CENSORSHIP: ISSUES AND RESPONSES

For English Teachers At All Levels
April, 1980 Volume 22, No. 3
Contents of This Issue

CENSORSHIP: ISSUES AND RESPONSES

Intellectual Freedom: One Answer for the 1980's in Wisconsin
Susan L. Heath, Nicolet College, Rhinelander

Across-the-Board and Bed Are Dirty Words?
Edward B. Jenkinson, Indiana University, Bloomington

Selection Versus Censorship: An Attempted Definition
Lee Burrell, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Sense and Censorship
Catherine A. Ball, Marshfield Senior High School

In Defense of Controversy
Don Patten, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Community Conflict and the Schools: Procedures for Response
J. Charles Park, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

School Newspapers and the First Amendment
Robert H. Willis, Editor, Milwaukee Sentinel

Censorship Focus on Judy Blume
Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Books for Teachers
Review of The Reader, the Text, the Poem by Louise M. Rosenblatt
Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Books for Children and Adolescents
Mary Jett-Simpson, Linda Western, Richard Western, Mary Meiser

© Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, 1980

The Wisconsin English Journal is published three times annually in October, January, and April by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 54481. Subscription rate is $5.00 per year for individuals and $6.00 per year for individuals at educational institutions and organizations. Membership is available to literacy educators, educators, and students. Membership includes a subscription to the journal. Mail subscriptions are processed every year, and the next issue is mailed to members in the fall. Postage is prepaid on all subscriptions mailed to the United States of America and its territories and possessions, and all other countries in the same manner as postage rates. All business communications regarding advertising, subscriptions, and orders, as well as all manuscripts and correspondence referring to the editorial content of the Wisconsin English Journal should be addressed to the Editor, Wisconsin English Journal, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 54481.
INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM: ONE ANSWER FOR THE 1980's IN WISCONSIN

SUSAN L. HEATH
Nicolet College, Rhinelander

AMENDMENT 1 - 1791

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free access thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for the redress of grievances.

1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE FIRST AMENDMENT

The framers of the Constitution envisioned the First Amendment to be a contract between the people and their Government. Through it, the framers' primary objective was to create an acceptance of and a tolerance for differences of opinion, no matter how they were stated, whether written, spoken, or visualized. The Amendment further guarantees U.S. citizens that the principle governing philosophies of their democratic republic would remain in the hands of the people. It was written with the intention of forming and establishing a national attitude and a consciousness toward individual rights.

Most constitutional scholars recognize a dichotomy of interests within the First Amendment. On the one hand there is a need for the acceptance of freedom of expression; on the other there is a need for control and order. With this dichotomy in mind, it is important to note and understand that we are living in a period of great uncertainty. Even though people are clamping to and demanding order, the freedom of expression should never be suppressed.

Challenges to our First Amendment are constantly occurring. Many people are returning to religions which foster a blind acceptance of church-taught fundamental moral values. Many church-goers approach their daily living, their children's education, and controversial issues such as homosexuality and abortion with these values firmly in mind. Some people are seeking regulations regarding these issues, and many are winning acceptance of their values through the legal process. New local ordinances have been drafted and have been later approved by voters against the practice of homosexuality and against pornography. These legal actions are taking place, not only at the local level, but also at the highest level, the Supreme Court.

Other groups are also challenging the First Amendment on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Some radical women's groups are forming specifically to attack pornography. They are trying to censor films, books and magazines that they feel are degrading to all women. Robert Shea in his recent article, "Women at War" emphasizes that: "This supposedly new movement is, for the most part, reiterating the tired and fallacious argument conservative and pro-censorship outfits like CDL (Citizens for Decent Literature) have been spouting for decades." Shea explains that: "The women hope to arouse public indignation through demonstrations and other publicity, thereby making pornography socially unacceptable." These same women are busy organizing both primary and secondary boycotts to achieve their goals. Secondary boycotts by some women's groups are putting pressure on stores and theaters not to carry books, magazines and films that they find offensive. Shea further argues that: "The secondary boycott is a form of censorship that unfairly prevents the public from making its own decisions about buying or not buying the material in question." Both the radical women's groups and some fundamentalist groups are trying to regulate our freedom of expression through their actions.

Other political tactics are also being successfully used to weaken the First Amendment. From the local to the national level, the power of appointment enjoyed by elected officials has tremendously important consequences. An example of the abuse of this power can be seen in a pending case filed in the Federal District Court of Utah. There Jeanne Layton, Director of the Davis County Public Library, was fired while carrying out the written board-approved policy. The firing came after twenty years of good service when a local pressure group, "Citizens For True Freedom," was able to place two members of their group to serve on the Davis County Library Board and was thereby able to gain a voting majority on the board. Layton was fired even though the local press, TV stations and the Utah Library Association opposed the action and spoke out in her defense. At the national level the presidential power of appointment to the Supreme Court has contributed to a trend in court decisions, which according to some legal scholars, are eroding First Amendment rights. First Amendment scholar, Robert N. O'Neill (recently appointed as President of the University of Wisconsin System) has stated that the Supreme Court has upheld major constraints on the liberties of expression and communication during the past several years.

One of the cases cited by O'Neill was the 1973 Supreme Court case, Miller v. California. This decision presented a new set of guidelines which plainly stated that local units of government could use and enforce local community standards in judging a book, a film, or other material, as obscene. Prior to this decision, the word "community" was used to describe the nation as a whole. Unfortunately, this Supreme Court ruling has opened the door and allowed local communities to impose their private tastes and morals on all segments of our society within the local community. In 1974, the CIA, as a party in the Marchetti case, laid the legal groundwork for the potential censoring of political publications. This form of control had been unprecendented in the U.S. before then. In 1979 two cases (Pico v. Board of Education and Bicknell v. Vergennes Union High School) were drawn to the attention of educators and librarians because of the far-reaching implications they might have on the future of education. The student's right to freely read and to be informed as well as the teacher's right to teach, using the censored materials, are currently being restricted or denied within these school systems.

While legally not as grim as the 1950's, when writers and film producers were being placed on public trial for supposedly having communist leanings, the tenor of the late Seventies and probably the early Eighties seems to be one of reaction by the Courts, reaction by women's groups, reaction on the part of many "moral conservatives." There is a fear and an intolerance brewing which tends to eliminate the free flow of informa-
tion, of opinions and of discussion. Because of this, there is a rise in the number of pressure groups that seek to promote their own personal viewpoints at the expense of others. The swing toward a more regimented society, the free flow of information is being sought by many Americans. An appeal toward this type of regimentation seems to be almost faddistic in nature. Issues such as pornography, sex education, homosexuality. The Equal Rights Amendment and abortion have been attacked vigorously at all levels of government. Lobbyists, on behalf of these pressure groups, have effectively persuaded others to join in their efforts and to contribute money to their causes.

These fears and tendencies toward intolerance have permeated the way many parents view their community's educational system and the way they view many of the teaching methods currently being used. The desire of these pressure groups is to see their dogmas and moral absolutes become the only acceptable philosophy taught within the schools, read about in books or magazines, or seen on film. Demanding these narrow viewpoints can only result in a very ominous atmosphere in which to raise children or to search for new ideas. Richard Hofstadter aptly defines this brand of 'anti-intellectualism,' which has grown during the Seventies, as "a resentment and a suspicion of the life of the mind and those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the values of that life . . . ."

John Stuart Mill said:

The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way so long as we do not deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is to be the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, mentally, or spiritually. Mankind are greater gainers of suffering each other to live as seems good to the rest.

Since 1991, the First Amendment has been applauded, defended, scorned, and tested in the courts by many citizens seeking their rights. Many would-be censors will either not have heard of Mill's famous quotation or they will choose to ignore it as they continue to test the First Amendment during the Eighties in order to pursue their own goals.

