

⚡ COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND ⚡

DEFENDER

issue four

winter 2015



**INCITING CHANGE:
AN INTERVIEW WITH
FRANK MILLER**

**2015:
THE YEAR IN
CENSORSHIP**

Director's Note

From the murders at *Charlie Hebdo* on January 7 through the barbaric persecution of international political cartoonists and the rising calls for censorship of graphic novels in the United States, the fight for free expression in comics was one of the central news stories of 2015. Thanks to the support of our contributors, CBLDF was at the forefront, fighting back when censorship struck at home and speaking out against violations of free speech abroad. In this issue of *CBLDF Defender*, we look back on this most eventful year.

It's shocking to recognize that while comics are dominating the popular culture, they are also facing more attempts at censorship in more communities in the United States than they have since the moral panic of the 1950s that gave birth to the Comics Code. On page 3, Betsy Gomez examines "The New Crusade Against Comics," and how CBLDF is fighting back. Caitlin McCabe adds some historical perspective on page 12, exploring what happened to comics "After the Comics Code," a cautionary tale of how moral panic specifically hampered the creativity of this vibrant medium.

Schools are the frontline of today's domestic censorship battles. On page 6, Maren Williams discusses "Lone Wolf Censorship," examining a recent spate of cases in which school administrators ignored or overrode review and challenge policies to unilaterally remove books from reading lists and classrooms. On page 4, we investigate how *Captain Underpants*, the most banned book series of 2013, was recently removed from a school book fair in Michigan because of the inclusion of a gay character. We also record the results of our most recent battles on the Censorship Scorecard. Unfortunately, it's not just schools that are restricting free speech. On page 5, learn how CBLDF is bringing suit against an unconstitutional Louisiana age-verification law that poses dangers to the rights of retailers and older minors.

Starting on page 8, "2015: The Year in Censorship" examines many of this year's major censorship battles, and the numerous accomplishments CBLDF made in the service of free expression.

Finally, on page 7, we're proud to present a short conversation with Frank Miller, who changed the face of what's possible for free expression in comics. Frank signed a variety of CBLDF exclusive prints to raise money for our important work, which you can find on page 14, alongside other items available to thank our donors for their support.

Thanks to contributors like you, CBLDF was able to make a difference in the battle for free expression this year. We hope you'll be a part of supporting our efforts as we prepare to continue the fight into 2016 and beyond!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director



STAFF

Charles Brownstein, *Executive Director*
Alex Cox, *Deputy Director*
Samantha Johns, *Development Manager*
Betsy Gomez, *Editorial Director*
Maren Williams, *Contributing Editor*
Caitlin McCabe, *Contributing Editor*
Robert Corn-Revere, *Legal Counsel*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Marder, *President*
Milton Griep, *Vice President*
Jeff Abraham, *Treasurer*
Dale Cendali, *Secretary*
Jennifer L. Holm
Reginald Hudlin
Katherine Keller
Paul Levitz
Christina Merkler
Chris Powell
Jeff Smith

ADVISORY BOARD

Neil Gaiman & Denis Kitchen, *Co-Chairs*
Susan Alston
Matt Groening
Chip Kidd
Jim Lee
Frenchy Lunning
Frank Miller
Louise Nemschoff
Mike Richardson
William Schanes
José Villarrubia
Bob Wayne
Peter Welch

CREDITS

Betsy Gomez, *Designer and Editor*
Charles Brownstein, *Contributor*
Alex Cox, *Contributor*
Caitlin McCabe, *Contributor*
Maren Williams, *Contributor*

Defender logo designed by Brian Wood.
Cover art by Frank Miller.

CBLDF is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law in the year they are given.

©2015 Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and respective authors.

CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members:

James Wood Bailey, Grant Geissman, Philip Harvey, Joseph H. King, and
Midwest Comic Book Association.

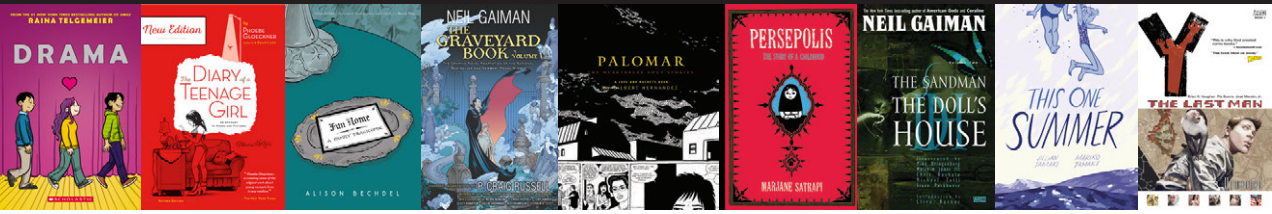
CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!



Corporate Members



THE NEW CRUSADE AGAINST COMICS



Although comics have never been a bigger part of mainstream pop culture, they sustained more censorship attacks in 2015 than at any other time this century. CBLDF was on the case, fighting back by providing expert support to keep comics available for everyone.

Defending Comics on Campus

In June, CBLDF rose to the defense of comics at Crafton Hills College in California. A 20-year-old student and her parents sought to have four graphic novels covered in an elective English class that she had completed in May “eradicated from the system.” Tara Shultz, who is working towards an Associate Degree in English, knew when she began the course in January that it focused on graphic novels but said she “expected Batman and Robin, not pornography.” Shultz contacted her parents, and the family challenged the inclusion of four of the ten books taught by Associate Professor Ryan Bartlett: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel, *Y: The Last Man Vol. 1* by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra, and *The Sandman Vol. 2: The Doll's House* by Neil Gaiman and various artists.

Crafton Hills declined to modify its curriculum based on the family's complaint, but hinted at requiring a disclaimer on the syllabus in the future “so students have a better understanding of the course content.” After CBLDF and members of the National Coalition Against Censorship sent a letter urging against that action, the San Bernardino Community College District ultimately decided not to implement such a requirement for Crafton Hills and its other campus, San Bernardino Valley College.

Shultz's challenge is rare, although similar protests against comics are increasing on college campuses. CBLDF is preparing resources to continue fighting this troubling trend in the new year.

Taking on a Media Attack

Rejecting one parent's complaint that the highly-regarded graphic novel *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez was “child porn,” a district review committee in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, voted to keep the book in a high school library. CBLDF led a coalition that included NCAC in defending the book after it was attacked in a lurid and biased news report from local TV affiliate KOAT, which continued its attack after the decision to keep the book was announced. The win was tempered by news that the parent was going to appeal the review committee's decision to the school board, but school board meeting minutes reveal no further discussion of the challenge.

Although *Palomar* is technically back in the RRHS library, the victory is qualified: A parental signature is now required for anyone under 18 who would like to check out the book. The requirement sets up an access barrier for the vast majority of students based on one parent's complaint. The special treatment for one book—apparently an administrative decision rather than a recommen-

dation of the review committee—also violates the spirit of Rio Rancho Public Schools' Library Bill of Rights and its challenge policy, which say book challenges are to be treated “objectively, unemotionally, and as a routine matter.” Further, a FOIA request revealed that the district initially ignored its challenge policy. Regardless, many free speech advocates treat the decision as a victory because the book was not removed from the library.

Threats to Young Adult Comics

Throughout 2015, CBLDF was confidentially involved in protecting several graphic novels for younger readers from attempted bans. In many cases, we were able to keep the challenges from happening—the best sort of victory!

CBLDF provided tools and resources to librarians who needed assistance defending Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell's graphic novel edition of *The Graveyard Book*, which was challenged for violent imagery. Surprisingly, we also had to protect Raina Telgemeier's kid-friendly bestseller *Drama* from a sexual content challenge that most likely arose because it features gay characters.

After becoming the first graphic novel to earn the Caldecott Honor, Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki's *This One Summer* also became the book that CBLDF had to defend most frequently in 2015. The Caldecott Medal and Honor are given to illustrators whose work is suitable for children up to 14 years of age. An examination of past Caldecott winners and honorees reveals that most of the audience for these books is younger. In the last ten years alone, about 82% of Caldecott winners have been aimed at audiences age 8 and under. As a result, many people have the expectation that Caldecott honorees are meant for the youngest readers.

This One Summer is absolutely eligible and deserving of the Caldecott honor, but problems arose when people ordered the book based on its awards pedigree rather than familiarity with the subject matter and the intended audience. A few people, believing the book is aimed at younger readers, have been shocked to find that the award-winning graphic novel is intended for audiences age 12 and up. Instead of taking responsibility for their lack of familiarity, some of these individuals attacked the book.

More troubling are the challenges that sought to ban *This One Summer* for its intended audience because of its handling of mature themes of coming of age, teen pregnancy, a failed pregnancy, and mature language. CBLDF fought these challenges and many more this year, fulfilling our mission to protect the freedom to read comics!

Michigan Elementary School Bans *Captain Underpants* from Book Fair Over Gay Character

A Michigan school whose motto proudly declares “Preparing Students for the Changing World” acted otherwise with the ban of the newest *Captain Underpants* novel from their recent book fair for its allusion to a gay character.

The Arborwood Elementary School parent-teacher organization decided to ban *Captain Underpants and the Sensational Saga of Sir Stinks-A-Lot* when they were notified that the book contained a gay character—a fact that is only uncovered at the end of the book, when it is noted that Harold, one of the protagonists, grows up to be an artist living with his domestic partner Billy.

Normally parents aren’t given the option to regulate what books should be included in the school’s book fairs, but when organizer Scholastic notified the school that the fair list might contain “a book that may be a little controversial,” administrators in turn notified the parent-teacher organization and allowed the handful of parents involved to determine the fate of the book.

“Most of the kids come in and they buy books and the parents aren’t part of the selection,” commented Monroe Public Schools superintendent Barry Martin to Detroit ABC affiliate WXYZ. “In this case, we felt it was necessary that if this book was going to be purchased, the parent needed to be involved in that.”

Reports seem to indicate that most of the school’s parents were in favor of having the book removed from the fair, but others have pointed out the absurdity of the action. “If you’re in

this world, they should know about that regardless. I mean, [parents] should have that conversation before it’s brought up,” argued parent Kimberly Rose while speaking with Detroit’s Local 4 News.

Although the book has been removed from the book fair, “the school decided we’ll make it available online,” said Martin. “But we won’t make it available in the actual book fair itself.” Martin further noted that he thought that pulling the book from the fair was the appropriate call. “I support the decision of the parent group and the principal for handling [the situation] this way.”

Author Dav Pilkey is no stranger to his series being challenged. *Captain Underpants* has repeatedly been on the American Library Association’s most frequently challenged books list. Pilkey sees these challenges as an opportunity, though, to educate people about the detriment of banning books. In a recent editorial piece he wrote for *The Guardian*, Pilkey reminds parents like those at Arborwood Elementary that:

All that’s required is a simple change. Instead of saying ‘I don’t think children should read this book,’ just add a single word: ‘I don’t think my children should read this book’... When it comes to books, we may not all agree on what makes for a good read—but I hope we can agree that letting children choose their own books is crucial to helping them learn to love reading... While changing ourselves we can still allow everyone the freedoms they deserve.

Caitlin McCabe



CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

CBLDF frequently joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...

Buncombe County, North Carolina

WIN: During a challenge to Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* in Buncombe County, North Carolina, CBLDF joined Kids’ Right to Read to voice concerns about the school district’s policy to pull books from classrooms during challenges. The school board voted to change the policy, allowing teachers continued use of challenged materials until a challenge is decided.

Charleston, South Carolina

LOSS: Based on a complaint from one parent, the principal of West Ashley High School in Charleston, South Carolina, removed Courtney Summers’ *Some Girls Are* from a summer reading list. Although the district’s challenge policy says that the school board should make the final decision, principal Lee Runyon said he pulled the book because “we felt like we needed to try to accommodate the parent’s concerns, which had some validity, and make a common-sense decision.” CBLDF joined KRRP to protest the ban, but the decision was not reversed.

Duval County, Florida

DEVELOPING: CBLDF joined KRRP to defend children’s books *The Librarian of Basra* and *Nasreen’s Secret School* in Duval County, Florida. Both books are set in the Middle East and explore issues of free speech and access to information. Some parents were

concerned that the books will encourage children to engage with Islam, so they demanded the removal of the books. The fate of the books has not been determined, but the school superintendent supported their use, indicating that they likely will be retained.

Leon County, Florida

LOSS: In early August, CBLDF joined KRRP to protest a ban at Lincoln High School in Leon County, Florida, where Principal Allen Burch violated school policy and pulled *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* from the school’s summer reading program. Despite the protest, the school board stood behind Burch’s decision.

Mattoon, Illinois

DEVELOPING: In violation of school policy, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer was abruptly removed from the Mattoon High School Honors English III class due to “several passages that were ‘extremely’ vulgar detailing sexual acts.” It does not appear, however, that the concerned parents were offered an alternative assignment or asked to file a challenge per district policy. CBLDF joined a KRRP-led coalition to protest the removal, but the school has not yet responded.

Rumson, New Jersey

DEVELOPING: In response to calls for the removal of Ariel Dorfman’s play *Death and the Maiden* and Bernard MacLaverty’s novel *Cal* from Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School in Rumson, New Jersey, CBLDF joined KRRP to defend the books. The challenged material will be discussed during a curriculum meeting, but a date for the conversation has not yet been set.

UN Envoy Recommends Japanese Ban of Some Manga and Anime

A UN special envoy on child protection waded into the debate over manga and anime in Japan, urging the country to ban “particular, extreme child pornographic content” even if it does not involve any actual children. In a press conference wrapping up a week-long fact-finding visit on underage sex trafficking, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio acknowledged the difficulty of “finding the right balance” between free expression and child protection, but nevertheless lumped in manga and anime with exploitative images of real children.

Japanese culture expert, translator, and friend of CBLDF Dan Kanemitsu spoke to *The Guardian* for its article on De Boer-Buquicchio’s recommendations:

There is no such thing as manga and anime child pornography. Child pornography entails the involvement of children, and we must confront it for that reason. [De Boer-Buquicchio] meant sexualised depictions of childish looking characters in manga and anime. Many male and female artists in Japan draw characters in an art style that looks childish to Western eyes. Therefore it is a rejection of an art style popular in Japan.

“Death Note” Found in New Hampshire High School Causes Concern

Parents at Nashua High School North in New Hampshire raised concerns in their community and online after the discovery of a “death note” notebook, designed to emulate the book from the immensely popular *Death Note* manga and anime. A student’s notebook contained the names of 17 students along with brief statements about how they wronged the unnamed author and the times and dates that each would die.

Parents were notified about the notebook, but school officials and police believe that the author of the book never intended any harm to the students whose names were written in the book. “At no time did either the police or school feel that any students were in immediate danger,” commented Deputy Chief Michael Carignan in an article for the *New Hampshire Union Leader*. “Please understand that we are well aware of the recent incidents of school violence and take all possible threats very seriously.”

The incident is being handled by investigators and the school. “An investigation was opened and continues. The student and their parents were interviewed and were very cooperative and open about what was going on,” notes Carignan. “It was determined that no criminal threatening, nor any other crimes, were committed.”

Suppressed 1978 Judge Dredd Stories to Be Republished Next Year

Two legendary Judge Dredd stories that were suppressed by their original publisher in 1978 amid concerns about copyright infringement will finally see the light of day after a recent change in U.K. law provided firmer protections for parody and satire. The stories likely would have been perfectly legal under U.S. law, but until last year, U.K. law required publishers of parodies to seek permission from each copyright holder.

The two storylines feature parodies of several marketing icons. In “Burger Wars,” Judge Dredd travels through “a devastated middle America in thrall to the warring Burger Lords, modeled on Ronald McDonald and Burger King’s eponymous monarch, who capture the heroes and force them to live on burgers and shakes.” The second storyline “Soul Food” includes parody versions of the Jolly Green Giant and the Michelin Man.

Find out more about these stories and
get the latest news every day at
www.cbldf.org!

CBLDF FILES SUIT AGAINST LOUISIANA’S ONLINE AGE-VERIFICATION LAW

In November, CBLDF joined a federal lawsuit against a new Louisiana law that requires websites to age-verify every user before providing access to non-obscene material that could be deemed harmful to minors.

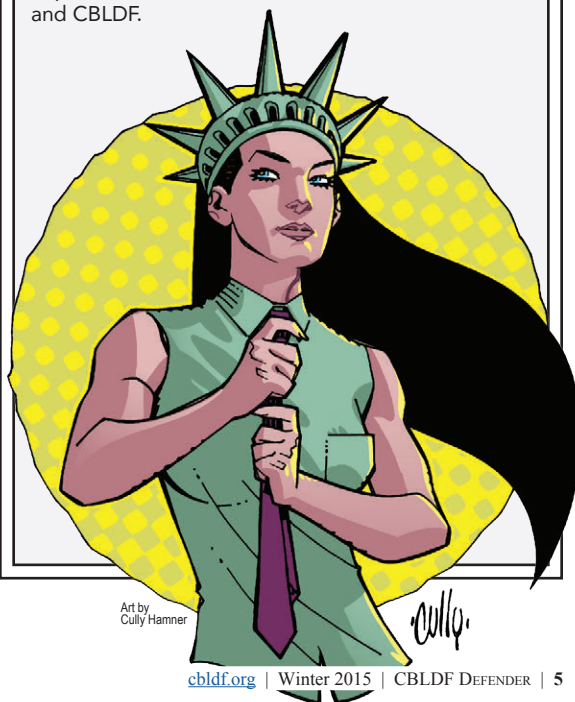
H.B. 153 requires that “any person or entity in Louisiana that publishes material harmful to minors on the Internet shall, prior to permitting access to the material, require any person attempting to access the material to electronically acknowledge and attest that the person seeking to access the material is eighteen years of age or older.” A failure to do so, even if no minor ever tries to access the material, is a crime that could lead to a \$10,000 fine.

To comply with the law, booksellers and magazine publishers must either place an age confirmation button in front of their entire website or review all of the items on their website and place an age confirmation button on each item that might be inappropriate for minors.

“Since we cannot possibly review the one million plus titles on our website, the law would force us to ask every customer visiting our website whether he or she is an adult,” said Britton Trice, owner of Garden District Book Shop. “That would have a strong and chilling effect on our business because it would make us appear to be an adult bookstore.”

The law violates the First Amendment rights of older minors as well as adults. Courts have held that older minors have a right to purchase books that are not appropriate for younger minors. However, the Louisiana law bars anyone under 18 from accessing “harmful” material. If a retailer places an age verification page at the front of a website, it would effectively bar all minors from buying any books.

The lawsuit was brought by Media Coalition and American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of Garden District Book Shop, Octavia Books, Future Crawfish Paper LLC, the American Booksellers Association, and CBLDF.



Art by
Cully Hammer

Lone Wolf Censorship

In 2015, we noticed a disturbing trend: Administrators at schools around the country ignored review and challenge policies to unilaterally remove books from reading lists and classrooms.

Although virtually all public school districts have some sort of policy for dealing with book challenges, all too often those carefully designed plans go out the window as soon as schools are faced with a few angry and vocal parents. Frequently the decision to censor a book without comprehensive review is made by an administrator who has seen the out-of-context snippets that set off the challenge but has not observed how students respond to the book. This disconnect is exemplified by four recent cases in which school administrators unilaterally banned books from their curricula without observing challenge policies.

***Some Girls Are*, West Ashley High School, Charleston, SC**

Based on a complaint from one parent, WAHS principal Lee Runyon removed Courtney Summers' novel *Some Girls Are* as an option on a summer reading list for freshman Honors English in July. Although Charleston County School District's challenge policy says that the school board should make the final decision "based upon careful examination and study of the challenged material," Runyon said he pulled the book because "we felt like we needed to try to accommodate the parent's concerns, which had some validity, and make a common-sense decision."

Before the challenge made its way to Runyon, though, teachers in the WAHS English Department had already responded to the parent's concerns by adding another option to the summer reading list: the 1943 classic *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Even though the parent had alternatives to *Some Girls Are*, she filed a formal challenge to the book, which should have triggered the formation of a review committee. Instead, Runyon pulled it from the list and, in consultation with English teachers, replaced it with Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, a book that explores similar themes and that is also frequently challenged.

In a *Charleston Post and Courier* article, Runyon mentioned "timing" as one reason why he did not follow the challenge policy. This may be a hint that the book fell prey to a phenomenon that was positively epidemic last year, when several school districts across the country failed to follow their challenge policies due to logistical issues with forming a review committee during the summer months. In August CBLDF signed on to a letter from NCAC, urging Runyon to observe district policy.

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Lincoln High School, Tallahassee, FL**

Although Mark Haddon's award-winning novel about a 15-year-old amateur sleuth with autism has received critical acclaim, some parents complained of profanity and "religious skepticism" in the book when it was selected as summer reading. Instead of following Leon County Schools policy, which requires that contested materials be evaluated by a review committee, LHS principal Allen Burch simply canceled the assignment.

While Burch's unilateral action was clearly in violation of district policy, the school board and district-level administrators did not see it that way. Instead, they supported Burch's decision, claiming that summer reading assignments are not really part of the curriculum and therefore do not merit the same protections as books assigned during the school year. In August, CBLDF signed on to a letter from NCAC, demanding that the book be reinstated and the district's review policy be followed.

***Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, Mattoon High School, Mattoon, IL**

Jonathan Safran Foer's novel about a nine-year-old boy dealing with the aftermath of his father's death in the attack on the World Trade Center had been used for several years in Honors English III classes at MHS. But when principal Michele Sinclair received parent complaints about "several passages that were 'extremely' vulgar detailing sexual acts," she abruptly pulled the book from the class in late September, before students had a chance to finish it.

Sinclair claimed that when some parents brought up concerns about the content, "we didn't really feel like we had a lot of alternatives" other than removing the book. It does not appear, however, that those parents were first offered the chance to opt their children out of the assignment or to file a "Uniform Grievance," both of which are laid out in district policy. Moreover, Sinclair also announced a plan to make teachers flag and notify parents of any assigned books judged to have "adult content," which is of course a highly subjective and potentially broad-ranging category. In late October, CBLDF signed on to a letter from NCAC, protesting both the ban of the book and the proposed policy.

***Looking for Alaska*, Lumberton Township Schools, Lumberton, NJ**

In mid-October, superintendent Joe Langowski briefly ordered the removal of all copies of John Green's popular novel from 7th and 8th grade classrooms, where they were available for independent reading. Langowski was responding to one parent's complaint about mature content, and he thought that his action was covered by a district policy giving him the authority to "recommend to the board the removal of [resource] materials." To his credit, Langowski restored *Looking for Alaska* when other parents pointed out the district's challenge policy.

Nevertheless, Langowski still believes that students have access to "reading materials which may be unsuitable for some," and that the district must "develop a system for students to gain access to books with mature themes." Langowski has an ill-conceived plan to form a committee that would review the books in classroom collections. In a local newspaper article Langowski suggested that the committee would classify books as "Acceptable," "Questionable," and "Unacceptable," apparently without reading them in their entirety. The "Unacceptable" books would be removed, and those that are "Questionable" would be restricted to students judged mature enough to handle them.

Maren Williams

INCITING CHANGE

Over the course of a storied career, Frank Miller has redefined comics—and he changed free expression in the process. CBLDF snagged a moment to talk to Miller about how he overcame the Comics Code. By Charles Brownstein

Your earliest work was done under the strictures of the Comics Code. For today's creators, can you describe what kind of restrictions you had to work under, and how that differs from how you work today?

The Comics Code was introduced during the Fifties, a distinctively paranoid time in U.S. history where restrictions were political in nature. Anything sexual or including overt violence was prohibited. Today, I impose strict codes on myself based on the readership I want and my own personal taste.

With Ronin and Dark Knight Returns, and later with Sin City, you fought some of the key battles to change content in commercial comics. What do you regard as some of your critical fights and essential victories that contributed to a broader range of free expression in comics?

First would be when I made an appointment to visit the Comics Code office to have them explain each and every restriction imposed. Then, I went to over DC Comics and spoke to [editor] Jenette Kahn and discussed with her how restrictions were political in nature and based on the assumption that readers were composed entirely of children. She then imposed a rating system on comics which bound us only by common decency and our own personal taste. From then on, I argued to strike down the ratings system. The readership had gotten older and with honesty and advertising and on the cover art, the ratings proved no purpose. Eventually I was able to convince them to remove the ratings altogether and simply make the covers honest. The publishers were eager to go along with the suggestion all the way.

Sin City paid homage to the EC Comics tradition. Bill Gaines is one of our heroes over at CBLDF. Can you share your thoughts on him and EC—how they affected your work, how comics treated them, and what today's creators can take from those comics and the times they were made in?

Bill Gaines is a hero of mine. He fought a heroic battle against the censorship, but he lost. The other publishers put the most popular comic book publisher out of business.

Today there's no Comics Code. In fact, CBLDF now owns the Code Seal of Approval and uses it to fight censorship! Content possibilities in comics are much wider. What are we in danger of taking for granted in this kind of climate? What lessons about censorship and free expression should creators and readers coming into the field today never forget about the fights your generation waged?

First and greatest lesson to be had is that when someone else is censoring, we should use our own good taste and judgment to behave ourselves and to be honest in the cover art and what age the work is intended for.

The End of an Era

Dark Knight III wraps up Miller's epic remastering of the Batman mythos. The CBLDF Retail Member variant of #1 features a cover by Paul Pope.



Frank Miller

(Photo credit: Matt Carr. Courtesy DC Comics.)



2015: The year in CENSORSHIP

2015 proved to be one of CBLDF's busiest years, from defending comics and other books against challenges to reporting on censorship news from around the world. Our year got off to a rough start with the attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris, and it never slowed down as more books—and cartoonists—are under attack than ever...

The *Charlie Hebdo* Attacks

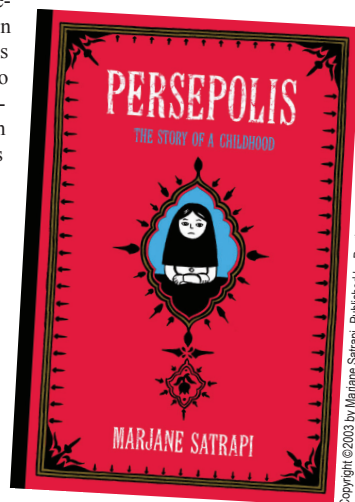
On January 7, 2015, the world looked on in shock as we witnessed the aftermath of a terrorist attack on the offices of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* over its publication of cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed. Twelve people were murdered, including cartoonists Charb, Cabu, Wolinski, Tignous, and Honoré. Outrage over the attack was immediate, as was the support for free expression. Unfortunately, the attacks didn't stop violence or censorship—around the world, there have been additional attacks against cartoonists. Some cartoonists are more reluctant than ever to tackle some of the controversial topics *Charlie Hebdo* covered.

After the attack, the remaining staff members of *Charlie Hebdo* could have closed up shop. Instead, they remained defiant and released a new issue a week after the attacks. The magazine normally has a circulation of 60,000 copies, but anticipating widespread interest, the print run was upped considerably. The January 14 issue sold out an initial print run of three million copies, and an additional two million copies were ordered for release the next day.

The newfound success of the magazine has been bittersweet. The magazine has resumed its regular printing schedule, but the formerly struggling magazine has found itself flush with donations and new subscriptions. Some are concerned that the magazine might lose its satirical voice, and media outlets incorrectly reported that editor Laurent Sourisseau had declared an end to Mohammed cartoons. Further, some staff and cartoonists have departed the publication due to stress.

Grad Student Uncovers Truth About Attempt to Ban *Persepolis* in Chicago Public Schools

A graduate student's research threw new light on Chicago Public Schools officials' 2013 effort to remove Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* from classrooms and libraries throughout the district. News of the ban broke in March 2013, when a local education blogger got hold of an email from the principal of Lane Tech College Prep High School, informing teachers and staff that he had been directed in no uncertain terms to collect all copies of *Persepolis* from the school's library and classrooms.



Copyright ©2003 by Marjane Satrapi. Published by Pantheon.

The move drew immediate protest from students, parents, staff, and free expression advocates, including CBLDF. CPS backpedaled on the ban, and district spokesperson Becky Carroll claimed that “the message got lost in translation, but the bottom line is, we never sent out a directive to ban the book.... We’re not saying remove these from buildings altogether.”

