

⚡ COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND ⚡

# DEFENDER



**WOMEN WHO  
CHANGED FREE  
EXPRESSION**



**CARTOONISTS  
UNDER FIRE**



**ATTACK  
ON SUMMER  
READING**

## Director's Note

"Everybody runs the risk of getting caught in a bad situation by either selling or possessing material in a community where for whatever reason it is deemed unacceptable," Image Comics publisher Eric Stephenson said during our interview that runs on page 11. It's a theme that recurs throughout the news coverage in this issue of *CBLDF Defender*, where you'll see that censorship continues to be a powerful, almost relentless force affecting comics.

In "Cartoonists Under Fire," Caitlin McCabe and Maren Williams spotlight three recent international struggles in which cartoonists face punitive government action for the content of their work. Atena Farghadani, an Iranian cartoonist, has been sentenced to nearly thirteen years in prison for "insulting members of parliament through paintings," while Malaysia's Zunar faces up to 43 years in jail for cartoons criticizing the country's judiciary. Read more about their cases and the defunding of Sonny Liew's *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* on page 3.

Closer to home, the pace of book bans and challenges continues to rise, with comics caught in the cross-hairs. On page 6, we'll show you why *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier, and *Saga* by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples appeared on the American Library Association's list of the ten most banned and challenged books of 2014. On page 4, our Censorship Scorecard reveals some of the cases CBLDF has worked on this quarter, including a notable win in New Mexico, where an overzealous parent and a local news station tried to run Gilbert Hernandez's classic graphic novel *Palomar* out of town.

With the days getting longer and students heading out for vacation, CBLDF is stepping up our guard, because summer has become open season for book bans. On page 12, we take an in-depth look at the "Attack on Summer Reading," a trend in which communities across the United States are banning books for teens.

We're happy to recommend a little summer reading of our own in this issue's history feature, "Women Who Changed Free Expression." Here, we spotlight the work of ten female authors who changed comics history and the attempts to ban them. For extra credit, go to [CBLDF.org](http://CBLDF.org), where you can read our full series of 23 profiles of trailblazing women in comics. You can also find daily news about our latest work, the CBLDF Podcast, and much more!

Finally, don't forget to visit us at a convention near you. All of our upcoming appearances are listed on page 15, alongside the latest premiums we've procured to thank you for your support of our important work!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director



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Midwest Comic Book Association.

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

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Jailed Iranian cartoonist Atena Farghadani



# CARTOONISTS UNDER FIRE

**For some cartoonists, art isn't just a way to express themselves — it's a never-ending battle against censorship and government officials.**

## Iranian Cartoonist Sentenced to 12 Years in Prison

Iranian artist and activist Atena Farghadani has been sentenced to 12 years and 9 months in prison for “insulting members of parliament through paintings” with a caricature she drew lampooning debate on a bill that would outlaw some forms of contraception.

The bill that drew Farghadani's ire would ban voluntary sterilization procedures such as vasectomies and tubal ligations in an effort to reverse Iran's falling birthrate. She was jailed and released to await trial last year, but Iranian authorities rearrested her when she posted a YouTube video describing beatings, strip searches, and threats from guards. She went on hunger strike to protest poor conditions, suffering a heart attack after three weeks. Farghadani is now being held in a different detention center and is no longer on hunger strike, but Cartoonists Rights Network International board member and Iranian cartoonist in exile Nikahang Kowsar describes the cruelty of Iranian authorities: During Farghadani's trial, “she was beaten up by the security agents...near the courtroom, in front of her parents” for talking about her earlier mistreatment.

Farghadani is a tireless advocate for political prisoners, Baha'i minorities, and the families of protesters killed after Iran's 2009 presidential election. In a speech she gave in her own defense at trial, she demonstrated incredible courage:

*If after 2009 I was present by the graves of 2009's martyrs or I joined their funeral [it] was because...their murderers were never found and government also insulted and treated them with a disrespectful attitude, I just tried to heal their families, because I felt we're all members of one family.*

*If I did anything against execution [it] is because I think that execution is an inhumane and false punishment, doesn't matter if it's a drug trafficker's execution or a political activist. I imagined my family in their families' position and I felt we're all one family!*

*If I objected that...our Baha'i compatriots don't have the right to study [it] was because I imagined myself in their position and I felt they're a member of my family and each person with any nations, beliefs, and thoughts should have the same and equal rights and equality should run in society.*

*If I drew that cartoon of assembly representatives [it] was because I believe that if someone choose arts as their subject but do not criticize the issues of their society, [they] have betrayed themselves, their [conscience], and their society.*

Despite the crushing verdict and sentence, an appeal is in the works. Unfortunately, Iran's jury-less judicial system has already worked against Farghadani, as her trial was overseen by a judge who is notoriously tough on political prisoners. It is unclear if the appeal will be any different, but all that international observers can do is keep Farghadani's case in the public eye and continue to pressure the government of President Hassan Rouhani, who claims to represent a departure from Iran's brutal past.

## Artist Loses Singapore Arts Grant

Due to unease over the book's “sensitive content,” the National Arts Council in Singapore has withdrawn its grant supporting the publication of Sonny Liew's *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye*. The book, which has been released in Malaysia and is slated for release in the United States in 2016, represents a milestone in not only Liew's career, but also for his home country of Singapore's growing comics industry. Meshing fiction and nonfiction, Liew's book tackles Singapore's historical struggle for independence, including controversial events and the repression of free expression. Some — including Liew himself — had worried that the subject matter would impact the book's publication.

As opposed to outright censorship, the decision by NAC to remove funding created a financial obstacle for the work's publication in Singapore. The removal of the funding, though, has not stopped the publisher, and the move actually backfired: The book is now sold out throughout Singapore.

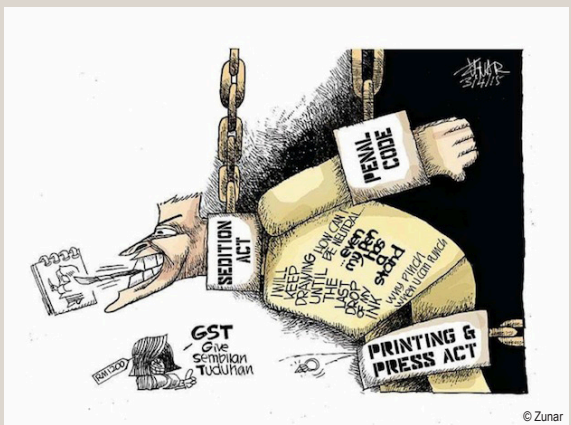
## Zunar's Sedition Trial Postponed

Outspoken Malaysian cartoonist Zunar was set to face nine sedition counts recently, but at the last minute, a court postponed the start of his trial due to a separate legal challenge to the country's Sedition Act. The charges, which carry a sentence of up to 43 years in prison, stem from statements and cartoons criticizing the country's judiciary that Zunar shared on Twitter in February.

The trial delay is due to a legal challenge to the Sedition Act from law professor Azmi Sharom, who is also charged with sedition for a statement that he made to a news outlet. Because Sharom contends that the act's restriction on freed speech is unconstitutional, his case will be decided by Malaysia's highest judiciary, the Federal Court. Sharom's appeal has been pending since November 2014 and no date has been set for the hearing, so it is unlikely that a decision will be rendered before Zunar's rescheduled trial.

