

7-12-2009

Patriotism WBCFSL Style: Celebrating Censorship & British Literature on 4th of July Float

Concerned West Bend Citizen

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Recommended Citation

Concerned West Bend Citizen, "Patriotism WBCFSL Style: Celebrating Censorship & British Literature on 4th of July Float" (2009).
West Bend Community Memorial Library (Wisconsin), 2009. Paper 394.
http://dc.uwm.edu/west_bend_library_challenge/394

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Sunday, July 12, 2009

[Patriotism WBCFSL Style: Celebrating Censorship & British Literature on 4th of July Float](#)

Ginny's WBCFSL group entered a float into West Bend's 4th of July parade. Images are available [here](#) and [here](#).

I've been struggling, however, with figuring out how a float pushing a minority group's opinion about how to manage the shelves at the public library fit in a parade that is meant to celebrate patriotism and freedom. Even the [parade's guidelines](#) make clear what is expected of participants: The Fourth of July Family Parade is a community celebration of our nation's independence. Please keep the tone and attitude of your participation positive, upbeat, celebratory and show your patriotism!

I guess the fact that the Preamble of the Constitution was recited, and that the float was red, white, and blue helps meet these expectations, but generally I remain befuddled about how pushing an agenda that is focused on forcing the removal of certain books from some of the library's shelves -- and [replacing library board members](#) who hesitate to do so -- is meant to be "positive, upbeat, celebratory" or otherwise worthy of a float in a parade.

Further, consider the books celebrated by the float and its participants:

- [*Treasure Island*](#)
- [*The Scarlet Pimpernel*](#)
- [*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*](#)
- [*The Indian in the Cupboard*](#)
- [*Saffy's Angel*](#)
- [*Little Women*](#)

Each, save the last one, are notable books from British authors -- hardly appropriate for a parade meant to celebrate America's independence from the Brits.

And it's no surprise that these books tend to celebrate Christian, Puritan or related themes. Sure wouldn't want anything salacious on the float (we'll ignore Louisa May Alcott's other notable book, the passionate [gothic novel, *A Long Fatal Love Chase*](#)).

Happy 4th!