2. KNOW THE ENEMY

Many of our country's once held philosophies, exemplified by the First Amendment, are now once again under serious attack. Censorship has been a central issue in the concerns of humanists since Plato proposed to abolish "poets" from the Republic. The ground rules for censors, however, have changed since Plato's time. Humanists must now regroup and deal with that change. Various pressure groups are battling to make their beliefs the beliefs of others. Censors are bent upon suppressing materials which they feel might be capable of destroying, distorting or perverting their personal perceptions of what the "True" picture of life should be. They do not simply combat words and ideas with more of the same. Rather, they use extreme pressure to attain their goals. Many intellectual freedom scholars have noted that censors tend to look for simplistic solutions to answer genuinely complex issues. They also feel that the activities of these censors are aimed at preventing individuals from properly judging for themselves, and ultimately analyzing the merit and values of their own ideas, or those of others. Robert Shea reminds his readers:

In a free society, one combats words, images and ideas, not with force, legal or illegal, but with other words, images, and ideas. Anyone threatened or maimed has the right to launch a campaign of counterpropaganda that is as loud, vigorous and ingenious as she or he can manage.

One of the most frustrating aspects of censorship and about those who censor is that one never knows what will be attacked, when it will be attacked, exactly who will attack or why they will attack. One area of their attack has been the classroom. Many censoring parents want to limit the teacher's right to teach and the student's right to read and to be informed. Much of the censorship activity against the schools originates from groups of "concerned parents." These groups often look to Mel and Norma Gabler as their mentors. The Gablers operate a textbook reviewing agency, called Educational Research Analysts, from their home in Longview, Texas. They support these concerned parents groups and they all frequently complain of political bias, of a lack of patriotism, and ultimately, of a failure to provide today's students with firm moral guidance. It is not only textbooks, magazines, school curricula and other forms of media that are under attack, but also ideas, political philosophies, personal values and teaching methods.

As a result of these attacks, paranoia has been unleashed in many parts of the country. Recently it surfaced in the small northern Indiana town of Warsaw. There, the local school board has banned five books including The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath, Growing Up Female edited by Eve Merriam, and a book that was also burned by a local group of senior citizens in a parking lot! Teachers were fired, the student newspaper, while defending the book and teachers, was eliminated, and nine English courses were withdrawn from the curriculum.

Some Warsaw parents feel, like the Gablers do on the national level, that their basic values are "being thrown out the door" due to the current structure of today's education. The battle will be fought between the forces the Gablers represent, who believe that back to the basics in the context of a Christian moral atmosphere is the answer (this approach to education inviting the elimination and censorship of materials due to the strict adherence to reading, writing and arithmetic skills), and those parents who oppose the barebones approach to educating today's youth, who feel that their children should be given the broadest array of materials and programs to prepare them for living in a complicated and diverse society and world (meaning courses in the humanities and social sciences which teach independent thinking and questioning as they explore different values and ideas). American education has entered the Eighties with the lines drawn for what may be one of the biggest battles ever fought within our schools.

The Gablers' influence with parents has spread throughout the country and their network is well organized, strong, and getting stronger. One example of this can be seen in Minnesota where Parents of Minnesota and Young Parents Alert, supported by the Gablers, keep prevailing upon Minnesota school boards and others to adopt their viewpoints and to change their educational philosophies. Wisconsin communities have also been affected by similar pressure groups. In Kenosha, Jil Wilson organized a group called Parents, and in Milwaukee, the Voice of Christian Youth radio sta-
tion tried to apply pressure upon the Milwaukee Public Library to remove books relating to yoga, meditation, the occult and sex education. Similarly, a special Coalition For Children was established in Prince George's County, Maryland to voice disapproval of topics such as THR, assertiveness training, transactional analysis, parent-teacher effectiveness, management by objectives and rap sessions. These were all targets for their concern.

A specific example of the actions of the Coalition For Children can be seen in their efforts to censor the book, *Our Bodies Ourselves.* In 1977, *Today's Education* listed this book as one of the "Best Books For Young Adults." Dorothy Broderick, who is well known in library circles and who is also a youth advocate, feels that this has been one of the most attacked books in the country in the last year and a half, the target of a nationwide campaign which is both well organized and systematic. In referring to such groups as the Coalition For Children, Broderick states:

They are able to find an enemy of the family under every federal program, behind every library stack and within every classroom. What emerges is a picture of a group of adults who find themselves living in a hostile world filled with enemies 'out to get them.' They are people whose world is filled with 'oughts' and 'shoulds' and any indication that other people are freer in their decision-making processes arouses in them a severe feeling of anxiety and resentment.

Broderick further emphasizes that knowing one's enemies is the first rule in battling the censors effectively. It is the responsibility of intellectual freedom advocates to find out what the censors dislike and fear, what they want changed, and how they plan on instituting that change. Then, as supporters of the First Amendment they can fight just as hard to defeat those plans.

3. INTO THE EIGHTIES: ONE ANSWER IN WISCONSIN

Advocates of intellectual freedom have many pressing concerns as they face the Eighties. Censorship of books and other curricular materials has increased. High school press censorship is on the rise. Attacks have been made on theater productions and films. Even national magazines like the Progressive have been under governmental attack. Reporters have been under close scrutiny and sent to jail for not divulging their sources. The confidentiality of library records is another issue yet to be addressed adequately by most state legislatures. So-called Parents Rights Amendments are reappearing annually in our statehouses. Meeting rooms within public libraries are being denied for many of the wrong reasons. All of these issues test the validity of the First Amendment.

With this changing American mood becoming more and more evident, eight national educational associations including the National Council of Teachers of English, have joined together to form an Academic Freedom Group. This Academic Freedom Group is planning and implementing regional workshops around the country to introduce more educators to the importance of maintaining First Amendment freedoms and to the necessity of establishing similar groups on statewide levels. The prototype conference, held in March, 1978, in Indianapolis, was attended by representatives from five midwestern states. The primary goal of the conference was to produce an amendable and exportable model for such conferences to be held in individual states in order to further foster the goals of the Academic Freedom Group.

Wisconsin delegates immediately began the task of forming a viable and diversified group of educators. During the first meeting in May, 1978, the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition was formed. Mutual goals and concerns were discussed and a Statement of Principles was drafted. A committee was formed to draft a Constitution and By-Laws and these documents were then presented to the membership at the second meeting in September, 1978. Plans were also well under way for the First statewide conference on intellectual freedom. The formalized goals of the Wisconsin Intellectual Coalition are as follows:

1. To promote the free access to information: print, spoken and audio-visual which is guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
2. To act as a liaison between groups in Wisconsin who support the freedom of information.
3. To monitor legislation that will safeguard our intellectual freedom.
4. To sponsor activities promoting intellectual freedom.
5. To help those who are confronted with censorship problems.

With this fourth goal in mind, the March, 1979, "First Amendment Under Challenge" Conference was held in Madison. Over one hundred educators and interested citizens attended. Nationally known speakers spoke to these issues: how pressure groups can affect intellectual freedom, how school censorship is on the rise, how censorship problems were handled through two specific case studies, how legal issues affect censorship, and how educators can better prepare for meeting the censor within their school, library or community. A second conference was held in March, 1980, to continue the discussions of the previous conference, and to introduce other areas of concern. Children's rights, high school press censorship, media censorship, handling complaints, and the important topic of community relations were among the topics covered. Newsletters from the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition to its membership have maintained the dialogue. A speakers bureau has also been established to provide well qualified speakers to other state or local groups wishing to present programs relating to intellectual freedom. Monitoring state legislation

*Other Academic Freedom Group members include: International Reading Association, Speech Communication Association, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Council for the Social Studies, American Association of School Administrators and the American Library Association.*

--

is also on the Coalition's agenda. Lobbying to support positive legislation and to defeat repressive legislation will be a continuing commitment.

The Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition realizes that tendencies toward censorship usually begin at the local level and, therefore, have to be fought locally. The major thrust of the Coalition has been to provide a clearinghouse for recent information about intellectual freedom, to provide arguments and rationale which can be used to defend First Amendment rights in all areas of our society, and, finally, to provide clear statements of policy in an effort to give local libraries, schools and parents encouragement as they face difficult issues within their communities. Support in time of need is very important. Persuading local educators that good public relations with the local press, religious groups, school boards and PTA's is crucial to winning the battle against the censors, is a major responsibility of the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition. The Coalition feels that, although legal aid may become necessary in extreme cases, what is needed the majority of the time is calm, intelligent and alert responses by local citizens when intellectual freedom issues are at stake. The Coalition wishes to present practical details to working educators, whose job it is to implement and to help defend school and library policy at the local level.