Zunar has received widespread international support. Article 19, English PEN, Index on Censorship, Media Legal Defence Initiative, and PEN International recently sent a letter to Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, demanding that the sedition charges be dropped.

Caitlin McCabe & Maren Williams





## Jefferson Center Muzzle Awards Bestow Dishonor For Free Speech Violations

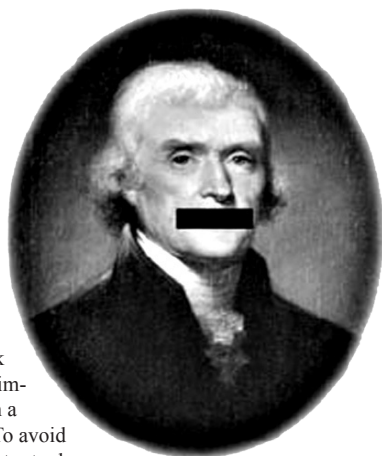
Each year, the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression presents Muzzle Awards to “recognize” individuals or organizations that have committed egregious violations against free speech. Some of this year’s undignified winners include:

- Peoria, Illinois Mayor Jim Ardis, for authorizing a police raid on the home of parody Twitter account owner @peoriamayor, AKA local resident Jon Daniel. Although Daniel clearly flagged the account as a parody, Ardis relied on a state statute that prohibits impersonating a public official — a statute that turns out not to apply online. Daniel was not home at the time of the raid, but authorities arrested one of his roommates for possession of marijuana and seized the computers and other electronics of everyone in the house.
- Bergen Community College (NJ), for suspending art and animation professor Francis Schmidt after his Google+ account automatically sent his contacts an email update including a photo of his seven-year-old daughter wearing a *Game of Thrones* t-shirt that says “I will take what is mine with fire & blood.” A college dean took the email as a personal threat made by Schmidt, who was suspended without pay last April and ordered to see a psychiatrist before returning to work. The school rescinded the suspension in September, admitting in a letter to Schmidt that it “may have unintentionally erred and potentially violated your constitutional rights.”

- Bedford County, Pennsylvania, District Attorney Bill Higgins, for charging a 14-year-old boy with “desecration of a venerated object” after the teen posted on Facebook photos of himself simulating fellatio with a Jesus lawn statue. To avoid jail time, the prankster took a plea deal. The desecration statute upon which Higgins relied is actually unconstitutional as determined by a Supreme Court case dealing with a similar law in Texas.
- The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for revoking its offer of a tenured position in Native American Studies to Professor Steven Salaita after donors were angered by comments criticizing Israeli policy that he had made on his personal Twitter account. Salaita had resigned his previous position and was in the process of moving when UIUC Chancellor Phyllis Wise withdrew the job offer, claiming the problem was not so much the content of the tweets, but the tone — which of course makes no difference where First Amendment rights are concerned.

For more about the Muzzle Award dis-honorees, visit <http://cblddf.org/2015/04/jefferson-center-muzzle-awards-bestow-dishonor-for-free-speech-violations/>

Maren Williams



## 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...*

### Rio Rancho Public Schools, New Mexico

**WIN:** Rejecting one New Mexico parent’s complaint that the highly-regarded graphic novel *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez was “child porn,” a district review committee 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.

### Brunswick County Public School System, North Carolina

**WIN:** About a week after Brunswick County resident Frankie Wood challenged Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* for the second time in as many years, she was informed that the challenge would not be considered due to district policy limiting how frequently the same book can be challenged. Wood spent several months last year fighting to have the book removed, but her request was denied by a review committee and (now former) superintendent Edward Pruden. Unfortunately, Wood appealed and the school board restricted access to the book by requiring students to have parental permission to check it out.

### Wallingford Public School District, Connecticut

**WIN:** Despite a recommendation otherwise from a review committee, Wallingford Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Salvatore Menzo removed Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the freshman English curriculum, claiming the reading level was too low for students. CBLDF joined NCAC to defend the book, which was challenged by a member of the district’s school board. Another parent filed a counter-challenge, demanding that the book be restored. In late April, the book was reinstated by the second review committee.

### Waterloo School District, Iowa

**LOSS:** CBLDF joined NCAC to send a letter urging the Waterloo school board to follow district policy regarding a challenge to Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which was removed by curriculum director Debbie Lee without review. Lee and Superintendent Jane Lindaman maintain that they don’t need to follow policy because they agree with the complaint, which came from one parent and was not formally filed. Several teachers have pushed back against the ban. School board meeting minutes reveal that there has been minimal discussion, and the book has not been restored to classrooms.

### Undisclosed Locations

**DEVELOPING:** CBLDF continues to be confidentially involved with challenges in various communities. Most recently, CBLDF provided tools to help a public librarian and a middle school teacher librarian prepare to defend challenges to *This One Summer* by Mariko and Jillian Tamaki and *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier.

## Art Spiegelman's *Maus* Pulled from Bookstores in Russia

Although no formal complaints were issued, several major bookstore chains in Russia have pulled the Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel *Maus* off of their store shelves and internet sites. The reason: The cover depicts a Nazi swastika.

Russian legislators passed a law last December that forbids the display of Nazi propaganda by retailers. *Maus* by Art Spiegelman was translated into Russian in 2013, and it has been widely recognized in Russia (as it has in much of the rest of the world) as one of the most poignant graphic novels of the twentieth century, a book whose overall message is completely anti-Nazi. It comes as a shock to many that the book would become the victim of a law designed to separate modern Russia from the history of Nazism inflicted upon the world during World War II. "I don't think *Maus* was the intended target for this, obviously," said Spiegelman. "But I think [the law] had an intentional effect of squelching freedom of expression in Russia."

## One Million Moms Targets Neil Gaiman's *Lucifer*

The American Family Association's One Million Moms is raising hell, this time protesting the release of Fox's upcoming series *Lucifer*. The show, which is based on the character Neil Gaiman introduced in his critically acclaimed comic *Sandman*, follows the bored Lord of Hell as he leaves the underworld and discovers a new hobby: helping the LAPD solve crimes and catch criminals.

According to One Million Moms' petition, "The program previews mischaracterize Satan, departs from true biblical teachings about him, and inaccurately portrays the beliefs of the Christian faith."

Neil Gaiman responded to One Million Moms' attempt to thwart the show:

*"Ah. It seems like only yesterday (but it was 1991) that the 'Concerned Mothers of America' announced that they were boycotting SANDMAN because it contained Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans characters. It was Wanda that upset them most: the idea of a Trans Woman in a comic book... They told us they were organising a boycott of SANDMAN, which they would only stop if we wrote to the American Family Association and promised to reform.*

*I wonder if they noticed it didn't work last time, either..."*

## Lawmakers Take Aim at Teachers

Academic freedom is under legislative attack in Minnesota and Kansas, as lawmakers in both states consider bills that would place restrictions on what teachers are permitted to share with their students. In Kansas in particular, teachers could face jail time for using legitimate educational materials in their classrooms.

At issue in both states is an often poorly defined category of content known as "harmful to minors." The goal of most harmful to minors laws is to protect minors from adult material, and harmful to minors laws typically build in exemptions for teachers, librarians, and other adults who may have a legitimate reason for sharing materials related to sex with those under 18.

The Kansas bill would remove the exemption for educators, making them subject to a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail for violations. The three bills Minnesota lawmakers are considering are equally insidious: They poorly define what materials are considered harmful to minors and effectively make it possible for a parent to anonymously veto instructional materials for all students. So far, no action has been taken on any of the bills.

