Cheyenne Kelly and Jill Stockton

Captain Underpants and the Conundrum of Creating a Custom Cookie Cutter

Creating a Unique, Edible Treat for Banned Books Week

The University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno, celebrated Banned Books Week in late September 2024 by hosting their popular Edible Books Festival. The annual event celebrates the freedom to read and spotlights current and historical attempts to censor books in libraries and schools. Each fall semester, the University Libraries' Outreach Committee, faculty, and staff host the Edible Banned Books Festival to show the libraries' shared support of the freedom to read.

At the Edible Books Festival, which took place inside the Mathewson IGT-Knowledge Center Breezeway, participants and passers-by were presented with opportunities to learn about banned and challenged books, enjoy a sweet treat from the University Libraries, and view and vote for their favorite edible banned book creation presented at the festival. Each of the clever, food-related, edible, banned book-themed entries included was created by the library's faculty and/or staff.[1]

In 2024, we had a very unique entry to the festival—the *Captain Underpants* cookie. Did you know the *Captain Underpants* books are among ALA's list of the top 100 most banned and challenged books from the past decade, due to complaints from parents about violent imagery? In recognition of *Captain Underpants* consistently being listed among ALA's banned books list, our Coordinator for E-Resources and Discovery, Cheyenne Kelly, wanted to create an edible *Captain Underpants* cookie to help celebrate Banned Books Week, and use her University Libraries-learned skills to make her own 3D-printed *Captain Underpants* cookie cutter.[2]

The Captain Underpants Cookie – Cheyenne Kelly

This event is one of my favorite events that the University Libraries puts on every year. I truly believe in freedom of information (even if I do not agree with the information), which led me to want to work for the libraries in the first place. People have the right to consume information and apply their judgment to it, regardless of their age or background. Book bans cause so much harm to the schools and libraries that have to deal with them, not only in reducing the available information but also in expending legal fees that could be used to provide resources instead. This is especially harmful for public libraries where the community relies on the free services.

Cheyenne Kelly is coordinator, discovery and e-resources at the University of Nevada, Reno, email: cheyennekelly@unr.edu. Jill Stockton is marketing communications specialist at the University of Nevada, Reno, email: jbstockton@unr.edu.

I first started reading *Captain Underpants* in middle school, and the humor in the books is what caught my imagination. In 2023, I worked the volunteer table for the festival, and *Captain Underpants* was on the poster of banned books on display at the event. University students participating in the event kept commenting on how surprised they were to see it on the list. The main reason I could find was that it was "unsuited for age group." I wanted to make the *Captain Underpants* cookie for the 2024 Festival would help bring attention to the silliness of banning books like *Captain Underpants*—the age-appropriate subversiveness of potty humor is what gets kids interested in reading in the first place.

I was blessed to have the opportunity to come back to school at the University in 2021 for a second bachelor's degree in Information Systems. At that time, I was able to gain employment as a student worker at the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library Makerspace despite being a nontraditional University student. I loved working at DeLaMare and learned so much during my time on the University Libraries' team. The Makerspace requires a two-week intensive training to learn all the machines found in the space, but it takes more time to fully learn the quirks and tricks of using the machines and their software.

The Makerspace was my first real exposure to 3D printing. Despite being fiddly, these machines were my favorite to watch and listen to while they were running. Over time, I learned various ways to troubleshoot the machines and print settings to get a quality print. I ended up focusing on mastering Adobe Illustrator for 2D vector images and Autodesk Tinkercad for creating 3D items. Adobe Illustrator is software provided by the University, while Tinkercad is a free 3D modeling program that is geared toward public schoolers, making it a perfect introduction to creating 3D objects for someone completely new, like me! Although I have started learning other 3D modeling software for more complicated projects, I still use Tinkercad for simple or quick projects.

As time went on, I promised myself I would get my own 3D printer when I got a full-time job. In 2023, I found the posting for my current position and was hired. As soon as I got my first paycheck, I purchased my 3D printer, an Ender-3 S1 Pro. I have experimented with materials and techniques that our machines in the Makerspace did not have available during my time there, such as PETG and different slicing software for running the print itself.

Fast forward to fall 2024; here is how I made our hero: I used Illustrator to trace an image of *Captain Underpants*, converting him into a black and white vector image. I also used Illustrator to create offset lines of my image. These offset lines were used to create a back for the image stamp and the cutter itself. I then exported all of my parts as individual SVG files, which allowed me to import the 2D lines into Tinkercad.

In Tinkercad, the import process automatically converts the image into a 3D block, so all I had to do was adjust the heights of each part and merge the pieces to create my final 3D parts. I then exported these files and printed them out in PETG, which is considered a food-safe plastic. I then found "the best sugar cookie recipe" on Pinterest and made my cookies. I would first use the outline cutter to cut the cookie, then use the image stamp to mark the cookies with our hero. Once I had completed my project, I posted my files on Thingiverse.com so others could make their own!

Conclusion

The University of Nevada, Reno University Libraries are committed to providing student employees with a diverse range of professional experiences while on the job. In this instance,

Cheyenne learned new skills while on the job as a student and was able to leverage what she learned into a full-time role with the libraries after graduation. Additionally, she continues to flex her experience gained in creative ways, such as making the cookie cutter for Banned Books Week 2024. Now that is what we call a happy ending! ⌇

Notes

1. You can see images from the festival by visiting the University Libraries at the University of Nevada, Reno Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/unevadalibraries/.

2. Read more about how Kelly used knowledge learned during her time as a student worker within the University Libraries' DeLaMare Science and Engineering Makerspace to pull off one of the cutest and most creative edible creations, *Captain Underpants* cookies, seen at the festival, at https://library.unr.edu/places/delamare/themakerspace.