Finally, in looking back at the history of the First Amendment and its ever-changing interpretations, I cannot help but think that there will be other tests yet to come, as well as other interpretations during the Eighties. It seems imperative that in order to protect the First Amendment freedoms we must begin to learn and utilize the successful tactics employed by those trying to undermine it. We must begin to follow Broderick's advice and learn about the enemy so that we can battle the censors more effectively. We must start now to maintain good public relations within our communities so that the groundwork is positively laid before crises arrive at our doorsteps. We must also pay heed to Judge Tauro's defense of the student's right to read in the Chelsea High School (Massachusetts) decision. Tauro states: "The most effective antidote to mindless orthodoxy is ready access to a broad sweep of ideas and philosophies. There is no danger in such exposure. The danger is in mind control." The Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition does not want to be caught in a position similar to the one pictured in the June 4, 1979, New Yorker cartoon, where two people are talking during a cocktail party and the one says to the other, "So what if the First Amendment does go, we still have twenty-five more."

NOTES

2. Ibid., p. 184.
3. Robert O'Neill, "The First Amendment: The Decade Ahead," (Speech delivered before the ALA Freedom To Read Foundation, Dallas, Texas, June 24, 1979.)
5. "Was Robin Just a Hoax?", Time, December 31, 1979, p. 76.
9. Ibid., p. 5.
11. Ibid., p. 231.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Michaels, Marguerite, "Public School Censors Try It Again," Parade Magazine, November 25, 1979, pp. 4-5.


O'Neill, Robert M., "The First Amendment: The Decade Ahead," (Speech delivered before the American Library Association, Freedom To Read Foundation, Dallas, Texas, June 24, 1979.)


Was Robin Just a Hoax?, Time, December 31, 1979, p. 76.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Suggestions for Dealing with Censorship of Media Center Materials: A Wisconsin Plan, Madison, WI, 1978, Bulletin #9233.
ACROSS-THE-BOARD AND BED ARE DIRTY WORDS?

EDWARD B. JENKINSON
Indiana University, Bloomington

A high school teacher of business education at Palm Bay High School (Rockledge, Florida) charged that The Random House Dictionary of the English Language—College Edition contains 23 "vulgaries." She filed a formal complaint with the school board of Brevard County, requesting that the dictionary not be used in the schools. The teacher warned that continued use of the dictionary in classrooms "could lead to widespread usage of these vulgarities by students. They could feel that these words are permissible language since they are included in classroom dictionaries."[1]

The task force appointed by the superintendent to review the dictionary disagreed with the business teacher. The teachers, administrators, and parent on the task force concluded that students would not use the words frequently nor think they were permissible simply because they are in a dictionary. "Children of this age have already learned what is a proper or inappropriate language," the task force noted. "This dictionary clearly labels the words slang or vulgar. The definitions are not sensationalized."[2]

Thus the RHD is probably safe at Palm Bay High School for the remainder of 1979 at least. But what will be its fate elsewhere? Will concerned teachers and parents in other communities look up the "vulgariest" in the book and file formal complaints against the dictionary in their school districts? Or, more likely, will concerned parents write to a national "textbook review clearing house," requesting a review of the RHD that can be modified for their own use and can be presented to the local school board as if they had done the research? Will the RHD become the target of the censors in 1979 and 1980, replacing the AHD (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) as the number one dictionary on the censors' hit list?[3]

The censors of school materials are self-appointed protectors of the young. As such, they know that they can attract attention and attain a great deal of publicity by pointing out every "dirty" word in every literary work, textbook, film, or resource book used in a school. They know that many parents will rise to protest books that contain, or allegedly contain, "dirty" words. The censors then may enlist the enraged parents in the campaign against some of their major targets: values clarification, psychology, mythology, sociology, anthropology, realistic history, and novels for adolescents that deal with current problems.

The "dirty" word, then, becomes the censors' stepping stone across what one outspoken critic calls the "river of pollution"—public school education. By mounting successful campaigns against books that contain so-called objectionable language, the censors can pick up recruits throughout the land who will help them dry up the "river of pollution."[4]

and destroy the public schools. But what is a "dirty" word? What can the censors use as examples of language that will arouse parents to the point that they would attempt to censor books?

The obscenity obliterators abhor words like hot, horny, and hooker. They disapprove of crooked, coke, and clap. Across-the-board leaves them aghast. Specific definitions of deflower and bed join several dozen other words on lists that the guardians of virtue classify as "blatantly offensive language."

In June of 1976, the school board voted four to three to remove the AHD from classrooms in Anchorage, Alaska. The decision was precipitated by complaints from a group of parents who called themselves People for Better Education. The organization said that definitions for the following words, among others, are offensive: ass, tall, ball, bed, knocker, and nut.[5]

Responding to the protest, the superintendent of schools appointed a reviewing committee that examined the AHD and approved it unanimously. Appearing before the school board, an assistant superintendent reported the findings of the committee, noted that "the ability of a child to look up 'dirty words' helped diffuse excitement and curiosity about them," and explained that the dictionary is "an excellent resource for advanced students, especially for scientific terms." As the assistant superintendent presented his arguments, four members of the school board sat with a list of definitions of 'objectionable' words in front of them. The four voted against the dictionary.[6]

After several parents charged that "seventy or eighty" words in the AHD are obscene or otherwise inappropriate for high school students, the board ordered the dictionary removed from the high school in Cedar Lake, Indiana.[7] In Eldon, Missouri, after twenty-four parents filed a complaint noting that thirty-nine words in the AHD are "objectionable," the school board voted to remove the dictionary from a junior high school.[8]

The dictionary protesters obviously overlooked almost all of the 155,000 words in the nearly 1,600 pages of the AHD and focused only on the so-called dirty words. One parent in Eldon was reported as saying: "If people learn words like that it ought to be where you and I learned it -- in the street and in the gutter." A school board member in Cedar Lake noted: "We're not a bunch of weirdo book burners out here, but we think this one [the AHD] goes too far."

The school board in Cedar Lake later reconsidered its decision and reinstated the AHD.[9]

Bed was one of the more frequently criticized entry words in the Cedar Lake controversy. Among the definitions are: "a place for lovemaking," a marital relationship, with its rights and intimacies," and "to have sexual intercourse with."

Anticipating a protest against the AHD and other dictionaries in 1976, Texas Education Commissioner Marlin Brockett stated that no works would be purchased that present material which would cause embarrassing situations or interfere in the learning atmosphere in the classroom. By quoting that sub-section of the Texas textbook adoption proclamation, Commissioner Brockett apparently justified the removal of these five dictionaries from the purchase list in Texas: the AHD, The Doubleday

Reprinted with the permission of the editors of Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association and the author.
The removal of the five dictionaries from the purchase list in Texas did not go unnoticed. Several organizations concerned with what is taught in the schools hailed the removal as a major victory. One such organization noted: 14

"God gave parents a number of victories. In Texas alone, the State Textbook Committee did a good job of selecting the best of the available books. Then, the State Commissioner of Education removed 10 books, including the dictionaries with vulgar language and unreasonable definitions.

That statement was included in an announcement distributed by Educational Research Analysts in Longview, Texas. Founded by Norma and Mel Gabler, ERA is billed as 'the nation's largest textbook review clearing house,' providing 'thousands of textbook reviews' that 'concentrate on pointing out 'questionable' content.'" 15

A person concerned with specific words and/or definitions in dictionaries can send a contribution to ERA and receive copies of the bills of particulars that led Dr. Brockett to place the five dictionaries on the no-purchase list. A concerned person can also request reviews of hundreds of textbooks.