## CBLDF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHARLES BROWNSTEIN JOINS FREEDOM TO READ FOUNDATION'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CBLDF is proud to announce that CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein has been elected to a two-year term on the Freedom to Read Foundation's Board of Trustees!



FTRF "is a non-profit legal and educational organization affiliated with the American Library Association. 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.

"Intellectual freedom is central to the progress of our free society. Current attempts to censor or inflict terror on those who would speak freely make FTRF's work more crucial than ever," Brownstein said in his statement of interest. "It would be an honor to serve FTRF during this critical time for intellectual freedom."

Brownstein joins new electees Jim Neal (University Librarian emeritus, Columbia University), J. Douglas Archer (University of Notre Dame librarian), Lorie Roy (Professor, University of Texas School of Information), Neil Richards (Professor of Law at Washington University in St. Louis, and Julia Warga (Kenyon College librarian and former chair of ALA's Intellectual Freedom Round Table) and existing Board members Martin Garnar, Kathy Ishizuka, Julius C. Jefferson, Jr., Em Claire Knowles, and Gretchen McCord, as well as ALA's Sari Feldman (incoming ALA president), Julie Todaro (incoming ALA president-elect), Keith Michael Fiels (ALA Executive Director), and Pamela Klipsch (incoming ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee chair).

Barbara Jones, the director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, serves as FTRF executive director and board secretary. Jones praised the 2015-16 board:

*"It's wonderful to add such a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences to the Freedom to Read Foundation board," said Jones. "As was the case last year, we are very excited to bring together librarians and free speech experts from other fields to expand on the Foundation's proud tradition. As we celebrate our 45th anniversary, FTRF will continue to work via litigation, advocacy, grants, and education to defend the fundamental rights of free expression and access to information."*

Brownstein will continue his work with CBLDF, and we're certain he and the FTRF board will make invaluable contributions to the defense of the freedom to read! To find out more about the members of the board and the election process, visit the FTRF website at <http://www.ftrf.org>.

Find out more about these stories and  
get the latest news every day at  
[www.cblddf.org](http://www.cblddf.org)!



# BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2015

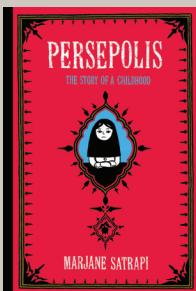
## GET READY TO CELEBRATE YOUNG ADULT BOOKS!

# CAUTION CAUTION CAUTION

Young adult books are challenged in public libraries and schools more than any other type of book, so this year's Banned Books Week will celebrate the freedom to read YA! Banned Books Week will run September 27 through October 3, 2015, and it will be observed in libraries, schools, bookstores, and other community settings across the nation and the world. It's never too soon to start getting ready for the party...

## Graphic Novels Among ALA's Most Frequently Challenged in 2014

When ALA released their list of the most frequently challenged books in 2014, CBLDF was disappointed to learn the list included three highly acclaimed graphic novels. Two of the novels are intended for young adult audiences: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi and *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier. The third was *Saga* by Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples.



Copyright ©2003 by Marjane Satrapi. Published by Pantheon, a division of Random House LLC.

*Persepolis* came in at #2 on ALA's list. In one challenge, 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." We couldn't find any news stories following up on the Oregon challenge, but ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom confirmed that the book was retained.

Less than a week after the Oregon challenge, *Persepolis* was targeted again in central Illinois' Ball-Chatham School District, where parent Mike Housewirth said it was inappropriate for the senior-level English students to which it was assigned. He also "questioned why a book about Muslims was assigned on September 11." The school board voted unanimously to retain the book in the curriculum.

A third *Persepolis* challenge in Smithville, Texas, began germinating almost a year before the other two. Satrapi's book was part of an innovative community book discussion series called "Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys — Points of View," funded by a grant from ALA and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Students in Smithville High School's World Geography class read excerpts from *Persepolis* and another book, *In the Country of Men*, and were encouraged but not required to attend Muslim Journeys events that were held outside of school hours. A large crowd attended a school board meeting to voice their concerns "about the newly-introduced Islamic literature available to students." Parent Charles King filed a challenge to both *In the Country of Men* and *Persepolis*. The school board voted 5-1 in support of the books.

The ban that landed Raina Telgemeier's middle-grade graphic novel *Drama* the #10 spot on ALA's list was also in Texas, at Chapel Hill Elementary in Mount Pleasant. There has been no news coverage of the ban, so details are thin. We do know that the book was claimed to be "sexually explicit" and was removed from the elementary school's library, while three copies remain in Chapel Hill Independent School District's combined middle/high school library. The school board policies do not list a formal challenge policy, but there does appear to be some sort of review process because district documentation contains a challenge form, as well as an assessment form for use by a review committee. It is unknown whether the district actually followed its review process, but it seems unlikely that a review committee would objectively agree that *Drama* is "pervasively vulgar," one of the stated criteria for removal of library materials in district policy.



Art ©2012 by Raina Telgemeier. Published by Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.



© Brian K. Vaughan and Fiona Staples. Published by Image Comics.

Little information is available regarding the challenges to Fiona Staples' and Brian K. Vaughan's widely praised series *Saga*, which came in at #6 on ALA's list. We know it was challenged somewhere in Oregon by a patron of a public library who said it 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 restrictions.

While free speech won out in most of these cases, that does not mean that we can grow complacent about the risk of censorship. Positive outcomes emerged largely because people in the local community were willing to defend the books and because administrators observed their challenge policies. Defenders of free speech must remain vigilant and hold local leaders accountable when books are challenged in their communities!

Maren Williams



# CBLDF'S COMICS CONNECTOR BUILDS A BRIDGE BETWEEN LIBRARIES, EDUCATORS, AND COMICS CREATORS!

Earlier this year, CBLDF launched its newest resource for libraries and educators — the **CBLDF Comics Connector!** CBLDF's Comics Connector is a free directory resource that connects educators and librarians with creators, editors, and other comics professionals who are able to provide classroom or library visits. Dozens of comics professionals in 12 states and one Canadian province have signed up with the CBLDF Comics Connector so far, and more will be added each week.

CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein says, "At CBLDF, we believe that the best way to fight censorship is to increase understanding. It has led us to create proactive resources that increase the appreciation of comics and their value. With more communities making a place for comics in schools and libraries every year, it was natural for us to begin to build this resource. Our goal is to benefit the readers we all serve by helping foster greater interaction among the educators and librarians who are using comics and the talented people who make them."

Many writers and illustrators are willing to visit schools, libraries, and stores, so don't be afraid to ask them to be part of your

Banned Books Week events. Plan ahead, especially if travel is involved. Six to eight months ahead of time is not too early!

CBLDF Comics Connector provides information about creators' willingness to travel, travel needs, and honoraria. Some creators can't travel, but they can join your Banned Books Week events via Skype, Google+ Hangouts, or other Internet-based conferencing tools.

CBLDF Comics Connector is the latest in a series of resources and publications CBLDF creates to serve educators and librarians. These resources are made possible by the support of our members! Even if you aren't planning a Banned Books Week event, you can help support our work by becoming a member or making a donation at [www.cbldf.org](http://www.cbldf.org)!

