

Freedom to Read Week across BC

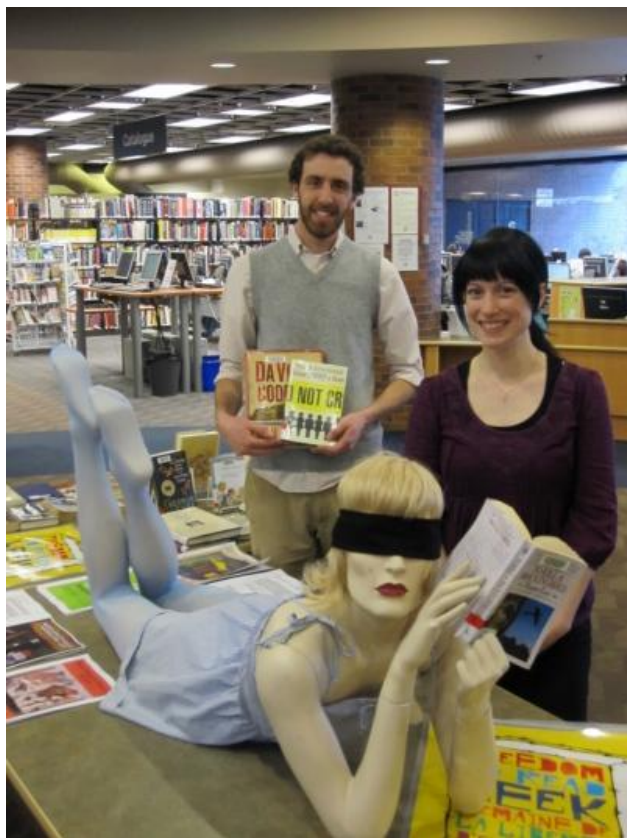
By Beth Davies.

This year's Freedom to Read Week (February 21st to 27th, 2010) had librarians across the province freeing books, blindfolding mannequins and doing all sorts of creative things to highlight intellectual freedom.

Beyond the Blindfold at GVPL

Avi Silberstein, the Outreach Librarian for Greater Victoria Regional Library describes their provocative and engaging Freedom to Read Week display.

"We thought it would be fun to have a mannequin – blindfolded – at the entrance to the library. So we made a few phone calls and visited a few stores, and after some persistence were able to convince the owner of a local consignment shop to loan us a mannequin.



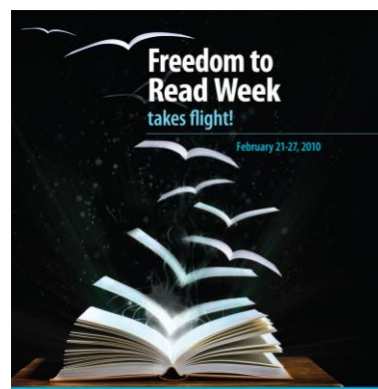
Avi and Leah with the blindfolded mannequin

We picked out a mannequin that was lying on her stomach with her hands near her face, dressed her up in clothes from the consignment store, and propped a book up in her hands. Then we tied on a blindfold. We put her up on a table, and filled an adjacent table with banned/challenged books. We also made sure to put up some signage explaining the display and that the books were there to be borrowed.

The response we received was overwhelmingly positive. Patrons loved it, staff loved it, and more than anything it got people to stop in their tracks and walk up to the display for a closer look."

Books Freed in New Westminster and Victoria

The New Westminster Public Library and the University of Victoria both used the Book Crossing web site to release banned and challenged books in their library, campus and neighbourhood. Susan Henderson of the University of Victoria said, "We're very pleased the event has captured people's attention and a lot more students are prepared to defend a book if called upon to do so at some point in their lives."



University of Victoria Libraries' poster

26 banned challenged books will be "released" on campus during Freedom to Read Week. Check out the display in the lobby to find out more about these titles and keep your eyes open for these "liberated" books.

For more great ideas from Freedom to Read Week, and to keep up with intellectual freedom issues and news:

<http://bclafc.wordpress.com/>

Beth Davies is co-chair of the BCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee.