

Please complete this form and send it with your entry to arrive on or before February 1, 2013.

Email your entry to: johncottondana@ala.org

Library Category:

All types of libraries are welcome to enter, and international entries are welcome. Entry narrative must be in English for review.

College/University

Public

School

Special

State

Friends Group

Library Associations

Library Consortia

Other _____

Country **USA**

Materials Included:

Send electronic versions of materials or appropriate websites used as part of the Strategic Communication Program you are entering for the John Cotton Dana Award. You do not need to produce additional media support exclusively for your entry.

Essential:

Project Narrative

Overall Presentation (.PDF, .DOC, .PPT, etc.)

Optional:

Video, Audio, photos, PDFs, etc.

Please type your answers; include separate pages as necessary.

1. Sent by: **LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Address: **707 Vermont Street**

City: **Lawrence**

State: **KS** Zip or mail code: **66044**

Country: **USA**

Phone: **785-843-3833** Fax: **785- 843-3368**

Library Director's name: **Brad Allen**

Contact Person for Entry:

Name: **Susan Brown**

Title: **Marketing Director**

Email: **sbrown@lawrencepubliclibrary.org**

Phone: **785-843-3833, ext. 123**

2. Short, Descriptive Title of Entry Submitted:

Banned Books Trading Cards

1. Duration of public relations/strategic communication program entered. The program must have occurred entirely during 2012, the 2011-2012 academic year, or a multi-year project completed in 2012.

Banned Books Week 2012

Starting date: **Sunday, October 28, 2012**

Ending date: **Saturday, November 3, 2012**

2. Budget (entries are evaluated in budget category):

Total annual library budget (including payroll): **\$3.2 million**

Cost of strategic communications program being submitted:

Cost to library: **\$0**

Value of in-kind contributions: **\$2,000**

Total cost of communication program: **\$2,000**

5. Project Participants:

Library staffing levels and budgets vary widely. Give reviewers a general idea of how your entry was developed and implemented. How much of your project was done by library employees?

In-House Contributions

Susan Brown, Marketing Director, served as project lead and Kathleen Morgan, Executive Director of Library Foudnation, provided support for FTRF grant proposal

External Support:

Did you use the services of an outside professional(s) on this program (for example, an advertising or public relations firm, media production Company, graphic designer)?

Yes

No

If "yes," list the services, vendors, and costs:

6. Copyright/Trademark:

Did you use copyrighted materials? Yes No

If "yes," are written copyright use permission letters included for any copyrighted or trademarked material? Yes No

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Banned Books Trading Card project was developed to meet three needs:

- 1. Raise awareness of Banned Books Week in a fresh and unique way.** Lawrence Public Library (LPL) has long celebrated Banned Books Week in the manner that many libraries do - with a display of banned or challenged books and a program or two about censorship. For the week's 30th anniversary, we wanted to do something fresh and unique to heighten awareness of challenges to intellectual freedom. With a population of nearly 90,000 people, Lawrence, KS is a college town with a large contingent of academics, writers, readers, and artists. We felt that the message of Banned Books Week would resonate deeply if presented in a creative way.
- 2. Engage the Lawrence arts community, both artists and arts organizations.** One of LPL's current goals is to build strategic partnerships with major community organizations and strong relationships with key demographic segments. By partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, we have strengthened our ties with the business community. Through programs and partnerships with the University of Kansas, we have reached out to university students and faculty. However, apart from offering gallery space, LPL had not directly engaged the local arts community - either individual artists or arts organizations - in many meaningful ways.
- 3. Bring greater exposure to local artists and support the marketing of Lawrence as an arts destination.** Lawrence is a small city with big artistic talent. Through festivals, art walks, and designated arts districts, civic leaders are currently working to market Lawrence as a regional and national arts destination. As both a gateway to our community and a showcase for all of the talent within, LPL is well-positioned to support this civic and economic initiative.

PLANNING

While the idea had been simmering for a few years, planning began in June 2012, when the project was awarded a \$1,000 Judith F. Krug Memorial Grant by the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF). The Friends of the Lawrence Public Library generously matched the grant, giving the project a total budget of \$2,000.