View participating comics professionals by visiting <http://cbldf.org/resources/comics-connector/>

## CBLDF has a number of tools and resources to help you celebrate Banned Books Week!



### CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook

The CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook gives you the scoop on banned comics, how to fight censorship, and how to make a celebration of Banned Books Week in your community! It is an essential tool to assist librarians, educators, and retailers in planning Banned Books Week events, while also being a vital reference to help readers everywhere fight cen-

sorship. The 2015 edition features a cover by Raina Telgemeier. Ask your retailer about how to get your copy. Bundles are available in *Previews* for items shipping in September

### Raising a Reader

*Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!* is CBLDF's signature resource for parents and educators! It's an indispensable tool for showcasing the value of graphic novels and chock full of reading suggestions and title recommendations to get young readers engaged with this exciting medium (starts at \$5 donation for a bundle of ten, <http://tinyurl.com/o9zrtsn>!)



### Comic Book Club Handbook

There's no need to limit your book club selections to only prose. Many — if not most — graphic novels are as appealing and as discussable as traditional book club selections. Start a comic book club in your community with the *Comic Book Club Handbook* (\$3 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/qflzb6t>).



### CBLDF Banned Books Week Gear

Declare that you read banned comics with "I Read Banned Comics" merchandise, including men's and women's t-shirts (\$20 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/qzwcsgg>) and the Banned Books Week gear bundle, which includes stickers, prints, and extra copies of the CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook (\$25 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/psz5zgg>!)



For more about Banned Books Week, visit <http://www.bannedbooksweek.org/>

# WOMEN WHO CHANGED FREE EXPRESSION

## Women Who Make Comics and the Attempts to Censor Them

Women have made invaluable contributions to comics, exploring topics as diverse as sexuality, feminism, coming of age, social justice, and more. In examining these subjects, female creators have changed the face of free expression by pushing the boundaries of the medium. Several have seen their work challenged or banned...

### Alison Bechdel

Alison Bechdel grew up in Beech Creek, Pennsylvania, the daughter of high school English teachers. Her family also owned and lived in the local funeral home, which her father Bruce meticulously restored in his spare time. When Bechdel reached young adulthood and realized she was a lesbian, her mother informed her of a fact that made many puzzle pieces from her childhood fall into place: Bruce was also gay and may have had liaisons with underage students. Just a few weeks after Bechdel told her parents of her sexuality, Bruce was struck and killed by a car while restoring another house. His death was ruled an accident.

Bechdel began her now-legendary comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* in 1983. Within a few years the strip, which explored the various archetypes of lesbian subculture, was syndicated in alternative publications across the country. A *Dykes to Watch Out For* strip also established what has come to be known as the “Bechdel test” for gaging the meaningful character development of women in movies and other pop culture.

Bechdel’s 2006 graphic novel *Fun Home*, which recounts her complicated relationship with her father, met with widespread critical praise and mainstream success — which also led to it being challenged several times. In 2006 it was temporarily removed from the public library in Marshall, Missouri after a patron said it was pornographic, but the book was returned to shelves after the library drafted a collection development policy to protect controversial material that was also critically acclaimed and/or in demand. Two years later, a challenge at the University of Utah was also shut down when the English department and the university affirmed that the single student who objected to the book had been reasonably accommodated with an alternate assignment.

In 2014, *Fun Home* faced a greater challenge in South Carolina, where some state legislators proposed punitive budget cuts against the College of Charleston because it incorporated the book into a voluntary summer reading program for incoming freshman. After months of debate, the legislature eventually reached a highly ironic “compromise”: the college would have the funding restored, but would be required to use it only for teaching about historic documents, including the Constitution.



© Alison Bechdel. Published by Mariner Books.

### Sue Coe

Sue Coe grew up next to a slaughterhouse, a circumstance that has had a profound impact on her career as an artist. In witnessing the horrors of factory farming, Coe decided that her work should bring to light the atrocities in the world around us. Her stark and sobering work isn’t limited to farms — Coe has used art to address the horrors of apartheid, systemic racism, HIV, war, and terrorism.

Born in 1951 in England, Coe moved to the United States in 1972. Her highly political work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New Yorker*, *Artforum*, and several other publications. Coe uses various media, including paint, collage, and drawing, but she considers herself more a journalist than an artist. She uses her artwork to address social issues, often juxtaposing victims and perpetrators in evocative and impactful ways, conveying dreadful events in a way that cannot be ignored.

Because Coe’s work is so powerful, it has occasionally run afoul of censors. “Woman Walks into Bar — Is Raped by Four Men on the Pool Table — While 20 Watch,” which depicts the gang rape of a woman on a pool table, has been attacked on a few occasions. When Coe drew it for Boston Magazine, the publication cropped the final image, removing much of its impact. In 1984, British censors shut down part of an exhibition at Ferens Gallery for displaying the piece.

Regardless of attempts to censor her, Coe continues to create work that makes a statement, and she does extensive research for her pieces. For *Dead Meat* (1996), which collects many of her pieces about factory farms and slaughterhouses, Coe visited stockyards, meatpacking plants, dairies, and chicken farms. The same research has influenced the pieces in her subsequent publications *Sheep of Fools* (2005) and *Cruel* (2012). Coe remains adamant that artwork should be used to address the cruelty of the world around us.

### Melinda Gebbie

Melinda Gebbie began her career as a fine artist but found a home among the underground comix creators in her birthplace of San Francisco, California. Her first comics work was published in the



“Woman Walks into Bar - Is Raped by Four Men on the Pool Table - While 20 Watch” by Sue Coe



seminal all-women underground anthology *Wimmen's Comix*, and she published her first solo work in 1977 with *Fresca Zizis*. The brightly colored, dreamy, and explicit images that graced the pages of *Fresca Zizis* caught the eye of UK censors when Knockabout Comics imported 400 copies in 1985. The books were seized by customs for pornographic images, and despite Gebbie's eloquent defense of the book during the subsequent obscenity trial, British authorities ruled that the copies should be confiscated and burned. Possession of the comic remains a crime in the UK today.

Gebbie is probably best known to many for her labor of love, *Lost Girls*. Alongside writer Alan Moore, she sought to create a piece of literate erotica that focused on three central characters: Dorothy Gale (*The Wizard of Oz*), Wendy Darling (*Peter Pan*), and Alice Fairchild (*Alice in Wonderland*). Gebbie and Moore set their story against tumultuous events contemporary with the adult versions of the characters, including the release of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the start of World War I. Gebbie's artwork is lush and sensual, and she has credited the 16 years she spent on the three-volume series with expanding her own artistic sensibility and skill.

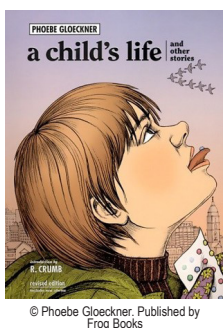
Many expected that *Lost Girls* would meet with immediate controversy upon its release, but the book has actually encountered few challenges in the United States. While some retailers refuse to carry the book, and it has met resistance in foreign markets (most notably the UK and New Zealand), Gebbie's sensitive, colorful, and painterly artwork can be credited in no small part for keeping the work from being labeled obscene.

## Phoebe Gloeckner

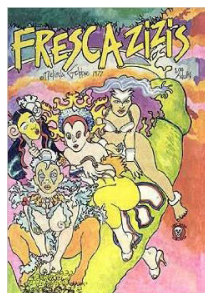
Phoebe Gloeckner grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she had the chance to meet several of the artists behind the irreverent — and frequently banned — underground comix. But Gloeckner didn't set out to be a comic book artist. She originally studied medical illustration, establishing herself as an artist of internal human anatomy.

Gloeckner's comics work was sporadic until 1998, when she released her first stand-alone graphic collection, *A Child's Life and Other Stories*. In 2002, she released *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*, which continues the story of some characters from *A Child's Life*. While Gloeckner is reticent to describe how closely the books correlate to her own life, many consider them semi-autobiographical. Through a series of interconnected strips, *A Child's Life* conveys the loss of innocence that comes with emotional and physical abuse during childhood. The artwork is dynamic and heavily influenced by the undergrounds, and Gloeckner incorporates medical illustrations to evocative and sometimes shocking effect.

In 2004, *A Child's Life* was removed from public library shelves in Stockton, California, after an 11-year-old boy checked it out. The boy's mother reproduced images from it and leafleted the community with them in protest of what she considered unacceptable material for a public library. Library director Nicky Stanke believed the book worthy of inclusion, but then-mayor Gary Podesto disagreed, calling it "a how-to book for pedophiles" and demanding that the city council exert more control over the library's collection. In response, CBLDF joined the National Coalition Against Censorship and the American Library Association to create guidelines for librarians about handling graphic novels intended for adult audiences.



© Phoebe Gloeckner. Published by Frog Books



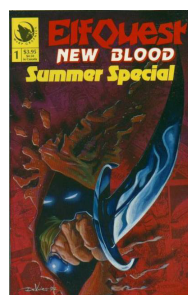
© Melinda Gebbie.

## Wendy Pini

Wendy Pini discovered comics as a teenager in the 1960s, devouring them alongside science fiction and fantasy novels. Pini was undeterred by the fact that, as a woman, she wasn't necessarily the target market for the comics and books she read. She soon began creating her own illustrations, drawing inspiration from fantasy and science fiction.

During the early 1970s, Pini illustrated covers for DC and Marvel as well as science fiction and fantasy magazines such as *Galaxy*, *Galileo*, and *Worlds of If*. In 1978, Pini and her husband Richard launched what has become one of the longest-running independent comics series: *Elfquest*. Pini created a diverse cast of characters and addressed contemporary social issues through her stories and illustrations. Her artwork in *Elfquest* is partly inspired by Japanese manga and looks nothing like the work that dominated comics at the time the series launched. When *Elfquest* debuted in *Fantasy Quarterly* #1, it became an instant hit especially among female comics fans. Now in its 37th year, the series has a loyal and broad fanbase and is considered by many a touchstone of independent comics.

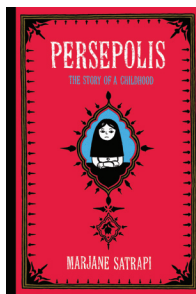
*Elfquest* often depicts issues and events that aren't commonly subjects of the comics medium. An issue in the *Elfquest: New Blood* series, for instance, included panels that focused on childbirth. The imagery included partial nudity, but the event was tastefully illustrated and conveyed as life-affirming. Unfortunately, someone in West Virginia didn't agree. In 1999, a social worker gave a neighborhood boy a copy of the comic, and the boy's grandfather contacted authorities after a verbal confrontation. The social worker was arrested for distributing obscene materials to a minor and contacted CBLDF for assistance. The comic came nowhere near failing the Miller test for obscenity, so CBLDF legal counsel Burton Joseph was able to get the charges dismissed.



Elfquest art © Warp Graphics, Inc. Elfquest, its logos, characters, situations, all related indicia, and their distinctive likenesses are trademarks of Warp Graphics, Inc. All rights reserved.

## Marjane Satrapi

Anyone who's read Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel memoir *Persepolis* is already familiar with the key events of her early life. Growing up in Tehran during the turmoil surrounding the Islamic Revolution, Satrapi experienced abrupt changes that curtailed the secular lifestyle she and her intellectual parents enjoyed prior to 1979. For her own safety, Satrapi's parents sent her alone to attend high school in Austria when she was 14. She returned to Iran at 18 and obtained a Master's degree from Tehran's School of Fine Arts, but found the prospect of remaining in the country untenable. In 1994 she moved to France, where she continued to study art.



Copyright ©2003 by Marjane Satrapi. Published by Pantheon, a division of Random House LLC.

Satrapi often regaled her friends in France with stories of her surreal childhood, and they in turn introduced her to comics including Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. She had been dabbling in children's picture books, but Spiegelman's work proved to her that illustrated books could address more serious subjects. Satrapi decided to try her hand at a graphic novel memoir, and produced *Persepolis* in four volumes between 2000 and 2003. They met with immediate acclaim, and were soon translated and collected into two volumes for the U.S. market.

While it's hardly surprising that *Persepolis* is banned in Iran, the book has also seen more than its fair share of trouble in U.S. schools, where parents and administrators have objected to profanity and depictions of torture. Most spectacularly, Chicago Public

Schools officials made a confused attempt in March 2013 to remove the book from all classrooms due to “graphic language and content that is inappropriate for children.” They allowed it to remain in AP classes for 11th and 12th graders, but now require 8th-10th grade teachers to undergo extra training before they can use it in class. The book remains banned in 7th grade CPS classrooms. In 2014 there were two more challenges to *Persepolis* in quick succession: one in the Three Rivers School District in Oregon, and another in Illinois’ Ball-Chatham district, where a review committee unanimously decided that it would remain in classrooms.

## Ariel Schrag

When it comes to autobiographical comics, few creators are as precocious as Ariel Schrag. Before Schrag even finished high school, Slave Labor Graphics had released three volumes of her *High School Comic Chronicles* series. Her ambitious and confessional work has been widely praised, drawing comparisons to notables such as Alison Bechdel, Judy Blume, and R. Crumb. Her work honestly confronts coming of age, sexual awakening, and sexual identity, often with sharp and mesmerizing humor.

Schrag hasn’t limited herself to graphic novels. She’s written for television, provided articles and illustrations for periodicals around the country, been the featured subject of a documentary, and edited comics anthologies. It was this last role that brought her to the attention of would-be censors: In late 2011, CBLDF joined the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom in writing a letter to the Dixfield, Maine, school system in order to prevent the removal of the anthology *Stuck in the Middle: Seventeen Comics from an Unpleasant Age* from library

shelves. Schrag edited *Stuck in the Middle*, which includes contributions from acclaimed graphic novelists Daniel Clowes, Dash Shaw, Gabrielle Bell, Lauren Weinstein, and more.

Ultimately, the school board voted to leave the book on library shelves with the caveat that students must have parental permission to check it out. CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein expressed his concerns over the decision: “While we’re pleased to see the book retained in the library’s collection, we’re very disappointed that it is retained with restrictions.”

## Jillian Tamaki and Mariko Tamaki

Canadian cousins Jillian and Mariko Tamaki both came to comics somewhat unconventionally: Jillian started out (and continues) as a freelance illustrator for books and periodicals, while Mariko cut her teeth in the performance art and comedy scenes. Growing up on opposite sides of the country — Jillian in Calgary and Mariko in Toronto — they both evinced a rebellious streak in their teen years. Mariko experienced alienation from her peers as “a weird, freaky, gothy kid” at an elite private boarding school, while Jillian attended public school and says she and her friends were also “disaffected, kinda gothy — they called us ‘the dirties’ in high school.”

Both cousins were well-established in their careers before they thought of collaborating. Mariko was offered the chance to publish some of her stage monologues in comic form as part of a zine series that Jillian says aimed “to pair people who had never written a comic and people who had never drawn a comic.” Mariko naturally called on her illustrator cousin, and together they produced a comic which they expanded into the 2008 graphic novel *Skim*. Loosely inspired by Mariko’s boarding school misfit experience, it became the first graphic novel nominated for a prestigious Governor General’s Award — but only in the “text” category, which prompted several comics creators to issue an open letter arguing that neither the text nor the illustrations are meant to stand alone in this format, and both Tamakis should have been nominated.

Although the selective nomination put both cousins in an awkward public situation, it apparently didn’t harm their collaborative relationship. In 2013 they issued *This One Summer*, a coming-of-age story of adolescent friends Rose and Windy. This time, the book was nominated for Governor General’s Awards for both text and illustration, and won in the illustration category. It also broke another barrier in the U.S., where it was the first graphic novel to make the shortlist for the American Library Association’s Caldecott Medal. This honor has led to some unexpected backlash, however, as adults who think of that award as the domain of purely innocent picture books attacked *This One Summer* for being other than they expected. Since the honor was announced this February, CBLDF has been confidentially involved in monitoring and defeating challenges to the book in various communities.



## Raina Telgemeier

Growing up in San Francisco, Raina Telgemeier was an avid fan of newspaper comics from an early age. She particularly enjoyed *Calvin and Hobbes* and *For Better or For Worse*, and passed many hours creating her own strips and mini-comics. After she graduated from New York’s School of Visual Arts in 2002 with a B.F.A. in illustration, Scholastic offered her the opportunity to take on another childhood favorite: Ann M. Martin’s *The Baby-Sitters Club* series. Telgemeier adapted four of the books as graphic novels, introducing them to a new generation of readers.

With her 2010 graphic novel *Smile*, Telgemeier moved into the realm of memoir, chronicling the painful period after she knocked out her front teeth as a young teen and underwent several rounds of oral surgery and orthodontia. To make matters worse, Telgemeier’s gap-toothed smile and later mouthful of braces led to mockery from her peers. *Sisters*, the 2014 sequel to *Smile*, delves into Telgemeier’s initial rivalry with her younger sister and their later rapprochement as their parents’ marriage began to dissolve.



In 2012, between the two memoirs, Telgemeier produced the fictional graphic novel *Drama*, which recounts the joys and tribulations of a middle school theater troupe. Although most readers found it to be just as endearing and authentic as Telgemeier’s other books, a small but vocal minority objected to the inclusion of two gay characters, one of whom shares a chaste on-stage kiss with another boy. Negative online reader reviews have accused Telgemeier of literally hiding an agenda inside brightly colored, tween-friendly covers, but in an interview with TeenReads she said that while she and her editors were careful to make the book age-appropriate, they never considered omitting the gay characters because “finding your identity, whether gay or straight, is a huge part of middle school.”

Betsy Gomez & Maren Williams

**In honor of Women’s History Month, CBLDF took a look at the careers of 23 women who changed the face of comics. You can read all of the profiles at <http://cbldf.org/2015/03/a-month-of-women-who-changed-free-expression/>**




 A photograph of Eric Stephenson, the publisher of Image Comics, sitting at a bar. He is holding a glass of Guinness and looking towards the camera. The bar is well-stocked with various bottles of alcohol in the background.
 

# IMAGE MAKER

**Image Comics Publisher Eric Stephenson on free expression, censorship, and how comics have changed in the last 20 years**  
by Charles Brownstein

*In 2012 you edited the CBLDF Liberty Annual under the theme “it’s good to be free.” Tell me about how that theme resonates with you and informs your work.*

As far as what we do at Image, freedom is very much built into our DNA. That is what guides us in terms of how we deal with writers and artists. I think it’s one of the things that makes Image special and one of the things that makes comics special. Just by the nature of the medium, we’re able to do stuff that you might not be able to do in other entertainment mediums.

*I think that’s right. But on the other hand, sometimes you see things that fly below the radar suddenly pop into the censorship cross-hairs. When you look at Charlie Hebdo, you definitely saw the attitude “I don’t think they should have drawn that because it’s offensive.” You can argue about the good taste of it — it was clearly not in good taste — but it’s very hard to argue that they shouldn’t be allowed to do that.*

It’s weird because everybody has a different notion of what good taste is. You and I could both be offended by two separate things to different degrees. And it’s a real slippery slope to get on if we’re gonna start telling people what they can’t say or do because it offends various slivers of society. Yeah, you 100% have the right to be offended, but people should have the right to offend.

*Considering Saga, Sex Criminals, and other books in your line dealing with frank adult subject matter, it’s interesting that these are all fairly viable propositions now. Twenty years ago that kind of book would have been in the adults only section of a comic book store, not on The New York Times bestseller list. What do you think has changed to make this kind of content viable in comic book storytelling now?*

I think what’s happening with comics is just a reflection of what’s going on in the culture in general. Some of the gatekeepers of that kind of stuff have kind of backed off a little bit. If you look at TV, the variety of content and realness of some of the stuff,

especially on cable, has opened the door for people to discuss things a lot more honestly and a lot more frankly.

*I think you’re right, but at the same time we’re seeing increases in attempts to restrict that content, at least on the local levels. Last year, Saga, Persepolis, and Drama were all on ALA’s Ten Most Frequently Banned Books list. As a publisher and creator, what are your words for the librarians who are at risk of losing their jobs in these situations?*

It’s tough. Speaking for myself, I live in Berkeley. The political climate is very different there. What makes it into schools and into libraries is very different than it is in other parts of the country, and I think that sometimes it’s a little hard to consider what some of these situations are like in other communities because we’re so far removed from that. So, to just say you need to fight for this stuff and have it in libraries even though you might be losing your job or your funding, I can’t just say that. You want people to be willing to fight for this type of material or other similar material, but it’s a difficult position.

*I think a lot of it comes down to the audience that we’re serving. It all comes down to what is the audience deriving from the content that makes it worth fighting for.*

And is the audience willing to fight for it? If a librarian’s gonna support the material, that’s ultimately useless unless the audience they’re trying to reach is gonna support the material too. There has to be a certain amount of activism on the part of readers to stand up, and whether it’s doing it when you vote, whether it’s going to town hall meetings, or whatever, you have to come out in support of this stuff if you want it to exist. Activism is more than going on Twitter and saying you like something or wearing a t-shirt. You actually have to come out and stand up for something. I think it’s important for the people to come out and support the libraries and make it clear that they want this type of material available.

*You’ve been a tremendous supporter both as a publisher and as an individual of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund’s activities. What is it about the Fund’s work that’s important to you as a participant in our mission?*

I think it comes back to what you were asking me about what I would say to people in communities where books are being banned. There needs to be a voice in support of those sorts of things.

I think a lot of people misunderstand what the Fund does. I talk to people sometimes who say, “they’re just trying to make sure that people can do porn comics,” and that’s not what this is at all. Everybody runs the risk of getting caught in a bad situation by either selling or possessing material in a community where, for whatever reason, it is deemed unacceptable. And as long as that’s a possibility, as long as that can happen to literally anybody if they’re in the wrong place at the wrong time, I think it’s really important to have an organization that can offer help and support.

