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**Macomb County Author creates Banned Book Awareness Group**

**WARREN, MI- January 23, 2011-** Local author, R. Wolf Baldassarro, has created a national project to bring attention to the importance of reading and the right to the free and open access of information.

The American Library Association holds an annual event called Banned Books Week celebrating "the freedom to read and the importance of the First Amendment." Held during the last week of September, Banned Books Week brings attention to censorship by showing the actual or attempted banning of books across the United States.

According to a recent Detroit News article (1/18/11), Detroit's literacy rate dropped to 56<sup>th</sup> place in 2010. "That simply will not do," Wolf explains. "Now, more than ever, we need to maintain a strong, intellectual citizenship so that Michigan can overcome the economic troubles that have befallen us."

So with that in mind, author R. Wolf Baldassarro came up with the idea of posting each week throughout 2011 the cover of a different book that was challenged, removed, or otherwise shut out and blocked from libraries and schools.

This cause has come to be known as the Banned Books Awareness and Reading for Knowledge project (BBARK). Plans are being made for public events to be held at schools and libraries across the nation to openly discuss these important issues.

He invites readers to discuss and debate the issue and the specific books each week in an open forum through his official blog and Facebook page. "Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an argument an exchange of ignorance," as Robert Quillen once said.

The project name and logo are a play on R. Wolf Baldassarro's name and design for Wolf's Deep Forest Productions company logo; but more importantly, in Native American culture the Wolf's Medicine, or power, is the pathfinder; the teacher; and dogs bark to call attention or as a warning to others. The long-term goal is to also get the community involved by going to schools and libraries and host events in which we encourage reading in general and not make it just about the banned books. In addition, the cause would like to encourage public events at libraries across the nation where everyone can come and read a banned book and celebrate our rich literary history and the freedom to read those works.

To join the discussion, please visit <http://www.deepforestproductions.com/BBARK.html>

**ABOUT AUTHOR**

R. Wolf Baldassarro is a published author, poet, and columnist from Macomb County, Michigan.

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