Jarrett Dapier, a student at the University of Illinois' Graduate School of Library & Information Science, obtained dozens of revelatory emails via a FOIA request. The emails tell quite a different story from what CPS claimed publicly. The correspondence reveals that administrators were willing to remove the book from the entire system over a pair of images in the book. One administrator declared “it is imperative that we remove the books from the classroom and from the school, to decrease the likelihood of the books getting into the hands of students.” Only after several emails in which administrators discussed the removal and tried to identify who to blame for the book's inclusion in the educational framework did someone point out that the ban steamrolled the district's library collection development policy.

Interestingly, when ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read Foundation sent a formal FOIA request in



Photo Courtesy of Dylan Horrocks

2013, they “only received the directives and letters that had already been publicly disclosed, and a copy of the agenda for the chief of schools meeting on March 11,” none of which helped explain the ban or whether CPS administrators were aware of their own policy on removing books from libraries. We may never know why CPS withheld the administrative emails then, but we’re certainly glad Dapier kept digging!

Ecuadorian Cartoonist Fined for Mocking Assemblyman

In February, political cartoonist Xavier Bonilla, known as Bonil, was charged with socioeconomic discrimination in his home country of Ecuador for a controversial cartoon mocking Afro-Ecuadorian legislative assemblyman, Agustin “Tin” Delgado.

Although the Ecuadorian government boasted the adoption of a more democratic approach to free speech with the passing of a 2013 law designed to overcome corruption, racism, and sexism in Ecuador’s media, the reality has been anything but free. The intent of the law was to ensure that journalists and editorial staff adhere to a higher standard of content without interfering with open and free reporting on events. Unfortunately, the new law grants a governmental agency called SUPERCOR the power to review media outlets and fine, prosecute, and censor them for any materials that the agency deems racist, classist, sexist, or anti-government. Bonil was not only asked by SUPERCOR to publicly apologize for his cartoon—a request with which Bonil complied—but he was also fined \$500,000.

The Ecuadorian government wasn’t the only group to attack Bonil. According to Fundamedio, a free speech advocacy group in Ecuador, *El Universo*, the newspaper that prints Bonil’s work, received a written statement from an alleged member of ISIS that threatened Bonil and the paper.

Three Graphic Novels Included on ALA’s Annual Most Challenged List

Graphic novels made a big splash in this year, including first-ever Caldecott and Newbery honors. But they also made their way into one of the places we hate to see them most: ALA’s 2014 Top Ten List of Frequently Challenged Books. When the American Library Association released the 2015 “State of America’s Libraries Report,” three acclaimed graphic novels were on the list: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Saga* by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples, and *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier.

Persepolis came in at #2 on the list based in large part on three challenges. In the first, a parent in Oregon’s Three Rivers School District demanded the book’s removal from high school libraries because of “coarse language and scenes of torture.” Less than a week after the Oregon challenge, *Persepolis* was targeted again in central Illinois’ Ball-Chatham School District, where parent Mike Housewirth “questioned why a book about Muslims was assigned on September 11.” The third *Persepolis* challenge took place in Smithville, Texas, where the book was part of an innovative community discussion series called “Let’s Talk About It: Muslim Journeys—Points of View.” Students in Smithville High School’s World Geography class read excerpts from *Persepolis* and another book, *In the Country of Men*, but were not required to attend the Muslim Journeys events that were held outside of school hours. Some parents and community members were displeased with this cross-cultural engagement, and parent Charles King filed a formal challenge to both *Persepolis* and *In the Country of Men*. Fortunately, all three challenges ultimately failed.

Saga earned the #6 spot on ALA’s list, but little was publicly reported about the challenges to the series. CBLDF did determine that the series was challenged somewhere in Oregon by a public library patron who said the series was anti-family and sexually explicit due to nudity and offensive language. In response to the challenge, the unknown library chose to keep the series in its collection without restriction.

In 2015, CBLDF defended significantly more books than we did in 2014. This year, we took action to protect the following titles:

- *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (Waterloo, Iowa)
- *Cal* by Bernard MacLaverty (Rumson, New Jersey)
- *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (Leon County, Florida)
- *Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman (Rumson, New Jersey)
- *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Phoebe Gloeckner (undisclosed)
- *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier (undisclosed)
- *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History* (Charlotte County, Florida)
- *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer (Mattoon, Illinois)
- *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel (Crafton Hills College, California)
- *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell (undisclosed)
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (Buncombe County, North Carolina)
- *The Librarian of Basra* by Jeanette Winter (Duval County, Florida)
- *My Princess Boy* by Cheryl Kilodavis and Suzanne DeSimone (Hood County, Texas)
- *Nasreen’s Secret School* by Jeanette Winter (Duval County, Florida)
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (Coeur d’Alene, Idaho)
- *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez (Rio Rancho, New Mexico)
- *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Wallingford, Connecticut)
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (Crafton Hills College, California)
- *The Sandman Vol. 2: The Doll’s House* by Neil Gaiman and various artists (Crafton Hills College, California)
- *Some Girls Are* by Courtney Summers (Charleston, South Carolina)
- *This Day In June* by Gayle E. Pitman and Kristyna Litten (Hood County, Texas)
- *This One Summer* by Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki (undisclosed)
- *World History: Connections to Today* (Charlotte County, Florida)
- *Y: The Last Man Vol. 1* by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra (Crafton Hills College, California)

The ban that landed *Drama* in the #10 spot on ALA’s list was also in Texas, at Chapel Hill Elementary in Mount Pleasant. The ban was not covered by the media, so details are thin. The book was challenged for “sexually explicit” content—most likely because it features gay characters—and was removed from the elementary school library (it remains in the district’s joint junior high/high school library). A formal challenge procedure is not listed in school board policies, but there does appear to be a review process because there is a document containing a challenge form, as well as an assessment form for a review committee. What we don’t know is whether the district actually followed that procedure, but it seems unlikely that even a majority of a review committee would objectively agree that *Drama* is “pervasively vulgar.” (cont.)



Jailed Iranian cartoonist Atena Farghadani



Iranian Cartoonist Jailed for 13 Years

In June, Iranian cartoonist and women's rights activist Atena Farghadani was sentenced to 12 years and 9 months in prison for "insulting members of parliament through paintings." She was prosecuted for a caricature of Iranian politicians that depicted them as apes and bovines, a depiction that conveys the idea that parliament is made up of empty-headed leaders and mindless followers.

Farghadani's cartoon was in response to parliament's discussion of a bill that would ban voluntary sterilization procedures, such as vasectomies and tubal ligations, in an effort to reverse Iran's falling birthrate. She was initially jailed and released to await trial late last year, but she was re-imprisoned when she posted a video on YouTube that described beatings, strip searches, and threats from guards. Upon returning to prison in January, Farghadani went on a hunger strike to protest poor conditions, suffering a heart attack after three weeks.

Farghadani's case is currently under appeal, but it has been further complicated by additional charges against Farghadani and her lawyer, Mohammad Moghimi, both of whom have been charged with "illegitimate relations" over a handshake. Contact between unrelated members of the opposite sex is technically illegal in Iran, but it is rarely prosecuted. Farghadani was forced to undergo virginity and pregnancy tests in August, purportedly as part of the investigation. Such tests are recognized by the World Health Organization as a form of sexual violence intended to intimidate and silence victims. Both parties could receive sentences of 99 lashes if convicted, and Farghadani's prison term could be extended.

Cartoonists around the world have rallied to Farghadani's cause, and in September, Farghadani was honored with the Cartoonists Rights Network International Courage in Editorial Cartooning Award *in absentia*.

Fun Home Ignites Debate at Duke

As the class of 2019 began their first semester at Duke University, campus newspaper *The Chronicle* checked in with students about the choice of Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* for the summer reading program. A discussion has been ongoing at least since late July, when incoming freshman Brian Grasso posted in a Facebook group for members of the class of 2019 that he would not be reading *Fun Home* "because of the graphic visual depictions of sexuality." Grasso added that he feels "I would have to compromise my personal Christian moral beliefs to read it."

Others agreed with Grasso, particularly in regards to the few images of nudity and sexual activity contained in the book. Student Jeffrey Wubbenhorst said in an email to *The Chronicle* that he might not object to a prose novel with the same content, but "the nature of *Fun Home* means that content that I might have consented to read in print now violates my conscience due to its pornographic nature."

Grasso's post touched off a lively debate (unfortunately not viewable to non-members of the private Facebook group) about "big issues" like morals, sexuality, literary value, and living in a diverse society. Several incoming freshman posted in support of *Fun Home*, including Marivi Howell-Arza, who said it could "allow you to open your mind to a new perspective and examine a way of life and thinking with which you are unfamiliar."

Malaysian Cartoonist Faces 43 Years in Prison for Sedition

After months of delay, Malaysian cartoonist Zunar will finally get his day in court as he faces nine counts of sedition that could bring up to 43 years in prison. Zunar's trial was postponed three times due to a constitutional challenge to the country's antiquated Sedition Act, the law under which Zunar is being prosecuted.

The Sedition Act was instituted by British colonial rulers in 1948, nine years before Malaysia became independent. Last year, the Act was challenged by Azmi Sharom, a law professor also charged with sedition, who argued it should be invalid since it pre-dates independence and Malaysia's constitution. A five-judge Federal Court panel ruled that the law will remain in force even though it contradicts free speech protections found in the constitution.

Unsurprisingly, Zunar's reaction to the ruling was biting:

The courts are emboldening the government to use the Sedition Act against critics. There is no more hope for justice through the courts....This further constrains the already limited freedom of speech and expression in Malaysia. We're speeding in reverse.

The sedition charges stem from statements that Zunar made on Twitter in February following the sentencing of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim on a trumped-up sodomy charge. The cartoonist hinted that the judiciary in that trial had been subject to political pressure or bribery, observing that "the lackeys in black robes are proud of their sentences. The reward from political masters must be plenty." He then exchanged Twitter barbs—and a cartoon—with Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar as officers were en route to arrest him.

Zunar has endured ongoing harassment and censorship for years, and his staff, printers, booksellers, and customers have been targeted by the government. As he stares down sedition charges, Zunar is also facing renewed persecution from authorities, who questioned Zunar's online sales assistant about distribution of the cartoonist's latest book, *Sapuman: Man of Steal*, which criticizes Prime Minister Najib Razak. Although many of Zunar's 18 cartoon collections are officially banned, the government has not yet declared any restrictions on *Sapuman*.



The fight for free expression may have been difficult this year, but CBLDF accomplished a lot in 2015:

- CBLDF successfully defended dozens of books and publications against censorship! Among those books were nine graphic novels that our work helped keep in classrooms and libraries. We also provided legal support and referral in a variety of cases affecting our constituents.
- We launched this very magazine, **CBLDF Defender**. A free quarterly news magazine coming to you from the front lines of the fight for free speech, *CBLDF Defender* brings engaging creator interviews, analysis of current censorship news, and in-depth features about the people fighting for the freedom to read!
- CBLDF welcomed **Reginald Hudlin** and **Christina Merkler** to its Board of Directors. Hudlin is an innovative force in modern Black entertainment, having written or directed films such as *House Party*, *Boomerang*, and *BeBe's Kids*, as well as producing Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, for which he received a Best Picture nomination. Merkler is the co-owner of DCBS, a CBLDF Corporate Member and one of the largest and most influential comics retailers in the United States.
- CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein took CBLDF's mission overseas again, this time to **Norway**, where he discussed the impact of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, global trends in comics censorship, and why the comics medium remains so singularly powerful—and dangerous—in 2015.
- CBLDF and Diamond Comic Distributors partnered with Every Child a Reader and the Children's Book Council to bring greater focus to what comics offer kids during **Children's Book Week**. This year, Free Comic Book Day kicked off the week-long celebration of children's books!
- CBLDF launched **CBLDF Comics Connector**, a free directory resource that connects educators and librarians with comics professionals who are able visit classrooms and libraries. (Visit <http://tinyurl.com/nn6dvbe> for more information.)
- CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein was elected to a two-year term on the **Freedom to Read Foundation's Board of Trustees**. FTRF "protects and defends the First Amendment to the Constitution and supports the right of libraries to collect—and individuals to access—information." In the past, CBLDF has partnered with FTRF on amicus briefs and other projects and programs to help defend the freedom to read.
- CBLDF released the **Comic Book Club Handbook**, which provides all the tools anyone would need to start a graphic novel book club. This publication is the latest in the ongoing educational collaboration between Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and Comic-Con International, who co-produced the handbook with the assistance of Erwin Magbanua of the San Diego Public Library.
- This year, **Banned Books Week** celebrated Young Adult books, and CBLDF continued our sponsorship of the annual celebration of the right to read. We released the latest edition of the **CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook**, featuring a cover by comics superstar Raina Telgemeier, and an assortment of free resources for librarians, educators, and retailers!
- CBLDF launched its inaugural writing contest, the **CBLDF Writing Competition for Excellence in Comic Book Scholarship**, which is directed to current students at any U.S. law school and seeks writings about comic books and the comic book industry. (For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/nsdwjcg>)
- CBLDF released the latest—and greatest—edition of **CBLDF Liberty Annual**. A love letter to a long-lost style of humor magazine, the 2015 issue is raunchy, ridiculous, absurd, and very funny! (You can get yours here: <http://tinyurl.com/oohhxu9>)





AFTER THE COMICS CODE

In 1954, the Comics Magazine Association of America established the CCA—a group comprised of school officials, volunteer citizens, and publishers—as a last ditch effort to save an industry that had come under the vicious attack of parental organizations, child psychologists, and even the United States government for content many adults believed to be rotting the minds of America's youth, converting them from upstanding citizens to emotionally maladjusted delinquents. From horror and crime to superheroes and romance, comics were maligned in magazine and newspaper articles, television broadcast specials, and "scientific" case studies and symposiums in a nationwide battle to save and protect America's children from what the U.S. Senate called "extremely cruel," "sadistic," and "lurid" publications.

The conclusion many reached after the hearing was that regulation of the industry and its content needed to occur, which led to the adoption of the Comics Code Authority on October 26, 1954. The authority was responsible for screening and requesting editorial changes to any comics that were destined for the newsstand. No retailer would dare put a comic on their racks unless they had the literal Seal of Approval of the CCA. In one of the largest instances of mandated censorship, comics were literally “legislate[d]... off the newsstands and out of the candy stores,” writes pop culture historian David Hajdu in his book *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic Book Scare and How It Changed America*.

