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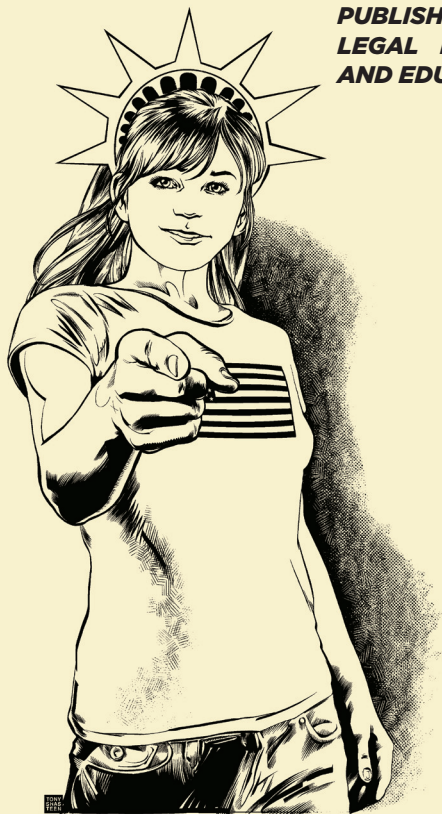


**FREE SPEECH IS WORTH
FIGHTING FOR!**

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PROTECTION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS OF THE COMICS ART FORM AND ITS COMMUNITY OF RETAILERS, CREATORS, PUBLISHERS, LIBRARIANS, AND READERS. CBLDF PROVIDES LEGAL REFERRALS, REPRESENTATION, ADVICE, ASSISTANCE, AND EDUCATION IN FURTHERANCE OF THESE GOALS...



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

IN 2012, THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND TOOK GREAT STRIDES IN PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO READ COMICS. THANKS TO YOU, OUR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS, WE WERE ABLE TO SCORE TREMENDOUS LEGAL VICTORIES AND MAKE HUGE ADVANCES IN OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

FROM COURTROOMS, CLASSROOMS, AND CONVENTIONS TO LIBRARIES AND LAW SCHOOLS, CBLDF'S WORK CONTINUES TO GROW, AND THE FUND IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE INVESTED IN THE FREE EXPRESSION OF THIS AMAZING MEDIUM.

IN THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW, I'M PROUD TO SHARE A SNAPSHOT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU MADE POSSIBLE IN 2012. HERE'S LOOKING AHEAD TO ACCOMPLISHING EVEN MORE IN 2013 AND THE YEARS TO COME!

— CHARLES BROWNSTEIN

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Design by Dan Goldman (www.dangoldman.net)

LEGAL ACTION

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND IS ON THE FRONT LINE IN THE BATTLE AGAINST UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES TO OUR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS. WHEN A COMICS RETAILER, READER, OR CREATOR IS ARRESTED OR INTIMIDATED BY POLICE, WE'RE THE FIRST RESPONDERS. WHEN A LAW IS PASSED THAT CAN HARM COMICS, WE'RE ON THE CASE. HERE ARE SOME RECENT EXAMPLES OF HOW WE'VE PERFORMED THIS IMPORTANT WORK...

EXPERT LEGAL DEFENSE

When a First Amendment emergency becomes a criminal case, CBLDF springs to action. Thanks to our efforts, earlier this year Canadian authorities dropped all criminal charges in the case of Ryan Matheson, an American citizen who was wrongfully accused at the U.S.-Canadian border of importing child pornography on his laptop, when in fact, what he had on his computer was humor and fantasy manga. CBLDF provided substantive support in the form of legal resources and expert witnesses. We also contributed \$30,000 to Ryan's legal fees, and we are currently working to pay off the remaining \$34,000 in legal defense costs.

PREVENTATIVE LEGAL AID

CBLDF is most successful when you don't hear about our work. That's because our powerful legal team works to defuse First Amendment emergencies at the first sign of trouble. This summer, we were successful in ending an investigation involving a comics reader in Idaho who was turned into police by an intimate partner. That partner maliciously alleged that the comics this reader owned were child pornography and obscene. They weren't. Our lawyers asserted that truth and made the case go away before it went to court. CBLDF's expert legal team is available at a moment's notice to respond to First Amendment emergencies like these thanks to the monetary support of our members.