I think the Fund has done a really good job getting the word out about what you’re doing. There are a lot of charities that I think sound good or look good on paper that you never really know where the money goes or what is actually being done. I think the level of transparency that you’ve established with the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, and just your efforts to get information out about what you’re doing make it very worthwhile.

**You can hear the full recording of this interview on the CBLDF Podcast, available now at [www.cbldf.org](http://www.cbldf.org)!**



# ATTACK!

## ON SUMMER READING

Since most challenges happen during the school year, summers are usually slow when it comes to defending books. That all changed last summer, when challenge after challenge to summer reading books popped up across the country.

One of the objectives of summer reading assignments is to keep students mentally engaged and to help them develop a lifelong leisure reading habit. For that reason, the books assigned during the summer tend to have broad appeal for teens and to address topics that affect them in real life, such as bullying, sexuality, drugs, and drinking. Of course, these same topics also lead to challenges from adults who find them objectionable. Here is a recap of the summer reading challenges, bans, and fiascos that we opposed.

### **Little Brother by Cory Doctorow**

The fun began early last summer, when a Pensacola principal canceled an entire One Book/One School summer reading program because Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* contained "language" and "overtures." In communication with Mary Kate Griffith, the teacher who had arranged the program, Doctorow heard that the principal also objected to "the book's positive view of questioning authority [and] lauding 'hacker culture.'" The author arranged for his publisher to send 200 free copies of the book to the school for any students who wanted to read it on their own. Escambia County School District's superintendent later admitted that the challenge policy was ignored, but the principal faced no consequences for his actions. Instead, Griffith faced misconduct charges that could have resulted in the loss of her job. She was finally exonerated in August and received a personal apology from the superintendent.

### **Paper Towns by John Green**

Our next case also came out of Florida, namely the Tampa-area Pasco County School District. This time, it was someone in the district's central office who quietly removed John Green's *Paper Towns* from a summer reading list after a parent complained of references to teen sex and masturbation, calling the book "soft porn." Although the school district has a detailed policy on book challenges, it was not followed in this case, and the superintendent later said there was some confusion as to "whether the full review process that is outlined in Board policy should be put into action."

### **Looking for Alaska by John Green**

The news was not all bad, however; in Waukesha, Wisconsin, the school district faithfully followed its challenge policy when a parent challenged *Looking for Alaska* because it contained "page after page" of sexual content. Ultimately, a review committee unanimously rejected the challenge, whereupon two more books were also challenged by other parents. The review committee also opted to retain those books, *Chinese Handcuffs* by Chris Crutcher and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

### **Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson**

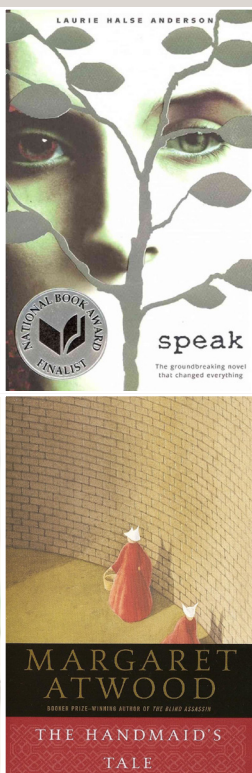
Another positive outcome came in the small town of Albertville, Alabama, where the high school principal calmly rejected a challenge to Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* by pointing out that it was one of many options on a reading list and students were free to choose a different book.

### **The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood**

When *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood was challenged in Pennsylvania's Ringgold School District, the school board initially followed a familiar pattern of ignoring its challenge policy and banning the book. When a teacher suggested that the board at least read the book before banning it, one member responded that "I don't read *Penthouse* and I won't read this." The board reconsidered its hasty action, however, and voted to reinstate *The Handmaid's Tale* as a summer reading book.

### **The Miseducation of Cameron Post by emily m. danforth**

For sheer disorganization and confusion over summer reading assignments, Delaware's Cape Henlopen School Board took the cake. In response to a parental challenge of emily m. danforth's *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, the board initially removed the book (without following challenge policy) as an option on a summer reading list that included nine other titles. Board members claimed that they found the book inappropriate only because of



profanity, not because the teenaged protagonist is a lesbian. But when nationwide free speech and LGBTQ advocates banded together and pointed out that some of the other books on the list also contain profanity, the board agreed and eliminated the entire list.

This was disappointing to say the least, but CBLDF and other member organizations of the National Coalition Against Censorship took the opportunity to sponsor an essay contest, giving Delaware high school students a chance to tell the Cape Henlopen board members what they should have known about *Cameron Post* before they banished it from summer reading. This fall, the board revised its policy so that future challenges to summer reading books must be brought during a designated review period between April 15 and May 15.

## Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

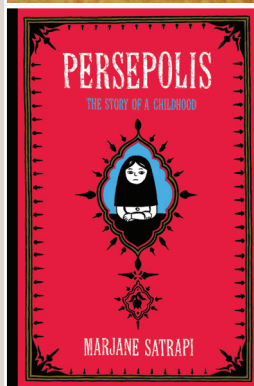
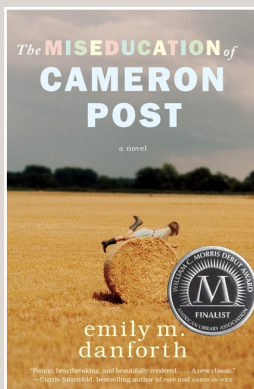
Unfortunately, the censors kept things going from summer into the new school semester. As Banned Books Week rolled around last September, some seemed to take the annual celebration of the right to read as a personal challenge to try to ban books around the country. In one week, we saw half a dozen new challenges, including new attempts to ban Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. Fortunately, we had plenty of help in protesting censorship from our frequent partners with the National Coalition Against Censorship and the other sponsors of Banned Books Week to parents, teachers, authors, and students who took immediate action to protest a challenge in their communities.

Maren Williams

## WHY IS SUMMER READING TARGETED BY CENSORS?

Summer can pose an obstacle for educators. It interrupts instruction and makes it difficult to encourage students to work on their own. Summer reading lists are designed around the latter idea, incorporating books that are enticing to students. By necessity, summer reading books are often more informal, more fun, and more exciting than assignments during the school year. These books are the type of book that students are likely to read in their own free time. Unfortunately, the very characteristics that make summer reading selections attractive, such as relatable plots and characters and material that mirror students' own experiences and vernacular, can also lead to challenges. This is especially true if the book includes profanity, sexual content, or LGBTQ material. All of these topics are relevant to teens as they navigate puberty and their burgeoning personal identity, but these topics often make adults uncomfortable.

In the case of graphic novels, the format encourages even the most reluctant readers, but it's easy for a parent to isolate a single image that he or she might find offensive. Rather than considering the work as a whole, the parent may challenge the book based on one image alone. Further, many parents still have the idea that comics are not valid literature and are only meant for the dimmest readers.



In removing books from summer reading lists, censors are limiting the options available to students and in many ways actively discouraging independent reading. Most summer reading lists are not mandatory, and students can simply choose another book if they are uncomfortable. Some parents fail to recognize this, and instead attack the book, demanding its removal. They may be well-meaning, but their actions limit what's available to students and interfere with other parents' right to decide what is best for their own children.

Betsy Gomez

## IN CASE OF CHALLENGE...

Most challenges to comics and books come from well-meaning individuals, frequently parents, who find something they believe is objectionable in their local public or school library. These challenges are often difficult and stressful for the library staff who must manage them, but there are resources to help them in the process. Here are a few tips for managing challenges...