Whereas some genres, like funny animals, illustrated adaptations of classic literature, and other children-oriented books, would leave the aftermath of the hearing virtually unscathed for their “wholesome” content, others were not so lucky.

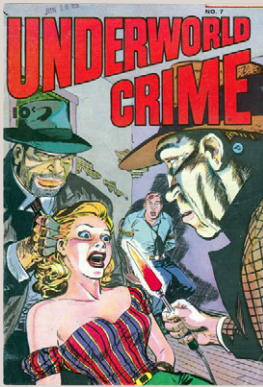
No comics genre was more targeted by the Comics Code than horror. From the in-house artists at EC to legendary creators like Steve Ditko, Jack Kirby, and Joe Simon, everyone worked on horror comics at the time the Code was implemented.

“The horror comics were our favorites,” writes popular children’s author R.L. Stine in the introduction to Jim Trombetta’s *The Horror! The Horror! Comic Books the Government Didn’t Want You to Read*. “The art was amazing. The stories were ghastly and gruesome. They were written with something new to us: a wonderful combination of humor and horror.”

After the implementation of the Code, though, which prohibited the inclusion of words like “horror” or “terror” in the titles of comics as well the depiction of evil as something “alluring,” the genre all but disappeared for decades.

Crime

Before the Code, any publisher worth their salt had a crime comic (or several). The covers of these books frequently declared that they told true stories and covered subjects from gangsters to serial killers. Each publisher tried to outdo the other, with over-the-top depictions of murder and mayhem, but this game of one-upmanship landed the genre in hot water with the CCA and led to the whole first section of the Comics Code—General Standards, Part A—being dedicated to the elimination of the glorification of crime and the “disrespectful” representation of police and judicial authorities.



Underworld Crime #7 (1953)
Fawcett Publications, Inc.

Romance

In order to reach the audience of girls and young women reading comics, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby of *Captain America* fame created what is credited as one of the first romance comics in 1947—*Young Romance*. Capitalizing on what were considered “real-life” stories of young American women, the genre quickly gained popularity and spawned whole other teen-oriented genres.



Young Romance #1 (1947)
Prize Comics

when it came to depicting the sanctity of marriage in a negative light. The Code set standards that called for the removal of any romance comic that “devalued” the home and/or would “stimulate the lower and baser emotions.”

Superheroes

Superhero comics fared better than most genres under the Comics Code, but they became pale shadows of their pre-Code iteration, suitable for only the youngest and most naive readers. Superhero comics were perceived as juvenile fantasies that distorted the minds of children. “One of the wonderfully appealing things about children is that they haven’t come to the age where reality and unreality are divorced,” declared news reporter Paul Coates in his 1955 television expose on comics, *Confidential File*. “The emotional impact of something they read in a comic-book may be much the same as a real-life situation they witness.” The allegation that comics and superheroes could distort children’s perceptions of reality led to stricter enforcement of the Code on this genre. CBLDF contributor Joe Sergi described the impact:

A lot of times, the changes were insignificant to the content of the story and comic creators creatively found ways around the Code. However... a lot of the time the stories had to be changed to the point where a) they didn't make sense or b) they just weren't as good. In all cases, the creator's original vision was changed. That's a shame.

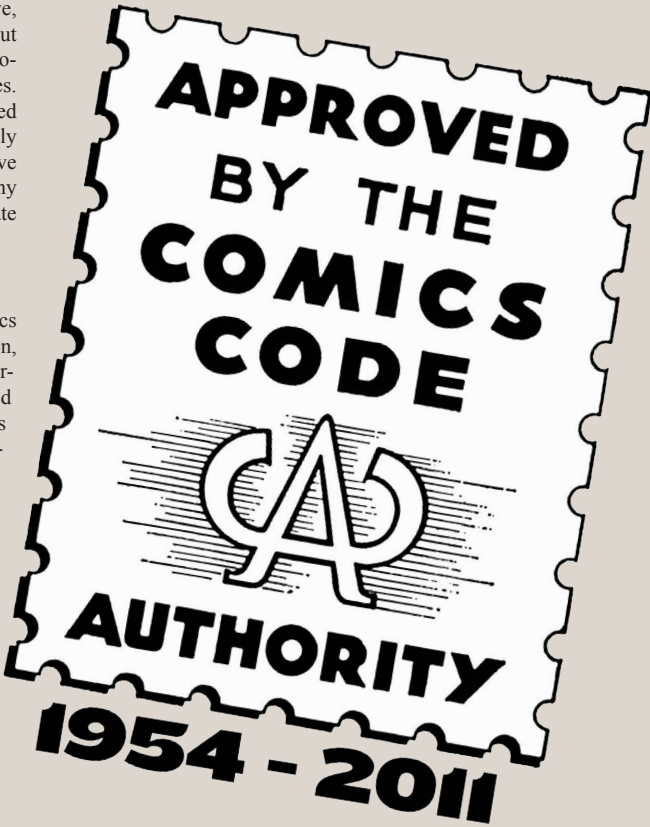
Where We Are Today

In 2011, the Comic Magazine Association of America officially dissolved when the last two holdouts—Archie Comics and DC Comics—decided to stop using the Seal. As publishers stopped heeding the Comics Code in the years leading up to its official dissolution, comics genres that had been suppressed and censored for decades were able to again grow and flourish.

Some genres, like romance, have seen little resurgence. But other genres have thrived, notably the superhero genre, which continues to be a dominant genre in comics. Superhero comics diversified as the Code crumbled, featuring more sophisticated story lines and nuanced characterization that reflect societal changes and issues. Comics such as Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ *Watchmen* and Frank Miller’s *The Dark Knight Returns* deconstructed the superhero genre, drawing attention from audiences that previously weren’t as invested in comics, such as librarians and educators.

Horror and crime comics have also seen greater returns with the dissolution of the Code, whether it be Vertigo’s *Hellblazer* and *The Sandman*, Dark Horse’s *Hellboy* and *BPRD*, Marvel’s *Ghost Rider*, and Image’s *The Walking Dead*, all of which have found popularity beyond the comics format. Books like Frank Miller’s *Sin City* (Dark Horse) and Matt Wagner’s *Grendel* (Image) opened a door for contemporary crime comics, and creators like Ed Brubaker, Brian Azzarello, and John Wagner have all found success revitalizing the crime genre from its bland post-Code depictions of police officers doing their job to gritty investigative procedurals and psychological thrillers.

With the end of the most regulated era in comics history, the CMAA donated the official Comics Code Seal of Approval to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, and the symbol that once stood for the censorship became one that is now used to defend the right to free speech. Although the decades of censorship under the Comics Code still loom over the comics industry, we see its influence dissolve more and more with each new comic published. Despite the Code’s legacy, we can still celebrate what it helped teach us about the value of free speech. Hopefully, it will take far less than another 61 years to see its effect pass away entirely!



