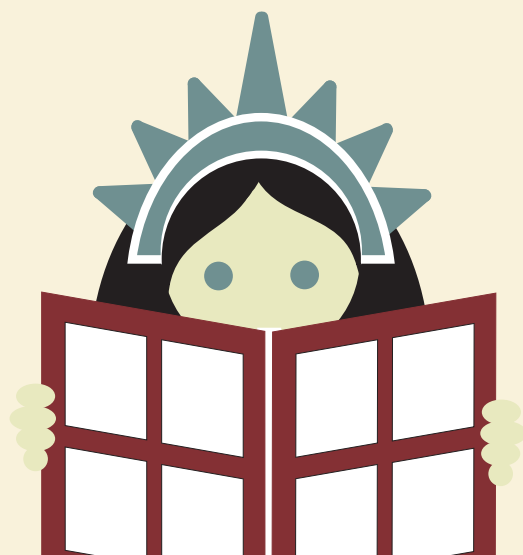


Protecting The Right to Read!

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Annual Report

2014



COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND is 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

CBLDF's important work made huge strides in 2014! From leading a comics-focused Banned Books Week and expanding our education program, to fighting the rising tide of censorship in schools and providing legal aid in a wide range of comics-oriented cases, CBLDF's efforts are more timely than ever.

CBLDF works hard to stop censorship in its tracks, with legal experts on call to manage every First Amendment emergency. We do all this while also developing a broad, preventative program of education work thanks to the support of people like you.

In the pages that follow, we've outlined how your support is helping CBLDF make a difference.

With donors like you on our side, we can sustain our important efforts, and keep comics free from the tyranny of censorship. This is an important fight, and we need your continued support!

— Charles Brownstein, *Executive Director*

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Deputy Director
Betsy Gomez,
Editorial Director
Kate Jones,
Office Manager
Robert Corn Revere,
Legal Counsel

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CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members: James Wood Bailey, Grant Geissman, Philip Harvey, Joseph H. King, Midwest Comic Book Association, Small Press Expo, and the Will & Ann Eisner Family Foundation.

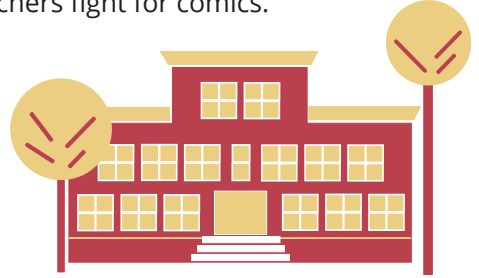
CBLDF's education program made possible by the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!

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.
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LIBRARIES and SCHOOLS



Challenges to comics and graphic novels in libraries and schools are on an alarming rise. CBLDF has been proud to dramatically increase our work to help fight these challenges by collaborating with librarians and associations and by creating tools to help increase the legitimacy of graphic novels as literature. By demonstrating the important place comics hold in 21st century literacy, our work helps librarians and teachers fight for comics.



LEGAL

Providing timely, expert legal defense is at the core of CBLDF's mission. Our commitment to this work is unwavering.

In 2014, we rose to meet every First Amendment challenge we faced and successfully protected the comics community when emergencies arose.

Legal Counsel

CBLDF retains expert counsel to manage First Amendment emergencies. Our legal counsel, Robert Corn-Revere, is one of the country's most respected First Amendment attorneys. He has argued, and won, several landmark decisions, and successfully secured a posthumous pardon for comedian Lenny Bruce.

Preventative Assistance

Much of the legal work done by CBLDF is private. We spring to action at the first sign of a First Amendment emergency, referring artists to counsel, writing letters of support when needed, and stopping legal troubles before they become costly and public.



Defense Fund

For nearly 30 years, CBLDF has been dedicated to maintaining a legal defense fund, ready to be deployed when the First Amendment rights of comic stores, creators, and readers are attacked. This money is disbursed to pay for expert legal counsel when comics are targeted by unjust prosecution. Since 1986, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised and put to this good use.

Most recently, CBLDF has paid off all legal expenses related to our victorious support of Ryan Matheson, an American citizen unjustly prosecuted by Canada Customs for possessing manga.

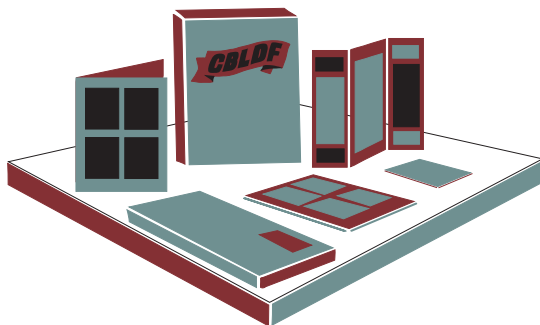
Legislative Action and Amicus Briefs

CBLDF monitors legislation and challenges laws that weaken the First Amendment. Our amicus briefs fight precedent that erodes free speech. In one of our most celebrated moments, CBLDF's amicus brief in *Brown v. EMA* was cited by the Supreme Court in their decision, bringing the history of censorship in comics into the national judicial record.



