

## pill-poppng and suicide

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An attention-grabbing title, right? It filled that role in the first paragraph of the San Jose newspaper article about the ongoing attempt to ban THE GIVER there. It always troubles me when, in a book challenge situation, things are taken out of context, when for example I am portrayed as endorsing suicide or euthanasia. Of course if one reads the book it is clear that I do not. But in the throes of hysteria, some book-banners don't get around to doing the obvious: i.e. reading the book. ("The author *what?* Promotes teen suicide? Of *course* I'll sign your petition!")

I did a live interview yesterday on a San Francisco radio station and wrote a letter to the San Jose paper, addressing the issue. But as always, I am—most of all—grateful to the librarians and teachers who again and again stand up against censorship. It is sometimes a lonely and scary battle.

My friend and neighbor, author Kathryn Lasky, is currently working on a book set during the book-burning in Germany under Hitler. She has actually hired my 14-year-old German granddaughter as a consultant—not on the history; Kathy is a top-notch researcher—but on the German language: what term of endearment, for example, would a mom use toward her daughter? I remember when Nadine, my granddaughter, was younger and we often called her "Bean"...her mom used to call her "Beanchen" (in the same way that "Gretchen" was originally a fond diminutive of "Margret") And now that very same Beanchen is being a literary consultant (and, Kathy tells me, quite a good one).

I helped Kathy out another time, using my family...and here it is:



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