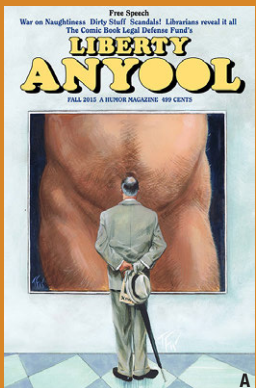
FUNDRAISING

Now Available



The Sandman Overture: Deluxe Edition

Twenty-five years since *The Sandman* first changed the landscape of modern comics, Neil Gaiman's legendary series is back in a deluxe edition! Gaiman and J.H. Williams have both signed this special edition on an exclusive oversized bookplate, featuring art by Williams! Limited to 300 signed and numbered copies, this extraordinary CBLDF exclusive is the ultimate holiday gift for any comics fan! (\$40 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/p5cnp7ey>)

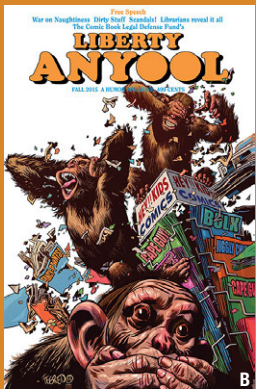


CBLDF Liberty Annual 2015

Art and story: Various

Cover A: Tom Fowler
Cover B: Duncan Fegredo
Cover C: Vanesa R. Del Rey

Painted satire! Off-color parody! Bawdy laffs! Relive the days when adult humor magazines ruled the newsstand with the 2015 CBLDF Liberty Annual! It's raunchy, ridiculous, absurd, and very funny! This 48-page monster benefits the free speech work of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund! (\$5 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/ooohxu9>)



REWARDS ZONE SPOTLIGHT

The first volume of *Sin City*, the crime comic megahit that introduced the now infamous Marv and spawned a blockbuster film, returns in a newly redesigned edition, with a brand-new cover by Frank Miller—some of his first comics art in years! Signed by visionary creator Miller! (\$30 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/nrk4735>)



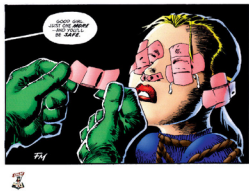
For Defender Readers



If you enjoyed this issue of CBLDF *Defender*, check out these premiums, available at special donation levels exclusively for you! Your support makes CBLDF *Defender* possible!

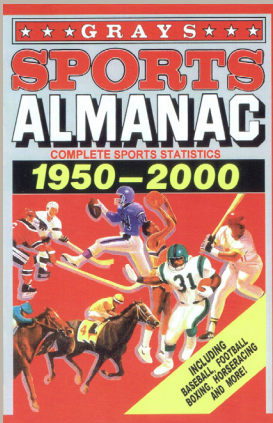
Lone Wolf and Cub 1987 Promotional Poster

Promotional advertisement for the 1987 American release of the classic manga by Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima, featuring covers by Frank Miller. This 11" poster is signed by Miller. (\$25 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/nlh6fmh>)



Frank Miller's "Just One More" Print

A classic image, created exclusively for CBLDF by comics legend Frank Miller. This 8.5" x 12" print is signed by Miller. (\$50 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/nsxwy5w>)



Frank Miller's "Miho" Print

This striking black, red, and white 8" x 10" print features fan favorite character Miho from *Sin City*. Signed by Frank Miller! (\$50 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/npe33g5>)



Spider-Man 2099 Diamond UK Exclusive

With a job at Parker Industries, a stable relationship, and uncertain of what impact his actions will have on the future, Miguel O'Hara has decided that it's time to hang up the web and retire from being Spider-Man. But when a dangerous new threat appears, he's got no choice but to don some new threads and tackle the problem the only way he knows how: head on!

This cover is a Diamond UK Previews exclusive variant, and comes signed by cover and series artist Will Sliney! (\$15 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/nvf9d7n>)



RADIO FREE COMIX!

CBLDF is now part of the audio-sphere! A mix of interviews, discussions about censorship, convention panel recordings, and archival materials, the CBLDF Podcast is a monthly event, from our keyboards to your ears. The CBLDF Podcast is made possible in part by a donation from the Gaiman Foundation and member support.

Listen at <http://cbldf.org/podcast/>

JOIN THE FIGHT!

Joining the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund puts you on the front lines of the fight against censorship! When you join CBLDF, we'll thank you with the best incentives and benefits in the free speech community, starting off with a stunning membership card by cartoonist Michael Cho! We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

- **Member (\$100):** CBLDF membership card, a button set, a sticker set, an embroidered patch, and an exclusive member-only t-shirt featuring Michael Cho's gorgeous art!
- **Associate Member (\$30):** CBLDF membership card and a CBLDF bumper sticker!
- **Supporter Member (\$50):** CBLDF membership card plus a button set, a sticker set, and an embroidered member patch!
- **Defender Member (\$250):** All of the above, plus a subscription to *CBLDF Defender*, a coffee mug, and a canvas tote bag!
- **Protector Member (\$500):** All of the above, plus an exclusive embossed executive Moleskine journal and a gym bag!
- **Champion Member (\$1,000):** All of the above, plus recognition in the next *CBLDF Liberty Annual* and a CBLDF publication assortment that includes variant covers and assorted printed matter!
- **Guardian Member (\$2,500):** All of the above, plus special recognition in CBLDF publications throughout 2015!

Use the signup form on the back cover of this magazine or visit <http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships> to join today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 29, 2016: Writing Competition for Excellence in Comic Book Scholarship Deadline

- CBLDF's inaugural writing contest for current students at any U.S. law school, entrants should submit original work about comic books and the comic book industry. The winner will receive a \$500 cash prize and a complimentary annual membership to CBLDF as well as have a chance to participate in a CBLDF presentation at the 2016 Comic-Con International!
- <http://tinyurl.com/nsdwjcg>

March 18–20, 2016: C2E2

- <http://www.c2e2.com/>

March 25–27: Wonder-Con Los Angeles

- <http://www.comic-con.org/wca>

Schedule subject to change. Visit cbldf.org for updates.



Art by Michael Cho





Compliments of:

**Comic Book Legal
Defense Fund**

255 West 36th Street, Suite 501

New York, New York 10018

www.cbldf.org

info@cbldf.org

1-800-99-CBLDF

FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO READ — JOIN CBLDF TODAY!

CBLDF's important work defending the freedom to read is only possible because of the support of individuals like you. Show your support for our work protecting the freedom to read by making a tax-deductible membership contribution today! We have membership plans for donors in every budget! *(For descriptions of the membership incentives for each level, turn to the inside back cover.)*

Contact Information

Name

Address

City / State / Zip

Email

Membership Level

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Protector Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Associate Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Champion Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Guardian Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Defender Member | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm already a member, but I'd like to make an additional donation of \$_____ | |

Members joining at the \$100 level and higher will receive a 2015 CBLDF shirt, with art by Michael Cho! T-shirt size **(circle one)**: **S** **M** **L** **XL** **XXL**

- ☐ Please send no premiums.

CBLDF Defender Quarterly Newsletter Subscription

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 for Nonmembers | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 for Members |
|--|--|

Payment Information

- ☐ **Online** (Visit us at <http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships>)
- ☐ **By check** (Please make checks payable to CBLDF.)
- ☐ **By credit card** (Please complete the following.)

Card Number

Exp.

CVV

Type of Card

Signature

Thank you for your support!

CBLDF is recognized by the IRS as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 institution and donations are tax-deductible in the year in which they are given. Please contact us for information on deductible amounts for CBLDF premiums, and consult your tax advisor as to the extent to which your donation is tax deductible.