PROGRESSIVE LEGAL EDUCATION

CBLDF is engaged in contributing to Continuing Legal Education seminars to inform lawyers about the First Amendment issues facing comic books. Our most recent seminar was held in partnership with the New York State Bar Association and was called "Is Manga a Crime? Non-photographic Images, Child Pornography, and Freedom of Expression." These seminars help educate the legal community about comics' First Amendment rights and the resources CBLDF deploys to defend them.

PROACTIVE ADVOCACY LITIGATION

CBLDF fights unconstitutional laws before they harm the comics community. This year, we were a plaintiff in a case that successfully knocked out a sweeping electronic censorship law in Utah -- a law that would have placed severe restrictions on Internet content. In *U.S. v. Alvarez*, we were part of an amicus brief that helped influence the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down the unconstitutionally overbroad Stolen Valor Act.

"CBLDF IS A MAJOR FORCE IN FIGHTING CENSORSHIP AND PRESERVING FIRST AMENDMENT LIBERTIES FOR THOSE OF US WHO READ, CREATE, PUBLISH OR SELL COMICS ON PAPER OR ON THE WEB."

— NEIL GAIMAN

LIBRARY SUPPORT

COMICS ARE AN IMPORTANT — AND OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD — FACET OF 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES, WHICH MAKES THEM THE TARGET OF FREQUENT CHALLENGES. CBLDF STANDS UP FOR THE FREEDOM TO READ COMICS WHEN THEY ARE TARGETED...

CHALLENGE ASSISTANCE

When librarians come under attack for shelving comics and graphic novels, CBLDF comes to the rescue. This year, we took action to fight attacks on the graphic novels: *SideScrollers*, by Matthew Loux, in Connecticut; *Neonomicon*, by Alan Moore and Jacen Burrows, in North Carolina; and *Stuck in the Middle*, edited by Ariel Schrag, in Maine. Most recently, we sent a letter in support of a Seattle area library director, commending the library for standing up for the intellectual freedom of its patrons in the face of a media attack against the availability of manga in the library's adult collection. Attempts to ban specific comics titles keep happening, and keeping comics accessible to the public requires constant vigilance.

“AS AMERICANS, WE NEED TO KEEP WORKING TO PROTECT THE FREEDOM WE AND OUR CHILDREN HAVE NOT ONLY TO SAY AND WRITE WHAT WE WANT, BUT ALSO TO READ WHAT WE WANT. CBLDF IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO READ, AND I’M PROUD TO BE A PART OF IT.”

**— JENNIFER L. HOLM,
THREE-TIME NEWBERY MEDAL HONOREE, CO-AUTHOR OF
YOUNG-READER FAVORITES BABYMOUSE AND SQUISH**

BANNED BOOKS WEEK

CBLDF is a sponsor of Banned Books Week, the annual celebration of the freedom to read. CBLDF's website offers a vast resource area that includes information about how and why graphic novels are challenged, alongside tools to help libraries and citizens fight back. We also offer case studies of numerous graphic novel challenges, including classics such as *Maus*, *Watchmen*, *Stuck Rubber Baby*, *Sandman*, and *Bone*, as well as titles within popular franchises such as *Batman*, *Dragon Ball*, and *Spider-Man*. In addition to these substantive resources, we also offer a tool-kit for ways individuals, libraries, and stores can celebrate Banned Books Week in their communities.



KIDS' RIGHT TO READ PROJECT

CBLDF is a partner in the Kids' Right to Read Project, a coalition of organizations that monitors and responds to challenges to books in schools and libraries. As part of KRRP, we provide proactive, substantive assistance to help keep comics in circulation when they are challenged. Our participation in KRRP underscores the core principle that parents have a right to choose what comics are appropriate for their children to read, and that all parents should be afforded that same freedom of choice.

COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

THE MODERN ERA IS BRINGING TO COMICS MORE READERS FROM MORE PLACES THAN EVER, BUT INCREASED READERSHIP ALSO BRINGS NEW THREATS. THAT'S WHY CBLDF IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING A GROWING EDUCATION PROGRAM THAT ELEVATES AWARENESS OF THE RIGHTS THAT THE PEOPLE WHO READ, CIRCULATE, AND MAKE COMICS ARE GUARANTEED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND HOW THOSE RIGHTS ARE ENDANGERED...

ADVISORY PUBLICATIONS

CBLDF offers timely advisory publications for readers, librarians, creators, and retailers to inform them of their First Amendment rights and how to protect them. CBLDF.org's rich library of advisory publications includes: Graphic Novels: Suggestions for Librarians, The Best Defense: CBLDF's Retailer Resource Guide, Criminal Prosecutions of Manga, and several resources for travelers in our Customs section. There's even more to come in 2013!