The ERA-distributed reviews concentrate on what's wrong -- not with what's right -- with textbooks and dictionaries. Using such reviews as guidelines, concerned parents can underscore 'objectionable' passages in textbooks and take the books to school board meetings to point out why children should not have to study such works. The concerned parents do not have to indicate the sources of the objections; rather, all they have to do is get the ear of a sympathetic school board member and hope to get a book or dictionary removed from a public school.

The tactic works. Concerned citizens in a number of states have used ERA-distributed reviews to complain about "objectionable" books that contain "blatantly offensive language." Fortunately, the critics of education are not always successful with their attacks on books. However, the victories are more and more frequent, and each victory gives the censors renewed purpose.

As I write and speak about the new wave of censorship in the public schools, I frequently ask myself, or am asked, what can be done to prevent the removal of dictionaries and textbooks from the schools. Here are six steps that every person can take:

1. Check the wording of the state's textbook adoption bill to make certain that the language in it does not permit the removal of dictionaries and textbooks simply because they contain a few words that some people would construe to be "blatantly offensive."

2. Attend meetings of the school board (or school committee) and speak out, at appropriate times, for academic freedom and the students' right to learn.

3. Attend state or local hearings on textbooks submitted for adoption.
4. Form a local organization for the preservation of academic freedom and the students' right to know.

5. Write letters to the editor protesting the removal (or attempts at removal) of any books from the local schools.

6. Make certain that the local school system has an effective set of procedures for dealing with parental complaints about books.

NOTES
1 Orlando Sentinel-Star, January 17, 1979.
2 Ibid.
3 Joseph P. Bean, Public Education: River of Pollution, Fullerton, California: Educator Publications (undated).
5 Ibid., p. 116.
6 Ibid., November 1976, p. 145.
7 Ibid., November 1976, p. 145.
8 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 18, 1977.
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Undated "Bill of Particulars" submitted to the Texas Education Commissioner by the Textbook Chairman of the Texas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.
14 See green printed sheet distributed by Educational Research Analysts. The sheet is entitled "THE MEL GABLERS -- Consumer Advocates for Education."
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.

School Newspapers and the First Amendment
Continued from page 34

Both English and American experience had taught them that without all these freedom there could be no free government. And, they had learned that even in a country where the people are sovereign, no words of lesser force than 'shall not' -- enforceable in independent courts of law -- could restrain the servants of the people from acting as if they were the masters.

We owe ourselves and those who follow an obligation to recapture the concern and spirit which Madison referred to as the 'Great Freedoms.'

If freedom is a growing thing, it can mean no less today and tomorrow than it meant to those who wrote the First Amendment.

The First Amendment distinguishes us from all other societies. And, it works. Every time the First Amendment works, it makes us stronger.

So, take up the torch. The professional press needs you. The school community needs you, but more importantly, our democratic society needs you.

SELECTION VERSUS CENSORSHIP: AN ATTEMPTED DEFINITION

LEE BURRESS
University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

A common theme in discussions of controversial books is that all teachers and librarians are censors, and there is therefore no real difference between censorship and selection. This seems a form of reductionism, and quite wrong to me. There seem to be real differences between the attitudes and actions of the censor and those of the person engaged in selection processes. It is true that funds are limited by which any agency buys books, and a single lifetime is too short to read all the books printed, so that some books and magazines will be chosen and others omitted. But there are significantly different ways of choosing the material for school or library or personal reading.

It also seems true that there is a range of continuous variability in the processes for choosing what I shall call hereafter by that laborious term, learning resource materials, since we must pay attention not only to books but to magazines, films, paintings, newspapers, perhaps even wall posters or any other source of information. The Supreme Court in fact, in the case of Tinker versus Des Moines Independent Community School District, included wearing an armband as an expression of thought.

This range of variability may make it difficult in a given case to know whether a book was omitted as an act of censorship, or because there was not in fact enough money to buy it. It seems probable that some persons engaged in the selection process may on occasion act out of motives that might indeed be characterized as censorious. That is, a given person might omit a given book out of fear of the consequences, but report that the book was not ordered because of lack of funds. The difficulty of understanding human motives makes it impossible to describe each act accurately.

However, the several efforts that have been made in recent years to study this subject do reveal patterns that enable reasonable conclusions to be drawn about the processes of choosing learning resource materials. These patterns suggest that one end of the range of continuous variability in choosing materials is characterized by a negative approach, one that is undemocratic, that acts secretly, irrationally, and unprofessionally, in its attitude toward learning resources material. At the other end of this range of characteristics is a positive approach, one that is characterized by public actions, by a rational attitude and a professional manner of dealing with material.

Censorship is primarily negative. Its interest is in the prevention of the dissemination of particular items or of particular kinds of information. Thus particular books, currently for example Catcher in the Rye, become the object of attack. The Catholic Index was a list of particular books that could not be read by faithful members of the church (unless permission was granted to persons deemed able to handle the questionable items on the list). Also, particular categories of knowledge may be
attacked, i.e. sex education material in the schools, or theories of evolution, or the writings of a particular person, i.e. Karl Marx. Currently the curriculum entitled MACOS, based on sociological and anthropological knowledge, is being attacked.

Censorship seems undemocratic in several ways. It rests on an authoritarian attitude that implies an elite, often self-appointed, that believes it alone is able to decide what the larger society should be allowed to read. Moreover, the censor very often acts in secret ways. He does not want the larger public to know that some book or piece of information has been denied. In totalitarian states, newspapers sometimes attempt to let the public know by leaving white spaces. Libraries or schools, however, often keep their censored materials on closed shelves or in locked closets. Moreover, there is no white space in the card catalog to let the reader know what books were not selected. Censors usually deny that they are acting as censors.

Censors often seem irrational in their attitude toward language. There is an implication in many acts of censorship that language acts magically, that to say the word will automatically produce the reality, as in the story from the Arabian Nights, "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." However in the world of reality, to say "Open Sesame" does not produce automatic results. But in the past many words that described unpleasant or dangerous realities were proscribed, almost as if to say the word would produce the reality. Various euphemisms were used, cemetery for graveyard, then memorial park for cemetery. But changing these words did not affect the unpleasant and tragic experience of accompanying the body of a loved one to its place of interment. Cancer or tuberculosis or sexual intercourse are not caused by those terms.

The relationship of language to reality is very complex. The censor seems to have little realization of the complexities involved, and in a simplistic manner seems to think that a confrontation with the dangerous or unpleasant realities of life may be prevented by censoring the words or language that refers to them. In the 1979 NCTE publication *Dealing With Censorship*, obscene or bad language was cited most often as the reason for objecting to a book. An examination of the materials that were cited as obscene or bad language shows that the objectors included a range of materials from faulty usage (i.e. 'ain't,' 'he don't') through common examples of profanity, as in the Catcher in the Rye. Some people apparently regard deviating from standard class usages as immoral or 'bad.'

Censors often act in unprofessional ways in dealing with books. They do not use professional standards of book selection, which are based on the traditional body of western world literature, including the Bible, the classics of English, British, and American literature. Professional standards assume familiarity with that body of literature, as well as the traditions of the various literary critics who have helped readers to understand and evaluate that literature. Professional standards assume a continuous tradition, as T. S. Eliot pointed out in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," a tradition that relates the writers of the contemporary decade to the great works that came down to us out of the past. The principles of literary criticism, ideally, become the operative tools of professional workers with books. Their judgments concerning the new books of each year, and the relative worth of older books, are recorded in the standard reference works and literary journals.

As in other fields, opinions tend to be codified on the basis of majorities. Though groups of professionally trained people may well disagree on the merits of a given book, a working consensus can be obtained subject to continued debate in various forums. This is, it should be noted, a public process, open to all, with records available in the libraries of the country. As a public process, it can be joined by any interested person who will familiarize himself with the rules of the game. Professional standards are available to all citizens and are used to greater or lesser degree in newspaper and magazine book reviewing, in the theater, the classroom, and increasingly in the courts.

An important characteristic by which the professional deals with books or other sources of information is to consider the whole unit. In contrast, censors often take one piece of language or one episode out of context and attempt to evaluate the work as a whole on that basis. That is clearly wrong. The conservative Berger court, in its famous decision of January 21, 1973, agreed with literary critics that in determining the characteristics and value of a book, the whole work must be considered. The court said: "The basic guidelines for the tryer of fact must be..., whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."