EDUCATION

CBLDF maintains a robust education program that raises awareness of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment and the dangers of censorship. We performed more education work in 2014 than ever before, including a vital publications program, school and library advocacy, and a record number of public events!



ONLINE RESOURCES

CBLDF offers a vast library of online resources to help readers, educators, and creators advance the freedom to read comics!

CBLDF Podcast

The Fund's monthly podcast brings the conversation about comics censorship to listeners everywhere with a lively mix of interviews, panel discussion, and archival materials that cover the full range of CBLDF's efforts protecting the freedom to read!

History of Comics Censorship

CBLDF provides an essential overview of comics censorship history. Covering incidents from the moral panic of the 1940s and 1950s that led to the Comics Code, to the attacks on comics retailers and artists that made CBLDF a necessity, and then to the modern era of censorship that targets comics readers, educators, and librarians, CBLDF's history of comics censorship is an important tool for students and enthusiasts alike.

News Coverage

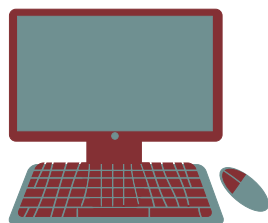
Stay current on threats to free expression with CBLDF's daily news blog and weekly newsletter. Censorship is on the rise, with attacks on teachers and librarians for using and recommending books of all kinds, including comics like *Persepolis*, *Bone*, and *Fun Home*. CBLDF.org is your source for breaking censorship news and how to fight back.

Library Resources

From case studies and discussion guides for commonly banned and challenged comics to programming ideas for classrooms, book clubs, and libraries, CBLDF's library and educator resources are a crucial tool for defeating censorship and expanding appreciation of comics.

Using Graphic Novels in Education

This ongoing column, written by education expert Dr. Meryl Jaffe, serves educators by examining graphic novels and highlighting strategies for classroom use, including suggestions for their use within the Common Core.

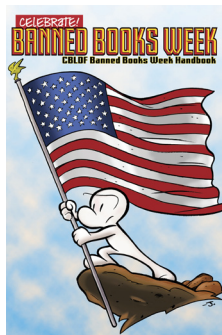


PUBLICATIONS

CBLDF creates high quality program publications, designed to educate readers about their rights and the dangers of censorship. This year, our publications showcased the history of banned comics, provided tools for using comics and graphic novels in education, and gave readers, creators, retailers, and educators important guidance for working with their communities to protect the freedom to read, teach, sell, and create comics!

CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook

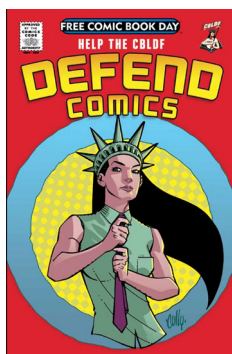
CBLDF led this year's comics-focused Banned Books Week with this dynamic handbook, containing everything you need to celebrate the freedom to read comics! The handbook identified some of the most challenged comics and graphic novels and provided concrete tools to help fight book censorship, debunk banned books myths, and allow individuals to create anti-censorship programming in their communities! More than 40,000 copies of CBLDF's handbook were circulated in comic stores, libraries, and schools across the country.



Defend Comics!

(Free Comic Book Day)

CBLDF's first-ever Free Comic Book Day anthology revealed the history of comics censorship, from the 1954 Senate hearings against comics to modern efforts to ban books. *Defend Comics* reached more than 50,000 readers thanks to the efforts of comic book stores and convention organizers across the country!



Working with Libraries!

A Handbook for Comics Creators

CBLDF helps communities come together in support of the freedom to read with publications like *Working With Libraries! A Handbook for Comics Creators*. This first-of-its-kind publication provides creators with a valuable insider's perspective on the library world and the systems librarians have to navigate in order to bring comics to their patrons. Detailing the basics of public, school, and academic libraries, the handbook explains the collection development process and offers suggestions for how creators and libraries can collaborate to develop events and programs.



Raising a Reader!

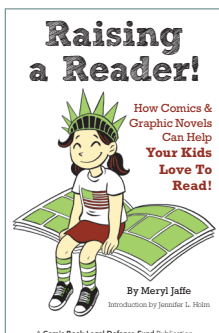
How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!

By Meryl Jaffe
Introduction by Jennifer L. Holm

Raising a Reader!

How Comics & Graphic Novels Help Your Kids Love to Read!

