



#digitalcormier

L C Smith

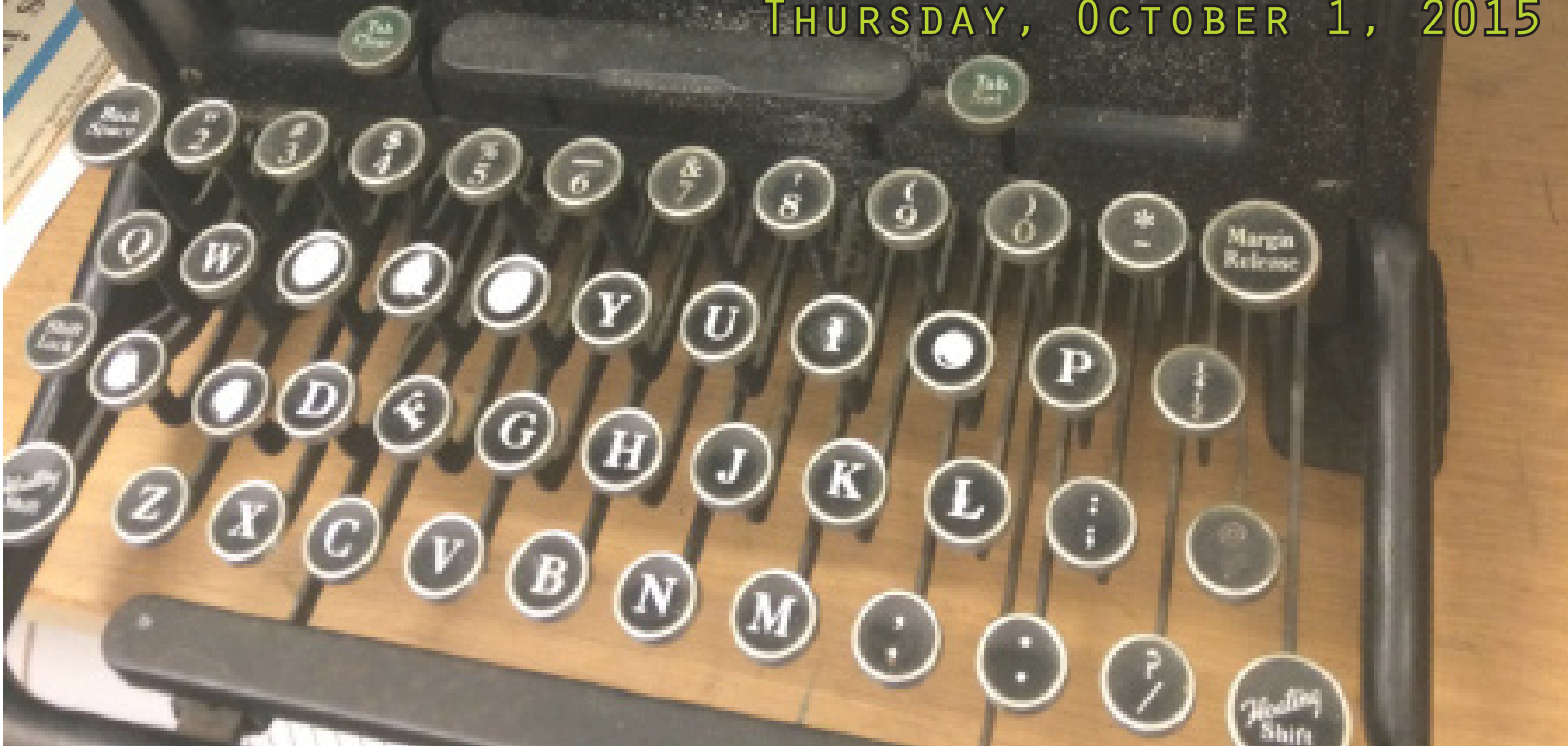
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ROBERT CORMIER: CENSORSHIP AND INTOLERANCE

L C Smith & Corona Typewriters Inc

A SYMPOSIUM AT FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015





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Words from Robert Cormier

“Emotions provide the color, the weather and even the stuff that creates the characters. All the characters in the stories are me before they are anyone else. And they are born out of my emotions, the things that dazzle me. Injure me, and touch me – with out these emotions there would be no novels and no stories to write.”

“The irony of book-banning attempts is that the publicity often causes people to read the books for the wrong reasons. If a book is controversial, perhaps the best place for it is in the classroom where, under the guidance of a teacher, the book can be discussed and evaluated, where each student will be free to proclaim how he or she feels about the book and, in fact, can even refuse to read the book. The point is that free choice must be involved.”