It is a clearly unprofessional manner of treatment to censor a book because of the ideas contained in the book. The American Library Association's Bill of Rights for libraries asserts that: "Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time." The statutes of the state of Wisconsin require that the school library and curriculum shall provide materials that reflect "the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of our society." Such a statement reflects the rather libertarian and equilateral climate of opinion that characterizes Wisconsin.

The other end of the scale of continuous variability is selection, in its most characteristic form. As such it is quite positive, interested in providing materials that meet the needs or interests of the constituency involved, as that constituency has indicated. For example, some years ago a curricular unit was established at Omaha, Nebraska for the eighth grade on heroes in American life. One book that was chosen was to Kill a Mockingbird. Although there was controversy over that title, when it was made clear that the book was chosen for that particular purpose, the controversy died away.

The most significant difference between censorship and selection lies in the effort of the one selecting materials to represent the whole spectrum of human thought, as suggested in the statement quoted earlier from the ALA Library Bill of Rights: to present "all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time." This approach allows all persons to decide for themselves about evolution, anthropological and sociological approaches to understanding human beings, or whether Calories Don't Count, as a recent book asserted (probably wrongly, to this writer's judgment). Nevertheless, a democratic approach to these matters allows all readers to decide for themselves.
In another application of the democratic approach, selection allows others to be wrong. It sets no standard of correctness—technologically, scientifically, or politically. All people are allowed their own points of view. There is a certain humility in this position that is in accord with our democratic society.

Ideally, the processes of book selection are quite public, in contrast to censorship, which is often secret. Public acts of censorship could and do occur, of course, but in distinguishing censorship from selection it is noteworthy that secrecy tends to characterize the one, and openness the other. Our democratic society provides a representative system by which we elect members of the legislature, the school board, and establish school policies by meetings which are open to the public, as required by law. Curricular units are constructed and materials are selected by professional persons, within the guidelines established by the elected agencies. Where communities are dissatisfied with the schools, the elective process offers opportunities for change. Under this system, no secret or self-appointed group determines the curriculum or the book choices. As suggested above, a community could act publicly in censorious ways, by violating various other of the principles that usually characterize selection processes. Generally, however, censorship is secret, selection public.

Again, ideally, book choices would be made by professional standards. To Kill a Mockingbird would be evaluated in terms of the complete work, not in terms of the fact that a definition of rape is offered in that book (as charged by some would-be censors of the book). Moreover, that book and all others would be seen in the context of the western world traditions of literature, and their evaluation by current critics would be considered in deciding whether or not to order or use the books.

I do not believe that teachers or librarians should describe their actions as "censorship." They should use the term "selection," and attempt to work out in each school and each district public, planned methods of establishing the curriculum and selecting the supporting materials. These methods should involve all the constituencies, from parents to administrators. Granted, such methods are time consuming and may not result in what a given teacher may think is the best possible set of choices, but in the long run this is probably the most efficient method, since it will have the support and will be perceived as meeting the needs and interests of the various constituencies in our society.

A Selected Bibliography

Books


Procedures and Policies for Materials Selection


Articles and Pamphlets


SENSE AND CENSORSHIP

CATHERINE A. BALL
Marshfield Senior High

"You're really going to use that book?" asked a fellow teacher.

"Yes," I answered with the confidence I felt in the selection.

"Well, where will you be teaching next year?"

A few days later, another colleague: "Do you really think this book is suitable for the classroom? I certainly wouldn't chance it."

Soon after, an administrator: "I wonder what the parents will say about this one."

The stimulus for these comments was a Vietnam novel, *Fields of Fire*, by James Webb, which I intended to include in a course in the contemporary novel for high school juniors and seniors. The ensuing discussion and controversy over this book exemplifies the crux of many censorship issues within the high school: administrators and teachers generally have confidence in student ability to handle controversial subjects, but these same administrators and teachers are wary of parents' ability to cope with their children's dealings with such topics. School personnel are at least partially justified in their cautiousness, because parents do sometimes object to course materials and call for their removal. They do this in the belief that they are protecting their children from exposure to harmful books and discussions. If materials are banned, students may be denied some challenging learning experiences.

So, how can trouble be avoided? What procedures will create an atmosphere of professionalism and confidence? What will help if parents do complain? Prior preparation is the answer to all these questions.

The following brief case study of the controversial novel, *Fields of Fire*, should reveal that with planning and rationality, trouble can be minimized and benefits to students maximized. This case is not unique, nor is it typical, but it does illustrate some reasons for careful planning. After the case has been presented, procedures will be suggested that may help avoid problems.

Teachers at Marshfield Senior High School are fortunate. Both school board and administration leave book selection primarily in the hands of teachers. This supportive attitude, however, does not mean there are no problems. *Fields of Fire*, for example, did meet with some staff and administration disapproval; but even more important, it brought the reasons for this disapproval into focus. Here's how the scenario developed.

About two years ago, while discussing *All Quiet on the Western Front* with my students, and in attempting to parallel our discoveries with more recent wars (especially Vietnam), I discovered that the students had almost no feeling for the Vietnam experience. To them it was "just history." I judged this as unfortunate and decided to add a Vietnam novel to the curriculum. Consequently, I read over twenty novels about the Indochina experience, looking for one that would convey the conflict realistically; one that would convey neither too much glory, nor too much bitterness; one that would show several perspectives; one that would, in short, provide a valid and varied picture in novel form, and still be reasonable suited to a high school student's frame of reference. A tall order. I enlisted the help of friends who had seen Vietnam combat; they read and evaluated several of the novels. I read reviews. Several students helped by volunteering to survey certain books and then give their evaluations. In the end, I chose and ordered *Fields of Fire* by James Webb, an ex-Marine with combat experience in Vietnam.

When the books arrived, many teachers picked up copies to read. This was not surprising since I had explained my plans and expressed my enthusiasm about the book to several people. Shortly after, comments such as the ones at the start of this essay began popping up.

The reservations voiced by one administrator and several faculty members regarding the novel's appropriateness in the classroom were based almost exclusively on wariness of possible parental disapproval of the book's language and descriptions. (Later, one administrator and one staff member did indicate that they found the book personally offensive.) Most of the objections were not to the story itself, nor to the accuracy of the depiction, but rather to the language used by the Marines, and to the scenes depicting sexual activity. (There were approximately half a dozen such scenes, the longest two pages. The book contains 350 pages. All scenes were either an integral part of the plot development or were created to show how war can degrade and debase the sexual act.) The staff's main concern was that parents would object to their sons and daughters' exposure to such material.

Consequently, an informal hearing was held regarding the book's suitability. This move was finally made because the English department chairperson felt that any problem generated by *Fields of Fire* could have repercussions on other selections in other courses. In plain words, if a parent latched onto Webb's book as offensive, that same parent might begin to wonder what else that child was being asked to read.

The hearing was attended by three administrators and eight faculty members, including the school librarian. Result and recommendation: the book should not be included as required reading. If students were given other options, however, it could be taught. This decision is, of course, quite open-minded in contrast to other censorship situations around the country; but still, it raised some questions: What exactly was to be feared in this novel? What effects could James Webb's words have on our students? Is language so magical that even in the carefully controlled and selective atmosphere of the classroom it has the evil power to twist and deteriorate minds? Which forms, which specific words and descriptions are malevolent, if any? Who is being protected? From what?
One way to begin answering these questions is to relate what happened when Fields of Fire was used in the classroom. And it has been and is being used. First of all, I took my colleagues' advice and offered an alternate selection, All Quiet on the Western Front. Even so, all but a handful of students chose to read Fields of Fire (350 pages to All Quiet's 175). Perhaps this is due partially to a "forbidden fruit" feeling, even though I try to present both books equally and fairly. Still, I imagine the explanation is far more enticing than repelling in favor of Fields of Fire. Students are told about the hearing and about the staff's reservations, about the possible objections (language, sexual description), about the realism of combat depicted in both books, and so forth. Then we charge on into three or four days of discussion.

