

A Display in an Envelope: Celebrating Freedom to Read at 38 Branches

By Monica Finn.

The Vancouver Island Regional Library system consists of 38 branches from Sooke at the base of Vancouver Island to Masset in the Haida Gwaii. To design a way for VIRL to celebrate Freedom to Read week, I knew I needed something interesting and easy to ship.

Creating a Display by Long Distance

Last year at the library branch where I work, I printed the [Challenged Books and Magazines List](#) available at the [Freedom to Read Week website](#) and left it out beside some challenged books. Customers read it, standing at the display for up to 10 minutes. The document explains the reasons given for challenges as well as the result which I think grabbed attention more than a row of titles.

The list hasn't been updated in the past year but it would still be interesting. Throughout, I received help from Laura Beswick, Adult Services and Readers' Advisory Divisional Manager—she located 35 Freedom to Read posters, one for almost every branch.

The [Freedom to Read Week website](#) gave me the main image of the display being challenged books wrapped in plain brown paper with just enough torn away to reveal the title. I took images of the 3 covers to a print shop where 38 colour copies were made of *Final Exit* by Derek Humphry, *Three Wishes* by Deborah Ellis, and *The Little Black Book for Girlz* by St Stephen's Community House. These books were on the [Challenged Books and Magazines List](#) as well as in the VIRL catalogue.

A couple of weeks before the event, I sent an envelope out to each branch with Freedom to Read posters, Duo-Tang folders, and colour copies of 3 book covers.

By email, staff received the list of challenged books on PDF in order to print the first 12 pages and put them in a Duo-Tang. The same email included a picture I'd made of the word BOOKS behind bars, two photos of the final display, and instructions on how to make the wrapped books.

Rather than send books, each branch found 3 discarded books of approximately the same size as the book covers. The "covers" were secured to the books and then wrapped in plain paper—the larger branches had craft paper or sheets of brown paper but the smaller ones did fine with standard printer paper. Then the paper was peeled back in a strip to show the title of each book.



The example of the final display emailed along with instructions.

As able, branches added chains, locks, and faux barb wire to their displays. They also added copies of any other challenged books that happened to be in the branch.

What the other 37 branches thought

Staff at the branches reported back with positive reviews of the ready made display and that only a few minutes were needed to set it up. I think we all enjoyed sharing something throughout our widespread system.

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