“They tell you to do your own thing but they don’t mean it. They don’t want you to do your thing, not unless it happens to be their thing, too.”

“I cannot apologize for what I have written, however, and don’t even want to attempt to rationalize. It is simply impossible for me to sit at a typewriter and worry about the effect my writing will have on readers. This, to me, would be the death of all creativity.”

Robert Cormier: Censorship and Intolerance

Symposium at Fitchburg State University
Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library and Archive
12:00 - 5:00 EST, Thursday, October 1, 2015

Opening Statements 12:00 – 12:30 EST (11:00-11:30 CST)

Dr. Elise Takehana
Dr. Annamary Consalvo
Dr. Marilyn McCaffrey

Keynote Address: TITLE 12:30 – 1:30 EST (11:30-12:30 CST)

Dr. Katherine Wisser

Archivists face a myriad of challenges in meeting the responsibilities of access to their collections. Access to archival materials is complicated by social, cultural, legal and technological concerns. Additional notions of privacy, security and accountability can create an ethical tap dance that archivists continually practice. Access is complex; archivists navigate this complexity through self reflection, innovation, and a strong commitment to the serious responsibilities imbued in record keeping.

Censorship Panel 1:40-2:40 EST (12:40-1:40 CST)

Dr. Daniel Sarefield — Dr. Laura Baker — Angie Miller — Angela Pitrone

This panel presents historical, cultural, and pedagogical perspectives on censorship from teachers, librarians, and historians. Panelists will address how censorship affects the growth of knowledge and the exercise of freedom. While panelists may not specifically mention the work of Robert Cormier, they will provide points of comparison to Robert Cormier's own views on censorship as a violation to an individual's right to make their own choices, an affront to America's freedom of expression, and worse still, an insult to the perceptiveness and critical aptitude of both the writer and reader.

Founding the Robert E. Cormier Collection 2:50-3:50 EST (1:50-2:50 CST)

Robert Foley — Chris Cormier-Hayes — Asher Jackson — Coco O'Toole Zephir

This panel presents a structured retrospective conversation among founder of Robert Cormier's sizable literary archive housed near the author's home and the geographical location for much of Cormier's fiction. Panelists will address the significance of the conception, creation, administration, and oversight of this large archive from their unique perspective.

"THE SUMMER MY NOVEL GOT BANNED: Covert Homophobia, Social Media, and the Censorship of *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*" 4:00-5:00 EST (3:00-4:00 CST)

emily m. danforth

YA author, emily danforth, will talk on her experience with and response to censorship. Her 2012 novel, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, fell under fire at the Cape Henlopen School District in Lewes, Delaware in 2014.

Virtual Symposium Attendance

A limited number of virtual "seats" will be available for teachers, faculty, and their classes to participate in the Robert Cormier: Censorship and Intolerance Symposium as real-time audience members. Contact aconsalvo@uttyler.edu for more information.

Featured Speakers and Panelists

in order of appearance



Katherine Wisser

Katherine M. Wisser, Assistant Professor at the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, teaches and researches the organization of information, archival description, metadata and the history of libraries. She has an MA in American History from the University of New Hampshire, an MSLS and a Ph.D. in Information Science from UNC-Chapel Hill.



Marilyn McCaffrey

Marilyn McCaffrey, Professor Emerita of English and Guardian Emerita of the Robert Cormier Collection, was instrumental in securing Cormier's papers for FSU. She worked with the author for 25 years, taught a graduate course on Robert Cormier's novels, organized the Cormier Centennial Symposium, and ran an annual campus-wide Celebration of Cormier's Writing.



Angie Miller

Angie Miller, the 2011 NH Teacher of the Year, a TED speaker, and a writer, is a 7-12 librarian in Meredith, NH who has fought censorship in her own classroom. She serves as advocacy chair on the NH School Library Media Specialist Association, supporting censorship issues at the state level.



Angela Pitrone

Angela Pitrone is a secondary English teacher at Belmont High School in New Hampshire, having recently completed a year teaching in the United Arab Emirates at a semi-private STEM school for Emirati nationals. Angela is currently pursuing research regarding the role of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation in academic achievement among adolescents.