I don't think I am reacting too strongly by saying I have rarely seen students so moved by a book. Granted, part of this view may be due to my own involvement and enthusiasm. Discussion sessions peaked with a constant flow of questions and comments. The students handled the more sensitive areas with discernment and maturity. Their insights were precise and thoughtful. I was not the only one who was pleased with their explorations; Mr. Robert King, our principal, happened to observe our third hour of discussion. He was favorably impressed and told the students so at the end of the hour, complimenting them on their work. In conversation the following day, Mr. King told me he could not imagine anyone -- teacher or parent -- who could legitimately oppose including Fields of Fire in the curriculum when it was obviously relevant to the students and could be handled so well by them.

Recent world events in Iran and Afghanistan have brought the themes of war and the individual's place in it into sharp focus. In fact, during the time I first used the novel, the Iranian incident began its ominous development. Students lost no time drawing possible parallels between the encounters of the novel and impending encounters for themselves.

The final results of our experience with Fields of Fire could be summarized: 1) Students have had a chance to think about war, and to answer some challenging questions regarding their commitments. 2) The administration (at least the principal) is pleased with the effort. 3) If any problems exist as far as parental response is concerned, they are minor ones. In fact, students have checked out copies for their parents to read. If complaints do come in, enough support and rationale now exist to alleviate almost any serious problems.

As noted earlier, questions of language are paramount. Many parents fear literature because they believe written words can and will change behavior and attitudes. A number of thorough and scholarly explorations have examined these fears and have concluded that, in fact, very little, if anything, need be feared; that (unfortunately?) written words have extremely limited long-term effects on attitudes and behavior; that language is least of all magical or malevolent, and no one need be protected from it.

So-called "bad language" includes the written words that most typically raise the eyebrows and voices of parents; however, "bad language" covers a multitude of transgressions including blasphemy, scatological references, "four-letter" words, and sexual descriptions. Looked at this way, it seems a simple matter of avoiding the erotic and obscene in order to keep feathers in place. But such appellations as "bad," "erotic," and "obscene" are slippery indeed, when strict definitions are sought. All of us would be able to respond to the question, "What is bad language?" but we would all have different answers. Therefore, the search for a list of particular words and phrases to be deleted is in vain. So, put away your black magic markers. There are better ways to prepare for censorship attempts.

First and foremost, all concerned parties must be considered. Although every book that runs the risk of garnering parental and community flack cannot be handled under every heading below, the ideal would be to do just that. The more that is done beforehand, the less likely it is that a complaint will develop into a full-blown censorship fight. This summary of approaches should give controversial materials a reasonable chance of survival.

1. PARENTS - Whenever a course is taught that involves controversial issues likely to attract negative reactions, parents should be notified by letter. The objections will differ by community, so a teacher's own perceptions of sensitivities is the best guideline. This letter is another way of saying, "Don't say I didn't tell you." For example, whenever a complaint is received, the teacher has the prior advantage of having forewarned the parties concerned. Send these letters directly to home. It is probably not necessary or advisable to write a letter to cover a particular book or discussion. An exception to this is field trips (e.g., to see Apocalypse Now), or when several weeks will be spent on a controversial topical. Specific forewarnings for small scale projects are likely to draw more attention than necessary. We have found this letter approach appropriate when an entire course is likely to attract attention. For example, notification, along with a list of selections, is sent to all parents of students in Contemporary Novel, but no book is highlighted over any other. This tactic also gives the student a chance to withdraw from the course, if parents object to the materials.

2. STUDENTS - Students, too, have a right to know what they are getting into. Tell them at the beginning of the course what selections or activities might prove sensitive. Once fair warning has been given, don't shy away from "forbidden" areas. Students are obviously aware of the taboo subjects, and to ignore discussion signals teacher squeamishness. Involve students in discussion of the objectionable' parts and by doing so, develop their independent, objective judgments as to why the sections are not necessary to the book's total message. (e.g., Is R.P. McMurphy's language appropriate to him in Cuckoo's Nest?) Does Dan's encounter with the village woman help to show how war has morally deteriorated him in Fields of Fire?) Such discussions help develop intellectual discretion. They also enlist the students as allies in any censorship situations, since when objectionable material is dealt with intelligently and openly, students no longer view it as harmful or taboo.

3. TEACHER - Have a thoroughly outlined rationale for each book that is included in the curriculum. Few situations are more uncomfortable than having the teacher standing there stammering something about "good literature" when a parent asks why a particular book is taught. Be able to exhibit a logical selection process.
4. **ADMINISTRATION** - Administrators hate to receive complaints about problems they know nothing about. Keep administrators apprised of materials in use that may draw complaints. Explain the rationale for using them. This way, the administrator, too, has arguments to counter the grievances and thus protect teachers. When deemed necessary, hold informal hearings on books to discuss suitability, especially when other teachers might be drawn into problems. Such discussions should not be viewed as personal threats, but rather as a sign of care, awareness and wise precaution.

5. **TEACHERS** - Teacher training and inservices in language theory help instructors understand language. Many of the censors' beliefs are based on a 'fear of the word' (Elb Oboler's term - Idaho State University). They are afraid that words can change behavior and attitudes. Studying the research concerning the nature, function, and effects of language can provide much solid evidence to counter "fear of the word" arguments. Granted, some people still won't believe scientific evidence, but they will find it more difficult to argue. With this approach, the teacher is backed by research, logic, and documented evidence, whereas the censor has only personal observation and emotional reaction.

6. Set up procedures for handling complaints:
   - Forms to be filled out by person complaining
   - Committee to review complaints
   - Procedures for taking action on complaints

   Final question: need we fear parental and community pressures for censorship? Yes. If we do not, we are foolish. Worse, if teachers are not concerned, their preparation to deal rationally and effectively with censorship problems is unlikely. Preparation for censorship confrontations must begin long before the first complaint is heard. For a teacher to say simply and without research, "This is a good book," is no better argument than that of those who charge that young people are being corrupted. Lack of preparation gets what it deserves.

**Bibliography**

**Censorship**


**Language**


**Research**


IN DEFENSE OF CONTROVERSY

DON PATTOW
University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

Teachers are often fond of claiming that teachers often have a profound effect upon students. And it's often true. And not only at the elementary or secondary level. The teacher who had the most profound effect upon me, for example, was my doctoral advisor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It was in casual conversation, usually over one of our endless cups of coffee, that Professor David C. Davis would drop upon me the fruits of years of thinking about the many things that interest him—and they are many, from young people's literature to art to film.

One day, while debating an issue of censorship, Professor Davis agreed with me that indeed some pieces of literature might, in fact, have a negative effect upon some people, especially upon some young people. But, he also pointed out, the first amendment only guarantees freedom of speech; it does not guarantee that people will not make mistakes or that freedom of speech will not be abused. His point, and the point I would like to emphasize here, was that the guarantee of freedom of speech is worthy of the possible abuses of that freedom. The first amendment does not suggest that guaranteeing freedom of speech will not have its risks, but the premise of the first amendment (and indeed of the Constitution, it seems to me) is that those risks are worth the freedom they insure.

Now it's true, of course, that no one knows exactly what the possible effects of a piece of literature are. Many studies have attempted to assess those effects, but at best the studies are inconclusive. One study, attempting to assess the use of black literature in a white urban high school population, concluded that "The reading of selected works of a literary nature about the Negro changed the subjects' attitude in a direction favorable to the Negro."

Another study, time attempting to assess the effects of literature on attitudes of fifth-grade students toward blacks, determined that if there was a change it was not sufficiently large to be measured by Galvanic skin response techniques. That study concluded that "the power of literature to shape attitudes seems to be over-estimated."

And even when experts agree that there is an effect, they frequently disagree about just what that effect might be. One fascinating controversy centers on the possible impact of fairy tales on young people. Hans Dieckmann, on the one hand, argues that fairy tales are a source of "fundamental neurotic patterns," while Bruno Bettleheim, on the other hand, argues that not only is it good for children to be exposed to the unpleasant truths about human nature, but fairy tales can make an "unique contribution" to the child's moral education.