Because LPL had never coordinated an arts competition, we asked the Lawrence Arts Center (LAC) for assistance in planning the initial phase. LAC provided insight into possible ways to engage artists, including commissioning seven well-known artists or commissioning one artist for all seven pieces. Due to budget constraints and a desire to reach out to artists of all ages and at all stages of their careers, a community-wide Call for Artists was agreed upon and drafted by LPL with assistance from LAC. The only requirements for submission were:

- Artists had to live in Lawrence/Douglas County
- Artwork had to be inspired by a banned book or author
- Pieces had to be submitted on paper
- A brief Artist's Statement had to accompany the submission

The Call for Artists also detailed the selection process and the rewards for the chosen pieces. The selection jury was comprised of Brad Allen, LPL Director; Ben Ahlvers, LAC's Director of Exhibits; and Lucia Orth, a local author and library supporter. While no monetary reward was attached, the winning art would be reproduced as a trading card and featured in a week-long exhibit at LAC. All of the other submitted pieces would be exhibited in the LPL lobby and on the LPL website.

The Call for Artists went out in July and was publicized by LPL and by local arts organizations, including LAC, the Lawrence Arts Guild, the Lawrence Arts Commission, and area galleries and artists' collectives. By the deadline, we had received 46 entries from artists of all ages and degrees of experience – high school students, college students, and established artists. After three hours of deliberation, the jury chose seven pieces to be printed as trading cards.

After the art was selected, we reached out to local businesses to help produce high-quality cards. A local digital services company donated high-resolution scans of all seven pieces, and while there are several online sources for printing trading cards, we wanted to involve local businesses as much as possible and so contracted with a local printing company to produce the cards. The front of each card featured the art and the back was designed to have the look and feel of a trading card, with a background reminiscent of cardboard, "stats" about each book and artist, and the logos of all project partners at the bottom. 600 sets were printed, with 400 to be given away, 150 set aside for promotional giveaways, and 50 sets to be divided among the artists.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic execution was essential to the project's success and was designed to maximize word-of-mouth buzz and encourage visitors to the library every day during Banned Books Week. One card would be unveiled and distributed each day – 300 at LPL and 100 at LAC. While previous days' cards would be distributed throughout the week if available, a limited run was printed. To guarantee a complete set, participants had to visit LPL or LAC every day. To build even more buzz, a "sneak peek" event was planned.

Two days before the start of Banned Books Week, we hosted a Final Fridays reception in our auditorium to unveil the seven winners and to launch the exhibit of all submissions. Final Fridays is a monthly downtown art walk where art lovers can stop by galleries to view art installations and mingle with artists. LPL usually participates with a small "punch and cookies" type reception, but for this event, we hosted a larger, after-hours affair with desserts from a local bakery and wine from a local vineyard.

Nearly 150 people attended, including four of the winning artists and several of the artists who had submitted pieces. The winning art was displayed in frames, with large format reproductions hung behind them and artists stationed nearby to chat with guests. Just outside the auditorium, the other 39 original pieces were displayed with artists standing nearby. Although the first card was not officially available until Sunday, there was a door prize drawing for 12 full sets of cards. The winners were thrilled to receive a complete set and helped to spread the word-of-mouth buzz about the project.

On Sunday, there was even more buzz, due to a front page feature article in the local newspaper, the *Lawrence Journal World* (LJW). We had hoped to have each day's card printed in the paper, but the budget precluded paid advertising. After sending a press release, we followed up by phone with the LJW and pitched the story. They not only agreed to print each day's card, they agreed to print them on the front page and develop a Sunday feature as well. This earned media helped sustain the buzz about the project throughout the week.

In addition to the front page of the paper, the plan for releasing each day's card included:

- A large format version of the card in the library lobby
- Card image on LPL website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed
- Card image on partner's websites and social media, including LAC and FTRF

The route to the service desk where the cards were distributed went past several points featuring information about banned books:

- The exhibit of all art submissions in the lobby, with the large format version of each day's card next to it
- "Cozy Up to a Banned Book" installation that encouraged people to sit down and peruse some banned books
- A large display of banned or challenged books with Banned Books Week buttons and bookmarks

On Sunday, staff recorded increased foot traffic, the lobby exhibit was crowded with viewers, numerous positive comments were posted on social media and just over 200 of the first day's 300 cards were distributed at LPL within 6 hours. This level of interest and participation continued all week long.

CREATIVITY

Artistic creativity was central to the entire project – without great art, the cards would not have been as popular. The styles of art ran the spectrum – from the book jacket illustration for *Animal Farm* to the mixed-media piece for *Rabbit Run*, with an actual burned book cover. *Slaughterhouse Five* and *The Origin of Species* showcased two different stylistic approaches to digitally-native art. *The Call of the Wild* card showed off a talented teen artist. *Little Red Riding Hood* and *1984* represented two of the oldest and newest artistic forms – wood block printing and comic book illustration. The remaining 39 pieces also represented highly creative artwork and a variety of styles, making the lobby and online exhibits interesting and engaging.

The creative format for the project was part of the draw as well. Art trading cards have been popular for some time, but combining them with the message of intellectual freedom was a fresh approach that also provided great inspiration to the artists. Artists, art lovers, writers, and readers are groups that are all affected by censorship and challenges to artistic and intellectual freedom. Presenting the big ideas of this topic in the small format of an art trading card resonated with both artists and card collectors.

Creative social promotion played a key role in the project's success. Each day's card was posted on Facebook and Twitter with a call to action of "Get today's card before it's gone!" which reinforced the message that the cards were a limited run collector's item. Messages like "If you think today's card is great, wait until you see tomorrow's!" help build anticipation for the next day's card. As the week progressed, the number of likes, comments, shares, and retweets continually increased. LPL also leveraged the viral nature of social media by encouraging FTRF, LAC, and others to share the cards on their social media.

EVALUATION

Based on the project's stated goals, it was an overwhelming success:

Raise awareness of Banned Books Week in a fresh and unique way. While it is nearly impossible to gauge the level of awareness before the cards were launched, it is clear that our community knows more about Banned Books Week now:

- Via the front page, the LJW's 16,000+ readers were exposed to the message of Banned Books Week every day that week.
- At LPL, increased foot traffic was registered all week long, and everyone who came in to get a card was surrounded with information about the freedom to read. The cards provided a teachable moment at the Reference Desk, as staff answered countless questions about why each book was banned or challenged.
- Our social media audience was exposed to the message of Banned Books Week. At the time, our Facebook following was approximately 3,000 and our Twitter following was around 2,800. The cards were seen by these followers and then shared by many of them. As a result of the viral nature of social media, in the course of the week, we gained nearly 100 new followers on both Facebook and Twitter.
- By week's end, we had given away more than 400 sets of cards, and everyone who received a set now possesses a permanent, hand-held reminder of Banned Books Week as well as a collection of beautiful artwork from Lawrence artists.

Engage the Lawrence arts community, both artists and arts organizations. Because of this project, LPL has new connections in the arts community. Local artists have a new perspective on LPL as a creative community center and many have already begun asking about submission deadlines for the 2013 cards. By including LAC, an anchor arts organization, in the project planning and execution, they shared in the positive PR and exposure associated with the project. By asking other area arts organizations to help publicize the project, we have new contacts at each of these organizations and are already planning new programs and other joint ventures.

Bring greater exposure to local artists and support the marketing of Lawrence as an arts destination. The project brought a great deal of attention to Lawrence artists, in both local and national media outlets:

- The LJW feature was picked up by the AP Wire, and appeared in newspapers in Seattle, Chicago, and elsewhere
- Via social media, the cards were discovered by national media outlets, including *Flavorwire*, *Vulture*, and *Huffington Post*
- Book-related outlets promoted the project, including *GalleyCat*, *BookRiot*, and Nancy Pearl's *Publisher's Weekly* column
- Library-related outlets featured the cards, including the *Library as Incubator* project

Beyond the three stated goals, the project created a few surprise outcomes that continue to raise awareness of challenges to intellectual freedom and bring greater exposure to local artists, well after the end of 2012's Banned Books Week.

Only an hour or so after the first card was released, we started receiving inquiries via email and social media from people well outside of the Lawrence area, asking if the cards were for sale. We had held back some cards for PR purposes and were initially open to mailing a few sets out to other libraries that might be interested. However, by Monday, national interest was so high that we needed to develop a different approach in order to meet demand.

To capitalize on national interest and on the week itself, we quickly set up a way for the cards to be purchased. Within one 24 hour period, we drafted an agreement with all seven artists for the sale of an additional run of cards, had an extra 1,000 cards printed, and set up a PayPal site for sales. Under the terms of the agreement, each artist receives 5% of every set sold with the rest going back to the library to cover costs of production, sales, and shipping. Although the cards went up for sale on Wednesday of Banned Books Week, we made it clear that Lawrence area residents could still get them for free during the week, and in fact made an additional 50 sets of free cards available at LPL. After Banned Books Week, cards were available for sale at the library as well.

As this application is being written, we are still selling cards via our website and at the Circulation Desk, months after Banned Books Week ended. So far, we have shipped nearly 800 sets to every state in the US, as well as Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The sales of the cards have been a great by-product of the project, bringing continued exposure for the library and the artists and heightened awareness of Banned Books Week. Card sales have resulted in a modest, unexpected monetary benefit for the artists. For the library, the project has not only paid for itself, but card sales continue to bolster the marketing budget.

We have also received many inquiries from librarians around the country interested in replicating the project and creating cards themselves. We have shared our approach and process with numerous libraries and if only a few of them actually create cards this year, 2013 will see similar cards at libraries throughout the country, spreading the message of intellectual freedom and promoting local artists in many different communities. LPL is planning to make Banned Books Trading Cards an annual initiative and The Friends of the Library have already allocated funds for 2013 cards. We expect even more entries this year and with an annual Banned Books Trading Cards project, we look forward to continuing to deliver a big message in a small format.

Banned Books Trading Cards - Project Budget

All figures are rounded off and this budget snapshot is based on sales of 800 sets thus far.

Project Funds

Freedom to Read Foundation grant	\$ 1,000.00
Friends of the Library matching grant	\$ 1,000.00
Total	\$ 2,000.00

Project Expenses

Original print run

600 sets of cards	\$ 750.00
Large format versions for display	\$ 200.00
Frames, foam core, exhibit materials	\$ 275.00
Final Fridays reception	\$ 250.00
Total	\$ 1,475.00

Second print run

1,000 sets of cards	\$ 465.00*
Shipping supplies	\$ 75.00
Postage	\$ 175.00
Payment to artists (35% of sales)	\$ 1,960.00
Total	\$ 2,675.00

Total expenses	\$ 4,150.00
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Project revenues

Total sales as of 2/2013	\$ 5,600.00
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Total profit for library as of 2/2013 (Revenues minus expenses)	\$1,450.00**
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*The printer offered to sell us the overrun from the original printing at a discounted price.

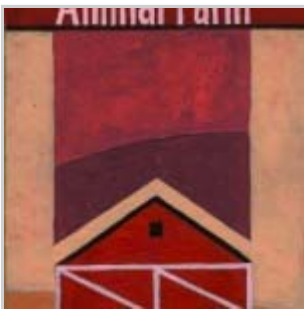
**While the original project was seeded with grant money and cards were intended to be given away freely, the subsequent sales of the cards have provided an unexpected monetary benefit for the artists involved and a way to bolster the marketing budget for the library.



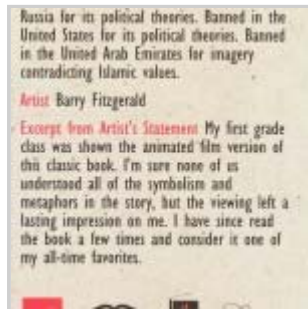
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Concise Project Summary: With seven collectible trading cards featuring art inspired by banned books and created by local artists, Lawrence Public Library’s Banned Books Trading Card project sought to raise awareness of Banned Books Week in a unique way, engage the local arts community, and bring wider exposure to the talented artists living and working in our community. The project achieved these goals, garnered national media attention, and resulted in a few surprising outcomes that have given the project an extended life, long after the end of 2012’s Banned Books Week.



Sunday - front



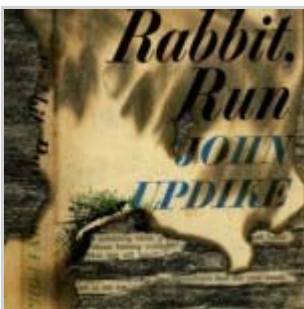
Sunday - back



Monday - front



Monday - back



Tuesday - front



Tuesday - back



Wednesday - front



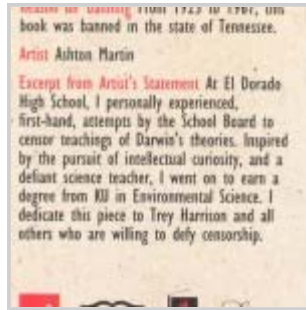
Wednesday - back

Required Materials:

- [Application form](#) (PDF)
- [Three page project description](#) (PDF)



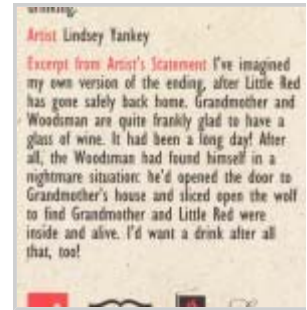
Thursday - front



Thursday - back



Friday - front



Friday - back



Saturday - front



Saturday - back

- [Project budget](#) (PDF)

Supporting Materials:

- [Banned Books Trading Cards web page](#) (NB - comments section)
- [Banned Books Trading Cards web exhibit](#) (NB - comments section)

- [Press Release](#) (via PitchEngine)

- [Media exposure](#)
- [Facebook promotion](#)
- [Twitter promotion](#)
- [Testimonial from Kent Smith, trading card artist](#)
- [Testimonial from Jonathan Kelley, Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
- [Public comments](#)
- [Photos from Final Fridays reception](#)
- [Call for Artists](#)

Lawrence Public Library, 700 New Hampshire St, Lawrence, KS 66044

Main number (716) 842-2222

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