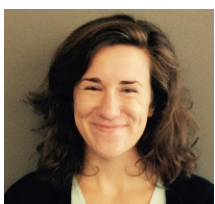
Daniel Sarefield

Daniel Sarefield teaches ancient history and Latin at Fitchburg State. Dr. Sarefield's research revolves around religions, rituals, and books. He has presented at conferences across the U.S. and Europe and published works on the practice of book burning in ancient Rome, on which he is currently completing a scholarly monograph.



Laura Baker

Professor Laura Baker teaches American history and history education courses at Fitchburg State University. She directs the university's Oral History Project, the goal of which is to record and preserve oral histories documenting personal perspectives about the university and communities in the Fitchburg area.



Katherine O'Toole Zephir

Coco Zephir, an Instructional Services Librarian at the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State, provides library instruction and reference services to the university community. She is interested in the role libraries play in the censorship debate as well as the importance of equal and open access to information.

**Asher Jackson**

Asher Jackson is the archivist for the University Archives & Special Collections at the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio library, where the Robert E. Cormier collection is housed. His primary area of professional and scholarly interest is in the preservation and curation of digital materials.

**Robert Foley**

Robert Foley is the retired director of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library of Fitchburg State University. He was responsible for establishing the Archives and Special Collections department with a goal to support the preservation of the records of local authors, organizations, and the University and encourage research by providing classes and online access to the documents.

**Chris Cormier Hayes**

Chris Cormier Hayes is the Coordinator of the Writing Center and an English and Writing instructor at Simmons College in Boston. She likes to explore how graphic novels probe the issues of identity, race, and gender.

**emily m. danforth**

emily m. danforth's debut novel, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, was winner of the 2013 Montana Book Award and a finalist for the William C. Morris Award and a Lambda Literary Award. emily is an Assistant Professor of English-Creative Writing at Rhode Island College and a recent MacDowell Fellow. Her second novel, *Side Talks With Girls*, is forthcoming from HarperCollins.

Exhibit and Symposium Organizers

**Dr. Elise Takehana**

Elise Takehana, Assistant Professor of English Studies, teaches writing at Fitchburg State University. Her research interests include composition and rhetoric, media studies, aesthetics, and 20th and 21st century text production. She is currently researching baroque aesthetics and their application across digital media and print texts. Recent essays by Professor Takehana include "Neo-Baroque Computing: Interface and the Subject-Object Divide" (in *Design, Mediation, and the Posthuman*), "Porous Boundaries in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*: Anticipating a Digital Composition and Subjectivity" (*Cross-Culture Studies*), and "Aesthetic Politics: Models of Reading, Models of Citizenship" (in *Journal of Contemporary Thought*).

**Dr. Annamary Consalvo**

Annamary Consalvo is an Assistant Professor of Literacy at The University of Texas at Tyler where she teaches disciplinary literacy, children's literature, and the teaching of writing. Her work with the Robert E. Cormier Archive began while on the faculty in English Studies at Fitchburg State University (2011-1014). She is currently studying writing conferences; adolescent literacy; and ways in which multiliteracies, both digital and material, inform teaching and learning in the 21st century. Recent papers include: "An Examination of the Construct of Legitimate Peripheral Participation as a Theoretical Framework in Literacy Research" (in *Educational Research Review*); "Keeping the Teacher at Arm's Length: Student Resistance in Writing Conferences in Two High School Classrooms" (in *Journal of Classroom Interaction*); and, "Teachers' Use of Global/World Literature in Secondary English Classrooms" (paper presented at the IFTE/CEE annual conference).

Thanks and Acknowledgements

We extend our thanks to the Cormier family for their gracious collaboration, particularly Bobbie Cormier. This symposium would not be possible without the sponsorship of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library and the Department of English Studies at Fitchburg State University. Sean Goodlett, Interim Director of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library graciously supported the symposium's speakers and assisting with event planning. Asher Jackson and Robert Foley's assistance navigating the archive proved invaluable. Asher Jackson and Coco O'Toole Zephir created the series of library displays in support of this symposium and Lori Steckervetz arranged the screening of Keith Gordon's film *The Chocolate War*. Our thanks to Dr. DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld for arranging Emily Danforth's reading.

Our thanks as well to Mike Makowski, Associate Director of Student Development for his leadership in technology and event logistics. Through a close collaboration with the Robert R. Muntz Library and the School of Education at The University of Texas at Tyler, we were able to make the symposium available virtually. Our special thanks to the Executive Director of the Robert R. Muntz Library, Jeanne Standley and Instructional Designers, Jana Brown and Jason Newland for their generous support and assistance with our virtual symposium. Finally Susan Shelton of the Leominster Public Library arranged a public discussion with Chris Cormier Hayes on *The Chocolate War* and *Beyond the Chocolate War*.

Related Programming

Dear Mr. Cormier - Asher Jackson and Coco Zephir of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library and Archives have created, with archival preparation and artistic direction of Maureen Moisson, four displays featuring material from the Robert Cormier archive collection. Each display accounts for a piece of Cormier's life and art, including: a display on his role in the local community, his deep commitment to engaging with his young readership, his part in censorship debates, as well as his commitment to libraries.

Patrons are also welcome to go on a "blind date with a banned book," to explore why and where classic and contemporary titles are banned or challenged across the United States.

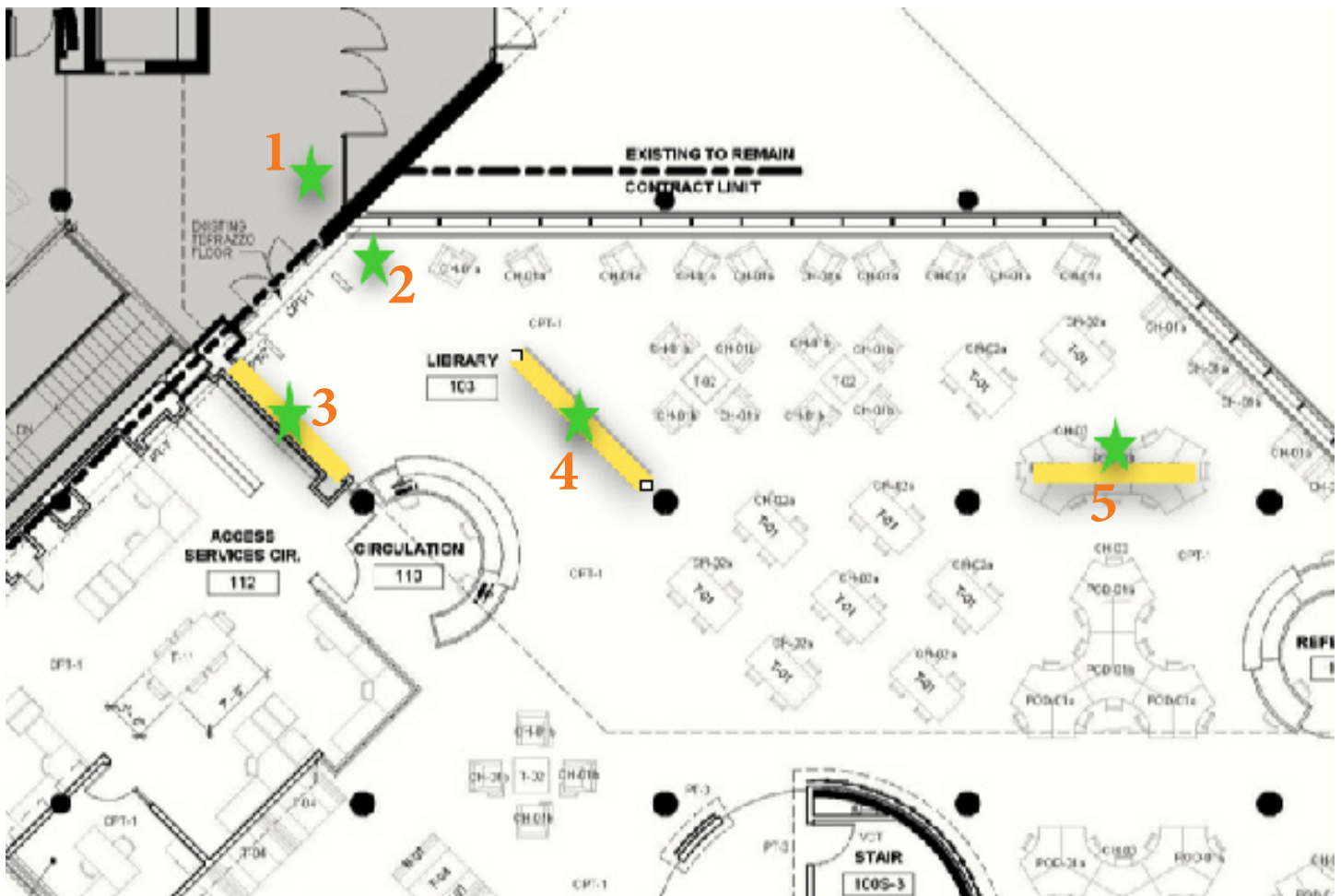
Movie Screening, *The Chocolate War* - Mon., Sept 28th 5:30 pm - The Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library and Archives hosts a screening of Keith Gordon's film adaptation of Robert Cormier's novel, *The Chocolate War*. Dr. Elise Takehana will open the screening with a brief talk on Robert Cormier's response to the film and the narrative significance of the changes Keith Gordon made to the end of his film adaptation. A discussion amongst the audience will follow the screening.