What these disagreements show is that we still know very little about the possible effects of literature upon people, young or old. It might be, as censors claim, that a particular piece of literature will have a degenerative effect; that is, it might actually contribute to the deterior-

lation of power, vitality and the quality of life. It might be, for example, that Go Ask Alice will encourage drug abuse and lead to moral depravity; it might be that the depiction of the ex-Nazi and the Jewish Nazi-hunger in M. E. Kerr's Gentlehands will encourage Nazism; it might be that J. D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye will, as once claimed, encourage a lossening of spiritual values which in turn will lead to Communism.\(^\text{15}\)

Of course, it might also be that a particular piece of literature will have a generative effect; that is, it might actually contribute to the dignity and worth of a person. It might be that Go Ask Alice will deter young people from drug abuse by showing the moral and physical deterioration that accompanies it; it might be that the depiction of the ex-Nazi and the Jewish Nazi-hunger in Gentlehands will clearly illustrate to readers "the lovely faces evil can assume and the common, everyday, even mediocrite faces that good may adopt"; it might be that Catcher in the Rye will help some adolescent discover the realities of the human condition and uncover the often buried human potential to survive.

Regardless of the possible effect, however, no one should be forced to read a book he or she objects to. But neither should anyone be prevented from reading a book he or she wants to. Throughout history, controversial books have provided some of the most significant inspirations and prods to human achievement. Controversial literature, from Homer to Shakespeare to Salinger, challenges and questions existing ideas and values. And one of the primary functions of education is precisely to challenge and question ideas and values—not to ridicule or to destroy, but to look deeply and humanely into ideas and values.

There will be those who will argue that we have an obligation to young people. Of course we have an obligation to young people; as Erik Erikson states, that obligation is "primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation...." And the best way to insure a vital, humane, surviving "next generation" is to do everything we can to protect and insure that generation's freedom, which includes the freedom to choose.

If America is to remain a free and open society, it must remain open to the challenge of new ideas and new values. The quest for a safe middle ground discourages strong opinions and stifles creative thought and innovative solutions to the problems of human survival. Though we need neither accept, nor even entertain, a new idea or a new value, we must allow others the freedom to meet those ideas and values in the free marketplace of the mind. Controversial books might not make us better, but, as Camus has so eloquently put it, "Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better, whereas enslavement is a certainty of the worse."


\(^{2}\)Charles D. Bronsin, "An Experimental Application of the Galvanic Skin Response to the Measurement of Effects of Literature on Attitudes of Fifth Grade Students Toward Blacks," \(D\)AR, 32 (1972), 599A-599A.

Continued to page 29
COMMUNITY CONFLICT AND THE SCHOOLS: PROCEDURES FOR RESPONSE

J. CHARLES PARK
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater

Schools seem to reap their share of conflict during times of stress and social uncertainty. In an open democratic society, conflict is to be expected—it can lead to progress and healthy communication among divergent interests. But alas, there are times when decency is overcome by fear, and when procedures are corrupted by extremist interests seeking to impose absolutism. This paper will address the manner of dealing with conflict where decency, evidence, and the democratic process are in jeopardy.

The time to prepare for community conflict is before the conflict occurs. When members of the community are not informed of the objectives of schools and when communication is lacking, the conditions are established for well organized political interest groups to use ignorance and apathy for political gain. An on-going public relations program which maintains liaison between the schools and diverse interests in the community is therefore a vital ingredient to reducing community conflict. Updated information about the curricula, policies, and procedures of the public schools is essential. Contact with business, religious and political leaders and the press is a mandatory base for orderly resolution of conflict, should it occur.

Establish procedures for dealing with conflict and stick to the procedures. A clearly articulated procedure regarding textbook selection, teacher retention, curricula, etc., is an important ingredient to reducing conflict. Such policy should have a requirement that all complaints be in writing and signed by the complainant. A committee structure designed to review the complaints should be established. Time should be given for consideration of the issues with provision for all interested persons to present their views. One of the factors that often surfaces in community conflict is the mushrooming of complaints. A specific grievance, with signatures of the concerned parties, can help to keep the discussion within bounds.

Do your homework. Often groups seeking to influence schools develop predictable strategies, designed by a national organization. Guest speakers, books, films and letters to the editor provide insights into the influence of national organizations. Wherever possible, such information should be clearly identified. It is essential that all materials circulated about the schools be identified and if necessary, exposed to the public. Such organizations as the American Library Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the National School Board Association, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers should be contacted for assistance, should their experience be of value in clarifying the context in which community conflict occurs.

The ability to understand the tactics used against the schools by self-seeking political organizations takes homework and a careful follow-through. Such time is well spent however, for when the community is aware of the tactics and strategies being used to influence them, the situation usually but not always, tends to calm down.

The role of educators in a democracy is crucial for the maintenance of freedom of enquiry. Administrators, school board members and teachers, are well advised to conceive of their roles in a democracy as crucial. The recognition that procedures will be followed, that everyone will have an opportunity to present their views, and that decency, evidence, and democracy will be insisted upon will go a long way in helping a conflict keep within bounds. The moral fibre of a community and a school district can be maintained by strong leadership during times of stress. Recognition of the interrelationship of diverse educational roles in the protection of freedom of enquiry is vital.

True believers, ideologues of the political extremes, can not easily be persuaded to change their views. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that some are prepared to hold their views so strongly that they are prepared to go beyond the bounds of evidence, decency and democracy to have them imposed upon others. When this occurs, it is likely that time and energy spent in attempts to change such perception will be wasted. The key may lie in influencing those on the sidelines who are susceptible to the rhetoric and tactics of extremist organizations. To become involved in community conflict is as American as apple pie. To do so effectively takes courage, homework and support through established procedures and open democratic debate. It also takes, in the view of this observer, a commitment to enquiry, decency, evidence and a sensitivity to the role of education in a diverse and pluralistic society. The protection of enquiry during times of stress, constitutes the first line of defense in the protection of democracy.

Some sources of interest might include:

The Ax-Grinders: Critics of Our Public Schools by Mary Anne Rayw  
The Strange Tactics of Extremism by Harry and Bonaro Overstreet  
Censors in the Classroom by Ed Jenkinson

For accurate information on right wing organizations, interested educators may wish to subscribe to Group Research Report, 3 Wes McCune, 419 New Jersey Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. Subscription rate $30.

Defense of Controversy
Continued from page 27

SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

ROBERT H. WILLS
Editor, Milwaukee Sentinel


The purpose: How to spread the word of the importance of the free press in the democratic process and in our lives. Those attending: 150 representatives of print and broadcast media, businessmen, advertisers, attorneys, civic leaders, students, including two high school students, educators, union leaders, public officials -- about 50% representing the media and 50% representing the public.

The group composed the second session of the First Amendment Congress. Its opening date was chosen as carefully as its locale -- March 16, the birthdate of James Madison, who had wisely guided the Bill of Rights into our Constitution.

The first session had been held in Philadelphia, birthplace of our nation, on January 16-17, 1980. At this first session, more than 300 media and public representatives had defined the problems facing the press in today's world:

- Court cases that increasingly restrict the reporting capabilities of the press.
- Declining credibility in the eyes of the reader.
- Criticism of reporting techniques and accuracy.

Confronted with such serious and momentous problems, it might come as a surprise to some that the press of the nation represented at the Congress took the time to consider the plight of the editor and the reporter for the high school newspaper. Yet, consider that the committee which spent an entire day discussing a bill of rights and the media came up with these recommendations, among others:

To promote a fuller understanding among the working press, print and broadcast, of the Bill of Rights, and especially of all the liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment, it is recommended:

- That journalists, individually and through their societies and organizations, undertake long-term programs with institutions of learning to institute curriculum requirements involving the study of the Bill of Rights, especially the First Amendment.
- That journalism and other educators place high priority on the need to improve instruction of students in the Bill of Rights.
- That special concern be given to the plight of the student press, where the spirit of the First Amendment is frequently violated and where future professional journalists need to be imbued with ideals that will serve them a lifetime.

