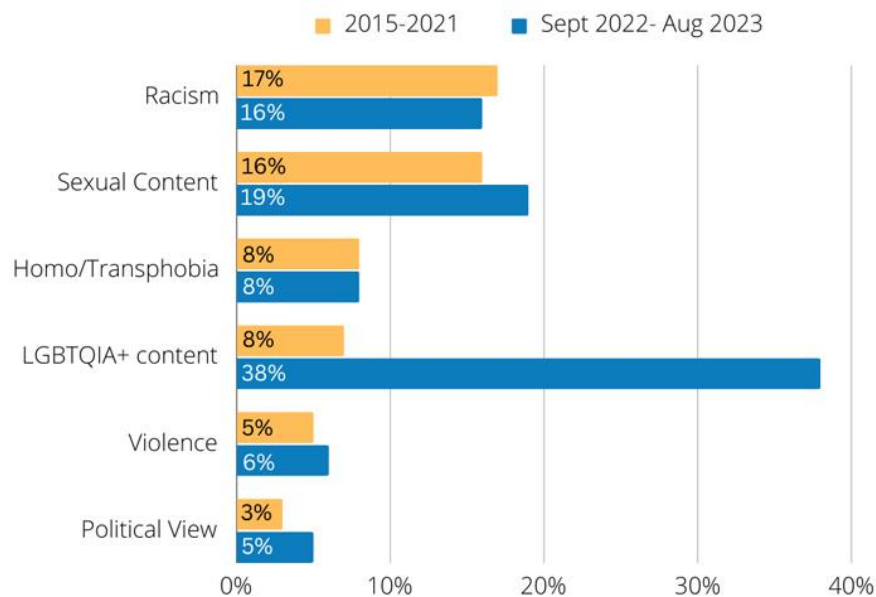


MARCH 2024 LIBRARY REPORT

Freedom to Read Week

February 18-24 was the 40th. anniversary of [Freedom to Read Week](#), an annual event that encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom is the right to access a wide range of ideas and information and decide for oneself what to accept or reject. It is a core value of public libraries and is enshrined in [section 2\(b\)](#) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, [article 19](#) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and [article 13](#) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Canadians' intellectual freedom is threatened when individuals or groups who disapprove of a book, DVD, program, event, speaker, display or service at the library attempt to have it removed or cancelled so that others may not access it. This is termed a “challenge”; if they are successful, it is called a “ban”. The chart below, produced by the CFLA Intellectual Freedom Committee based on data gathered from Canadian libraries, illustrates the reasons given by people requesting the removal of materials or cancellation of events. **The number of challenges to Canadian libraries rose by 62% last year (118), largely through objections to LGBTQA2S+ themes or content.** * Although many of the challenged books were referred to as “pornography” by the complainants, there was no truth to these allegations.



The Smithers Public Library is dedicated to defending the intellectual freedom of everyone who uses the library. We serve the entire community and strive to offer a wide range of materials and perspectives for people to choose from, respecting their right to decide for themselves what they think about it. We do not usurp parents by judging the reading choices of children and youth, nor do we limit the library's offerings to one worldview.

*For more information on recent challenges in Canadian libraries, see the article "[A Rising Tide of Censorship: Recent Challenges in Canadian Libraries](#)" by Michael Nyby (February 2024).

Professional Development

In January, Wendy attended the Ontario Library Conference in Toronto and co-presented a talk about intellectual freedom to The Partnership on behalf of the CFLA IFC. Wendy's term as Chair of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) ended in February but she will continue to work with the committee until the end of April 2024. Wendy was interviewed for CBC Vancouver News (TV), two CBC Radio shows, and local radio stations CICK FM and MooseFM/My Bulkley Lakes Now talking about Freedom to Read Week, as well as in the Ottawa Citizen on behalf of the CFLA IFC.

Board members Shaunna and Amy attended a BC Library Trustee Association workshop on Trustee Roles and Governance.

Building

Health, safety and accessibility renovations started on March 11, beginning with the larger of the two washrooms. The renovations are funded by the one-time provincial Enhancement Grant.

Ongoing Programs

Melissa hosts **Book Lovers' Night Out** the second Tuesday of the month at the library thanks to Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation.

Babytime and Toddlertime continues on Tuesdays, **Storytime** on Wednesdays and **LEGO TIME** on Thursdays.