### Make Strong Policies

Strong policies are key for protecting access to library materials, including comics. Having a strong policy in place before challenges happen and ensuring the policy is followed increases the likelihood that a book will survive the challenge.

The American Library Association has developed a number of excellent tools to assist school and public libraries in the essential preparation to perform before books are challenged. Visit <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials> for more information.

### Cope With Challenges

What do you do when a comic or book is challenged? Once again, help is available. Your policies will be essential for managing a hearing for the challenged materials. The American Library Association has developed these helpful tools to cope with challenges:

- Conducting a Challenge Hearing: <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/support/hearing>
- Strategies and Tips for Dealing with Challenges: <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/support/strategies>
- Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources: <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/support/sampleconsideration>

CBLDF can also help by providing assistance with locating review resources, writing letters of support, and facilitating access to experts and resources. Call **800-99-CBLDF** or email [info@cblddf.org](mailto:info@cblddf.org) at the first sign of a First Amendment emergency!

### Report Challenges

Another essential step in protecting access to comics and other books is to report challenges when they occur. By reporting challenges, you help the free expression community gather necessary information about what materials are at risk so better tools can be created to assist. To report a challenge to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, call us at **800-99-CBLDF** or email [info@cblddf.org](mailto:info@cblddf.org). ALA also has an online reporting form at <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/online-challenge-reporting-form>



## FUNDRAISING

## COMING SOON



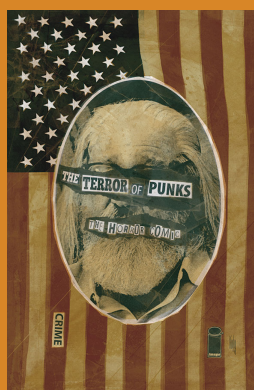
### Comic Book Club Handbook

Art by Rick Geary

Cover: Rick Geary

There's no need to limit your book club selections to only prose. Many — if not most — graphic novels are as appealing and as discussable as traditional book club selections. Start a comic book club in your community with the *Comic Book Club Handbook*. Available exclusively from CBLDF (\$3, <http://tinyurl.com/qfcb68>).

Debuts June 25, 2015, at the American Library Association Annual Conference!

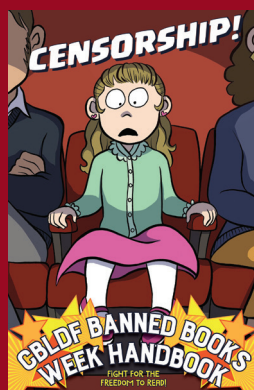


### Punks: The Comic CBLDF Special #1

by Joshua Hale Fialkov with art by Kody Chamberlain

Cover: Kody Chamberlain

EVERY RULE OF THE COMIC CODE WILL BE BROKEN IN THESE 32 PAGES. To say thanks for the assured mutual destruction, 20% of all profits will be donated to the CBLDF. Help support an amazing cause and be seduced by the innocent. Or corrupted by the corrupt. Either/or. On shelves July 1, 2015!



### CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook 2015

Cover: Raina Telgemeier

Everything you need to celebrate Banned Books Week! Boasting a cover by Raina Telgemeier, America's most popular kids comics creator — and one of the most frequently banned! This resource reveals what comics are banned, how to report and fight censorship, and how to make a celebration of Banned Books Week in your community! On shelves September 2, 2015!

## FOR DEFENDER READERS



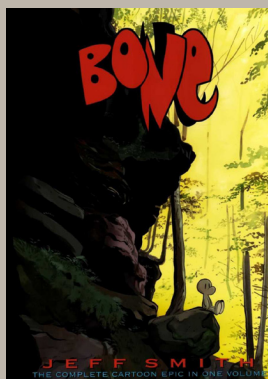
If you enjoyed this issue of *CBLDF Defender*, check out these premiums, available at special donation levels exclusively for *CBLDF Defender* readers! Your support makes *CBLDF Defender* possible!

### "Shoplifter" Print by Michael Cho

CBLDF has a very limited number of these gorgeous prints, numbered 1 through 20 and signed by artist Michael Cho. (\$20 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/o8z5b9j>).

### Bone One Volume Edition

Signed by long-time CBLDF supporter Jeff Smith, this volume collects every issue of Jeff Smith's award winning and generation-defining all-ages epic! After being run out of Boneville, the three Bone cousins, Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone, are separated and lost in a vast uncharted desert. One by one they find their way into a deep forested valley filled with wonderful and terrifying creatures. Mixing equal parts Walt Disney and JRR Tolkien, *Bone* is a modern comics classic (\$50 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/oexwafv>).



### The Complete Maus

The Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus* tells the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and his son, a cartoonist coming to terms with his father's story. *Maus* is a haunting tale within a tale. Vladek's harrowing story of survival is woven into the author's account of his tortured relationship with his aging father. Against the backdrop of guilt brought by survival, they stage a normal life of small arguments and unhappy visits. This item comes signed by artist Art Spiegelman (\$45 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/ontj4l6>).



### Defend Comics! Free Comic Book Day 2015 Edition

*Defend Comics* is a sampler of the great YA comics available and explores the censorship of comics with some of today's most talented creators!

Stories include "The Green Turtle Fights for Free Speech!" by Gene Luen Yang and Sonny Liew, "Rabbids!" by Dan Parent, "Princess Decompsia and Count Spatula" by Andi Watson, "Beanworld" by Larry Marder, "Archie Presents Kevin Keller" by Dan Parent, "Giants Beware!" by Jorge Aguirre and Rafael Rosado, and "A Tale of the Olympians: The Ears of King Midas" by George O'Connor (starts at \$5 donation for a bundle of ten, <http://tinyurl.com/neh97h7>).



## REWARDS ZONE SPOTLIGHT

Wear your love for banned comics! One of our most popular designs, this striking shirt was designed by Eisner Nominated letterer and designer Jared Fletcher. Wear it proudly, and show your support for free speech and CBLDF (\$20 donation, <http://tinyurl.com/qzwcsgq>)!







## 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 key-boards 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 line 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

### June 26–29: ALA Annual Conference

- Booth 0211
- <http://alaac15.ala.org/>

### July 9–12: Comic-Con International: San Diego

- Booth 1918
- Come early to join us at the San Diego Public Library for a live interview with Raina Telgemeier on Tuesday, July 7!
- On Thursday night, CBLDF kicks off Comic-Con with our intimate welcome party at the Westgate Hotel.
- Join us Saturday evening to bid on original art and more during our annual Comic-Con auction at the Hilton Bayside!
- <http://www.comic-con.org/cc/>

### September 19–20: Small Press Expo

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

### September 25–27: Baltimore Comic-Con

- <http://baltimorecomiccon.com/>

### September 27–October 3: Banned Books Week

- Celebrate young adult books during Banned Books Week 2015! The annual celebration of the freedom to read, will be observed in libraries, schools, bookstores and other community settings across the nation and the world!
- <http://bannedbooksweek.org/>

### October 8–11: New York Comic Con

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

Schedule subject to change. Visit [cbldf.org](http://cbldf.org) for updates.



Art by Michael Cho





## Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

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[info@cbldf.org](mailto:info@cbldf.org)

1-800-99-CBLDF

Compliments of:

## 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

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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

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### 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.)

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**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.