CENSORSHIP RESOURCES

CBLDF.org's Resources area offers hundreds of pages of information about current and historical comics censorship issues. Our historical resources are designed for students and casual browsers alike, providing in-depth knowledge about banned books, the history of comics censorship, the history of the Comics Code, CBLDF's case history, and cutting edge information about challenges to manga.

"A STELLAR ORGANIZATION." — **CORY DOCTOROW,**
BOINGBOING

NEWS COVERAGE

CBLDF.org is a content-rich website offering a daily news blog on Free Expression issues. The blog covers trends in legislation, litigation, challenges to comics and graphic novels in libraries, international censorship, and other important trends. We also distribute this news through a free weekly newsletter.

LECTURES & EXHIBITIONS

CBLDF educates thousands of people about comics' First Amendment rights each year by maintaining an ambitious calendar of educational lectures and events on current and historical trends in comics censorship. CBLDF presents at comic book and anime conventions, library and book trade conferences, universities, legal education seminars, and symposiums in the United States and around the world. We also exhibit at more than 20 conventions each year, where we distribute educational literature and provide ground-level education to fans, artists, educators, librarians, and retailers about their rights.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

CBLDF regularly gives interviews to TV, radio, and Internet news outlets to advance awareness and understanding of our program work. In the past year, we have been covered by The New York Times, numerous NPR outlets, and ABC's Nightline.

"THE WORK THEY ARE DOING IS AS IMPORTANT AND TIMELY AS EVER, BECAUSE WITH THE GROWING POPULARITY OF GRAPHIC NOVELS, THE ART FORM HAS CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY KNOW BETTER THAN THE REST OF US WHAT WE SHOULD READ."

— **JEFF SMITH,** **CREATOR OF BONE**

MANGA & INTERNATIONAL AID

MANGA IS UNDER ATTACK IN THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONALLY BECAUSE OF MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MEDIUM AND ITS CONTENT. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GENERATION OF YOUNG AMERICANS THAT HAS GROWN UP ON MANGA AND ANIME IS INCREASINGLY AT RISK. CBLDF IS WORKING TO PROTECT THEM...

LEGAL DEFENSE

CBLDF provides substantive and monetary aid when readers of manga are prosecuted. Most recently, we successfully defended Ryan Matheson, an American citizen who was unlawfully arrested by Canada Customs and wrongly charged with importing child pornography for having innocuous manga images on his laptop. Ryan's case cost \$75,000, of which the Fund has paid \$30,000. We are currently fundraising to pay off the remainder of Ryan's legal debt.

ADVISORY PUBLICATIONS

CBLDF has published a variety of advisory publications to apprise readers and librarians of their rights when handling manga. For comics-carrying travelers, we have a full Customs section filled with practical information about how readers can protect themselves at international borders. In 2013, we will publish a comprehensive resource about manga for librarians, educators, and parents, helping them better understand this important art form.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

CBLDF has informed thousands about manga and the rights of its readers with our educational presentations. Our professional audience presentation, "Is Manga A Crime: Criminal Prosecutions of Manga in the United States & Canada," has been attended by audiences of lawyers and scholars in the United States and Japan. We have also delivered the fan audience presentation "The Fight to Protect Manga" with Ryan Matheson at conventions across the United States.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Earlier this year, CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein was invited to Tokyo on a trip sponsored by the Institute of Contents Culture to participate in a symposium and roundtable on manga censorship. While there, he met with members of the Diet and the Democratic Party of Japan in a mutual fact-finding exchange about the status of legal attacks on manga in the United States and Japan. While in Japan, CBLDF also participated in an important exchange with senior legal affairs and marketing officers from the publishing industry about protecting the rights of manga in the United States. The goal of this ongoing exchange is to expand cooperation and resources for protecting manga.

EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITIONS & PUBLICATIONS

CBLDF exhibits at an increasing number of anime and manga conventions, distributing literature and providing information to reader communities about threats to their rights. CBLDF has also published a variety of pamphlets and information sheets that outline how manga is threatened and what readers can do to protect themselves.