A **Book Club** and the **Smithers Board Games Group** meet at the library monthly.

Author Visit: Christopher Pollon

20 people attended an evening reading and Q&A with award-winning author and journalist, Christopher Pollon. His latest book **Pitfall: The Race to Mine the World's Most Vulnerable Places** is a global investigation of mining—led by a secretive industry that enables most modern comforts, but simultaneously exacts staggering environmental and social costs. Pollon asks: How do we get the metals we need, including to save our civilization from climate change, without inflicting new harms on Indigenous peoples and fouling our collective nest?

JOIN AWARD WINNING JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR

CHRISTOPHER POLLON

FOR A READING FROM HIS BOOK
PITFALL: THE RACE TO MINE THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE PLACES

SMITHERS PUBLIC LIBRARY
3971 ALFRED AVENUE

MAR. 1
7 P.M.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:





Neurodiversity Celebration Week

JOIN A SERIES OF FUN, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE ACTIVITIES!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN SMITHERS

MAR 18
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
REGISTER @ BVPOOL.COM
SENSORY-FRIENDLY SWIM
FEATURING LOWER LIGHTING, NO MUSIC, 40 MAX CAPACITY
@ THE BV REGIONAL POOL, 1316 TORONTO ST

MAR 19
3:00 - 5:00 & 6:00 - 8:00 PM
REGISTER @ AUTISMBC.CA
BRACELET MAKE & TAKE
WITH BRAINBOW, SPONSORED BY AUTISM BC
@ THE RANGER PARK BUILDING, 3736 16TH AVE

MAR 20
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
MOVIE NIGHT: 'CHAMPIONS'
WITH THE SHINE TOGETHER PROJECT
@ THE OLD CHURCH, 3704 1ST AVE

MAR 21
12:00 - 1:30 PM
VIDEO VIEW & CHAT
'UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERSITY AS A FAMILY'
@ THE NW CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, 1471 COLUMBIA DR

MAR 23
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
CAT CAFE
WITH THE NW ANIMAL SHELTER, SPONSORED BY BV CREDIT UNION
@ THE RANGER PARK BUILDING, 3736 16TH AVE

BOOKS FOR ALL BRAINS
ON DISPLAY ALL WEEK @ THE SMITHERS PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT EVENTS IN SMITHERS, PLEASE CONTACT
KODU.LISA@GMAIL.COM

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NEURODIVERSITY, GO TO:
WWW.NEURODIVERSITYWEEK.COM



The library will display materials for Neurodiversity Celebration Week March 18-24.

Sandra and the **Library VolunTEENS** put on a **Pyjama Party non-instructional day** program for elementary school-aged children. Thanks to Wetzin'kwa Community Forest for their support.



PJ Party at SPL!

No school today? Slip into your PJs and join us for some fun games and crafts.



Friday, Feb 16
9:30 - 11:00 am

Smithers Public Library

All attendees are encouraged to wear their favourite pyjamas!



Find out more at smithers.bc.libraries.coop



Wendy had the rare (for rural libraries) opportunity to preview hundreds of new and forthcoming **children's picture books** at the Ontario Library Association Conference trade show. The library has ordered \$4200 worth of brand-new books for children and teens and has already received six boxes. The **Bulkley Valley Credit Union** has generously contributed a portion of the cost and we are seeking more funding from the community. Online donations can be made through the Friends of the Smithers Library CanadaHelps account on the library's website <https://smithers.bc.libraries.coop/library-information/donations/>



Reports

The library's annual grant report (PLGR) has been submitted to the province.

Upcoming: Spring Break Activities



SPRING BREAK

AT THE LIBRARY

Read, listen, watch

Babies/Toddlers

March 19 & 26:

Babytime
9:30 a.m.

Ages 0-18 months

Toddler time
10:30 a.m.

Ages 18 -36 months

Preschoolers

March 20 & 27:

Storytime
9:15 a.m.

Ages 3-5 years

Teens

March 19:

VolunTEENS
"Art Therapy"
6 - 8 p.m.

Ages 11 and up!

Families

March 20:

Family & Elder
Storytime*
1 - 3 p.m.

All ages

*Delivered by Métis Nation BC

Community

March 20:

Film Screening*
"Champions"
7 p.m. @ The Old Church

Movie rating: PG-13

*Shine Together Projects Partnership