Book Discussion with Chris Cormier Hayes - Sat., Oct. 31st 2:00 pm - You are invited to join in a stimulating and thought-provoking discussion of Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* and *Beyond the Chocolate War* on **Saturday, October 31st at 2:00 p.m.** in the **Leominster Public Library Community Room**. Chris Cormier Hayes, daughter of author, Robert Cormier, will facilitate the discussion. Chris, a writing instructor, is the coordinator of The Writing Center at Simmons College in Boston. She has led numerous book groups all over the state, including several book group sessions here at the Leominster Public Library.

This is a drop-in program and no registration is necessary. Visit or call the library's Reference Desk at 978-534-7522 ext. 3 if you wish to borrow a copy of the books. Funding provided by the Eliane Tonkin Memorial Fund.

Amelie V Galluci-Cirio Library, First Floor

Hammond Building, Fitchburg State University



Map of Robert Cormier and Censorship Displays

- 1 "I have lived many lives"** - A display of Cormier's life behind the typewriter and works born from it.
- 2 "Cormier's Life in Libraries" and "Cormier's Role in Censorship"** - A display of Cormier's commitment to the community and his role in censorship debates
- 3 "The hero doesn't always win: Cormier's Readership"** - A display of Cormier's dedication to his readers.
- 4 Blind Date With a Banned Book** - Check out a book wrapped and marked with the rationale used to censor the book.
- 5 Cormier Digital Exhibit** - The digital exhibit is available to view on this pod of eight desktop computers. They are reserved for your viewing during the symposium. See the back of the program for descriptions of each collection in the digital exhibit.



About the Robert Cormier Digital Exhibit

Drs. Annamary Consalvo and Elise Takehana have assembled novel typescripts, essay drafts, letters, speeches, photographs, student artifacts, and historical news coverage of Robert Cormier's work as it pertains to censorship and the importance of reading in young adults. Particular attention has been paid to his three most often taught novels *The Chocolate War*, *I Am the Cheese*, and *Fade*. The exhibit includes five collections:

Censorship Battles

This collection details Robert Cormier's thoughts on defending his work against censorship and the perspectives of other parties battling censorship attempts. It includes letter exchanges with individuals fighting in censorship battles and those seeking Cormier's advice and assistance. Draft versions of Cormier's essay "A Book Is Not a House" along with his signed statement on the subject of censorship appear here.

Objectors

This collection includes material surrounding the objections brought against Robert Cormier's work and a range of responses to those objections. Included are letter exchanges with readers and parents who took offense to Cormier's books as well as from defenders seeking perspective and advice on approaching Cormier's naysayers. Magazine coverage representing detractors and critics of Cormier are included along with defenses from Cormier and from students who gained from reading his work.

Robert Cormier as a Reader and Writer

This collection features details on Robert Cormier's experiences and feeling on reading and writing including Cormier's letters and loose drafts that address his motives as a writer and the significance of reading and writing to his, and by extension, any child's life. Pieces included here also describe Cormier's hometown of Leominster, Massachusetts and photographs of the area and of Cormier.

Robert Cormier in the Classroom

This collection showcases student writing and teachers' curricular work as it relates to Robert Cormier's novels. Students from middle school to graduate school have interacted with Cormier's work in rich and varied ways, which is represented in this section of the exhibit. Included are letter exchanges with students and classes. Teacher lesson plans and student projects and papers contribute heavily here.

Self-Censorship and Outside Authority

This collection highlights Robert Cormier's the ethical and authorial choices in his work. Often Cormier painted censorship as an exercise of fear and distrust. Artifacts in this section of the exhibit chronicle Cormier's feelings on the writer's and reader's roles and the threat censors play to those roles. Letters with students and teachers, typescripts of some of Cormier's speaking events, magazine and journal articles, and draft material from *The Chocolate War* appear in this collection.



Scan with your smart phone for the Robert Cormier digital exhibit at <https://cormiercensorship.omeka.net/>