



September 28, 2015

**Libraries are books and a lot more! Libraries Change Lives**  
*New Exhibit at the State Capitol*

National Banned Books Week is September 27 through October 3. Its goal is to help people remember that libraries are bastions of our freedom to read whatever we want. But while libraries are pillars of this country's truly unique democratic principles, libraries are also much, much more.

When the State Library was granted space on the [first floor of the State Capitol next to the Governor's Office](#) for an exhibit on national [Banned Books Week](#), we chose to showcase libraries rather than spotlight those who considered Mark Twain, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Captain Underpants* to have breached the bounds of propriety. (The exhibit runs through Friday, October 9.)

Libraries are equalizers, opportunity providers, instruments of inclusion. They're the most welcoming place for the most disenfranchised.

Libraries are books, of course, and books are beautiful things. But libraries are also community centers. They teach adults to read, help people get better jobs, connect people to the needle they seek in a worldwide haystack of information. They offer a place for people to invent and create – even publish their own books.

Libraries are afterschool homework havens and summer reading programs. They are pre-kindergarten learning centers.

Libraries help veterans and others in need. You can even check out sewing machines, cake pans, tools, laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots. For those without Internet access – some 25 percent of Californians don't have Internet access at home – libraries are their digital lifeline.

All for free.

Libraries – and librarians – celebrate diversity – something California has more of than any place on earth and any place in history. Diversity fosters acceptance, patience and empathy. Not greater than, not lesser than

but equal to. That's what's at the heart of California's libraries from El Centro to Carson to Cedarville to Concord.

Check it out. Here's an easy way to find the library closest to you. <http://find.library.ca.gov>

– Greg Lucas, State Librarian

**About the State Library:** Founded in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for the Governor's office, legislature, state employees, and the general public. The State Library administers federal and state grants for programs in historical preservation, library construction, civil liberties education, literacy, volunteering, and broadband connectivity in public libraries. For more information, visit [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov).

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