The Fund's popular resource aiding parents and educators with strategies for using comics to encourage literacy enjoyed another successful year! CBLDF distributed an additional 60,000 copies of this handbook in 2014, helping communities fight the stigma against comics and promoting the use of the medium to help build a life-long love of reading!



BANNED BOOKS WEEK



CBLDF is a sponsor of Banned Books Week, the annual celebration of the freedom to read.

Comics were the national theme of this year's Banned Books Week. CBLDF provided leadership by creating extensive resources, including our *Banned Books Week Handbook* and discussion guides for banned and challenged graphic novels.

Comics-focused Banned Books Week events happened all over the country, including a coast-to-coast CBLDF tour that involved Scott McCloud, Larry Marder, Brandon Graham, and Executive Director Charles Brownstein.

Several prominent media outlets covered censorship challenges faced by comics: *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Guardian*, *Graphic Novel Reporter*, *Huffington Post*, *Kirkus*, *The New York Times*, *NPR's Morning Edition*, *Paste*, *Project Censored*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Reading Rainbow*, *Reason TV*, and *The Washington Post* were just a few of the outlets covering comics censorship during Banned Books Week.

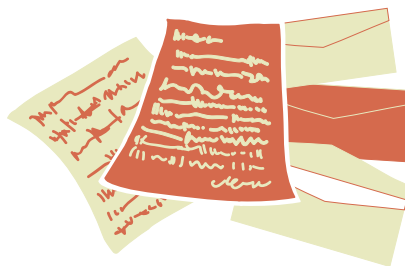
This year's Banned Books Week spotlighted comics censorship in a vital way, but with challenges to 12 books during the week, including new challenges to *Persepolis* in Oregon and Illinois, the battle is far from over.

ADVOCACY

CBLDF is on the forefront of Free Speech advocacy, through our homegrown efforts and as a partner in several vitally important coalitions protecting the First Amendment. These efforts help us fight unconstitutional laws, write letters of support when books are challenged, and advance education and advocacy that protects the right to read.

Media Coalition

CBLDF is a member of Media Coalition, an association that defends the First Amendment right to produce and distribute books, magazines, recordings, home video, and video games, and that defends the American public's First Amendment right to access the broadest possible range of information, opinion, and entertainment.



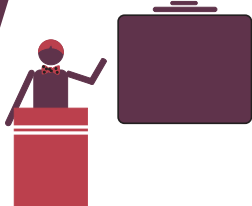
Kids' Right to Read Project

CBLDF is a partner in the Kids' Right to Read Project, alongside the National Coalition Against Censorship, American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, and the Association of American Publishers. KRRP offers support, education, and direct advocacy to people facing book challenges or bans in schools and libraries. KRRP has helped defend hundreds of titles from challenges in almost every state in the nation.

National Coalition Against Censorship

CBLDF is a member of the National Coalition Against Censorship, an alliance of more than 50 national non-profits, including literary, artistic, religious, educational, professional, labor, and civil liberties groups. As part of NCAC, we have engaged in direct advocacy and education to support First Amendment principles.

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING & EVENTS




CBLDF's staff and volunteer team is on the road year-round, providing lectures and workshops at comic conventions, book festivals, colleges, libraries, law schools, and professional conferences. We distribute our publications, provide education, and raise money at our convention booths. Your donation helps us stay in constant motion, spreading the word about free speech and doing outreach we otherwise wouldn't be able to do.

Lectures, Workshops, and Panels

In 2014, CBLDF staff delivered more than 40 public programs, including presentations on the history of the Comics Code, which had its 60th anniversary in 2014; banned comics; and using graphic novels in education, as well as workshops for librarians and educators. CBLDF's programs were presented at comics events all over the United States, as well as at the Berkeley Public Library, British Library, Chicago Public Library, Columbia University, New York University, Pace University, San Diego Public Library, William King Museum, and many other venues.

Convention Booth Education and Fundraising



CBLDF's efforts remain grassroots, with the majority of our education and fundraising occurring at conventions across the country. In 2014, CBLDF exhibited at 21 conventions, where we provided in-booth education to tens of thousands of readers and professionals about the current state of comics censorship. The convention booth is also a lifeline for CBLDF, providing the venue where we receive the majority of our donations and recruit the bulk of our members.

STAFF

CBLDF is run by a small staff that works full time, year-round, to protect the right to read. Between responding to First Amendment emergencies, developing educational content, giving public presentations, creating ongoing news and program content, and working with artists, stores, and publishers who aid our constant fundraising, we stay busy. We perform this important work because of your support and donations!



HOW TO HELP

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 \$30 a year, you can be part of the supporter community that ensures we can continue our important work to protect free expression.

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.

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!

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.

"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

"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

DONATE

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

www.cbldf.org



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