"THANK YOU SO MUCH TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED SO MANY PEOPLE OUT THERE THAT WANT TO HELP STAND UP FOR OUR RIGHTS. YOUR DONATIONS REALLY DO HELP A LOT AND I AM REALIZED THAT THE COMICS AND MANGA COMMUNITY IS DEFINITELY



RETAILER SUPPORT

RETAILERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE COMICS BUSINESS, AND FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, CBLDF HAS WORKED TO PROTECT THEIR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT TO SELL THE FULL RANGE OF OUR INDUSTRY'S EXPRESSION. HERE ARE SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES WE ENGAGE IN TO PROTECT THIS VITAL COMMUNITY...

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

CBLDF monitors legislation on an ongoing basis and brings challenges to unconstitutional laws that adversely affect the industry's ability to sell or display comics. In recent years, we have knocked out a wide range of unconstitutional laws that would affect retailers. The most recent case of this nature was *Brown v. EMA*, involving a California law that sought to broaden the definition of speech not protected by the First Amendment to include violent images. Our brief was cited by the United States Supreme Court in declaring the law unconstitutional.

"FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS CHALLENGED ON A DAILY BASIS IN THIS COUNTRY, AND IT'S ONLY THROUGH THE VIGILANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE FUND THAT OUR RIGHTS REMAIN INTACT. IT'S A CONSTANT BATTLE, AND IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US THAT THE FUND IS ON OUR SIDE."

— ERIC STEPHENSON, PUBLISHER OF IMAGE COMICS

ADVISORY PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCE GUIDE

When threats to the retail community emerge, CBLDF creates timely advisory publications to help address them. In response to a news story targeting suggestive and violent content in recent general audience comics, CBLDF published a special advisory for managing media attacks. We also provide an annually-updated Retailer Resource Guide filled with a rich range of informative articles on best practices to aid retailers in protecting and augmenting their businesses.

RETAILER MEMBERSHIP KIT

In partnership with Diamond Comic Distributors and industry sponsors, CBLDF offers a dedicated retailer membership program each year. The retailer member kit includes a variety of branded incentives and substantive tools to assist retailers in protecting their rights. The industry's leading retailers are members of CBLDF and regard our work as essential to protecting the First Amendment rights they depend upon to do business.

"THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND IS AN ORGANIZATION COMPRISED OF GOOD, HARDWORKING PEOPLE WHO WORK TIRELESSLY AND SELFLESSLY TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THOSE THAT HAVE NEITHER THE POWER NOR THE RESOURCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO DEFEND THEMSELVES."

**— ELIZABETH BARRIAL,
PRESIDENT OF BLACK PHOENIX ALCHEMY LAB**

"BUT TO THE CBLDF! IT'S REALLY ENCOURAGING TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE OTHER COMICS AND MANGA. I USED TO FEEL SO ISOLATED AND ALONE BUT NOW I'VE FOUND ONE THAT CARES ABOUT THE THINGS WE LOVE AND IS WILLING TO STAND UP FOR US. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE SUPPORT I'VE RECEIVED SO FAR. THANK YOU!"

— RYAN MATHESON



HOW TO HELP

“THERE IS NO BETTER, MORE RESPECTED ORGANIZATION IN COMICS, NOR IS THERE A BETTER WAY TO BECOMING A MORE ACTIVELY INVOLVED MEMBER OF THE COMICS COMMUNITY THAN JOINING. IT’S A GOOD THING TO DO.”

— TOM SPURGEON, THE COMICS REPORTER

BECOME A MEMBER

Show that you believe in the freedom to read comics by becoming a member of CBLDF. For a membership contribution of as little as \$25 a year, you can be part of the supporter community that ensures we can continue our important work to protect free expression.

VOLUNTEER

CBLDF is a small organization that’s made powerful by the contributions of our volunteers. Whether you’re a student or an enthusiast, CBLDF has volunteer opportunities at our NYC home office and at conventions. If you’re a writer, artist, or designer, we also need your help to create resource articles and publications like this one.

SPREAD THE WORD

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to learn the latest in our efforts to protect comics, and share our work with your network of friends and followers. The more people who know of our work, the better able we are to perform it!

HOST A PRESENTATION OR EXHIBIT

Arrange for one of CBLDF’s presentations to come to your school, conference, convention, or community event. Check them out on www.cbldf.org, and contact us for more information.

HOLD A MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

If you’re a retailer, you can host an event in your store to thank current CBLDF members and recruit new ones. Visit www.cbldf.org and contact us for more information.



DONATE

Visit our website to make a monetary contribution to our important work

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