Why this emphasis on the student press when seemingly much more momentous subjects were at issue? The professional press of the nation depends on the high school publications to stimulate bright, independent, involved, young people to become interested in journalism. There is many an editor, many a broadcast news operations director who wrote his first newspaper, his first headline, his first appearance before a microphone, made up his first newspaper or year book page in his or her high school days. If, when we interview job applicants, we trace an interest in journalism back to the sophomore, junior or senior years in high school, we know that the interest has been there long enough to ensure that this applicant will probably stay in the field. We know that his roots as a communicator are deeply bedded. That is why the professional press gives moral and financial support to such organizations as the Student Press Law Center in Washington, D.C., established to provide legal advice and aid to student newspapers across the country.

The guidelines, drawn up by the 50 persons - school board members, superintendents, principals, journalism advisors and members of the print and broadcast media - who attended, made two major points:

One, that the First Amendment to the Constitution protects the rights of students to freedom of expression and educators have the obligation to teach the responsibilities that accompany this freedom.

Two, that student journalists have the right to determine the content of their student publications.

As a corollary, the student journalists were told that they have:

- The right to report and editorialize on events, ideas and issues in the school, community, nation and world, even though these may be unpopular or controversial.
- An obligation to seek and present contrasting views.
- An obligation to learn and observe the legal and ethical responsibilities of professional journalists, as discussed in the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, including accuracy and fairness.
- The responsibility to know and observe applicable laws including libel, slander, obscenity, privacy, copyright and substantial disruption of school activities, and should consider accepted community standards of decency and good taste.
- The responsibility to consult with, and carefully consider, the view of their print and broadcast advisors regarding the content of their student publications.

And, finally, that school officials and school boards should support their journalism advisors, and the print and electronic programs in their schools with adequate budgets.

Note that the guidelines are based on the same premise as that supported by the professionals at the Philadelphia and Williamsburg meetings, that "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, ..." In short, the courts have been telling the student press that that same fundamental right applies to them also.
Are these rights and responsibilities too heavy for the high school junior and senior? Some parents, some officials and some board members undoubtedly would answer, yes. Some teachers and principals would feel that high school students are not yet prepared to accept these responsibilities which, by necessity, must accompany First Amendment rights. But many of us in the professional press want the students challenged by these responsibilities. We believe they will be better editors, reporters, news broadcasters in the future if they are asked to shoulder those responsibilities.

To be deprived of those responsibilities means that some teacher, some advisor, some principal makes the decision for them of right and wrong, of good or bad. And it is at this point that censorship of the student press comes to the fore. Some school systems and some educators do not believe in a free press for students. They feel that what the professionals call "prior restraint," that is censorship of undesirable material prior to publication, is a necessity. In those schools, all copy for the student publications must be approved prior to their being sent to the print shop or the copy must be cleared by the principal or some other higher authority. Some students have told me this is a way of life at their schools. Other schools find the practice abhorrent.

How widespread is overt censorship in Wisconsin schools? In 1977, Una M. Weber, a journalism advisor at Brookfield East High School, Brookfield, Wisconsin, as a part of a thesis for her Master's of Arts degree in Mass Communication, conducted a study of censorship methods practiced by high school newspapers in southeastern Wisconsin. She surveyed 102 high schools. Her conclusions:

1) Only 1/3 of the schools surveyed actually allowed their students to practice First Amendment rights, although a majority of respondents considered their editors mature enough to handle these rights.

2) Overt censorship, through prior restraint practices, seems to be the exception, not the rule.

3) Although principals do not involve themselves in the daily operation of their school newspapers, the majority regard prior restraint practices as their right.

4) The practice of using the school newspaper as a public relations tool for the school seems obsolete. Most principals reportedly do not pressure their staffs to publish only articles about what is right with the school.

5) The covert censorship method of barring topics from student publications does exist in southeastern Wisconsin.

6) Instances of low budgets and/or poor physical facilities for school newspapers do not seem attributable to practices of covert censorship.

7) Covert censorship, through selection of the editor by principals is minimal. Most principals did not even know how the editor of their paper was selected.

8) Advisors do not seem to be held responsible for newspaper content.

All well and good, except for those schools where censorship is the practice.

Very simply, censorship has been declared illegal in a 7th Circuit United Court of Appeals case handed down in 1975, according to Attorney Michael D. Simpson, Director of the Student Press Law Center. The case he cites is Fujisima vs. Board of Education and it established a legal binding precedent in the State of Wisconsin, said Simpson. In this case a school rule permitting a prior review of publications was declared unconstitutional and was described as a "prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment. . . ." "The message in Fujisima," Simpson said, "is unequivocally clear," i.e. in the State of Wisconsin, "prior review or prior restraint of student expression in the public schools violate the First Amendment." Simpson noticed that the case dealt with non-school sponsored publications but said he believed it applied with equal force to school sponsored publications. He cited many cases in which the court makes no distinction between school sponsored papers and non-school sponsored papers. Thus, the student who chooses to challenge censorship practices in his school has a formidable tool in Fujisima to support his position. And in the Student Press Law Center he or she has an organization that will provide legal aid for that challenge.

The situation is understandably unsettling to members of school boards, superintendents of schools, principals and journalism advisors. Two common questions raised by school boards who are considering the future of the school publications or the adoption of student guidelines are: "Who is going to get sued?" "Am I going to be sued?" The questions aren't easily answered. An area of law is developing as cases are litigated across the nation.

How does the school function, then, in the face of this situation? First of all, the professional press urges you to resist the easy out: Abolishment of a newspaper, a yearbook, or a radio station. They are really needed to prepare today's young citizen for the democratic process. What must be apparent by now is that the journalist, at whatever level, isn't loved -- but he or she should be respected. Yet that respect has to be earned. It will not come by some mysterious osmosis. It will come only by an assumption or responsibility.

How do you create responsible journalists? You can't achieve a responsible person, a responsible reporter or editor without first asking him to shoulder the mantle of responsibility. There are those who will argue that "You don't know the students of today", or "You don't have to function in my school -- it's a zoo". Granted that students of today are a different breed than they were in the past. Granted that discipline problems are greater than the temptations of alcohol, drugs, and styles of living are different than they were 25 or 40 years ago. But some students today are brighter, more alert, smarter, more independent and have more advantages than in years past and they are prepared to make the best of those advantages. It is for us, the advisors, the administrators, the professionals to properly motivate them. There is no better place to motivate them for acceptance of responsibility in their own world than in the student press. It is incumbent, then, on the English teacher, the advisor, the principal, to seek out these students to work with them carefully, to guide them, to educate them.
The teacher, the advisor, the principal can be the student's best friend. That means each has a responsibility to intercede for the student if necessary when he has made an error, because he will make errors, when there are excesses, because there will be excesses, when he violates a principle, because there will be violations. But with guidance and understanding, these can become a part of the learning process without detriment to the school or larger community.

In a school where students’ stories, columns and editorials are turned over to the principal so that he can make decisions whether they are satisfactory for publication, someone ought to pick up the torch and attempt to enlighten the administration, the school board or the principal. Most teachers, most advisors, are not comfortable with the censorship situation. The happiest advisors are in the schools where there is freedom, where the student editors and advisors work as a team, where there is communication, give and take, inquiry, opportunity to critique without controlling. Where there is mutual understanding.

Let’s return for a moment to the First Amendment Congress at Williamsburg. The final committee report of the day was entitled, “Whose First?” The committee said:

Whose First?

It belongs to every man, woman and child.

Whose right to use it?

It is the right of every man, woman and child.

Whose responsibility to protect it?

It is the responsibility of every man, woman and child.

The First Amendment protects freedoms, separately defined, yet indivisible. We share these rights:

-To believe
-To speak
-To publish
-To support or criticize our government

These rights belong to the people and never are to be denied nor controlled by the government.

We share, as citizens, a responsibility to understand that the First Amendment protects, with equal force, the ideas we despise as well as those we cherish. Government infringement on any one of these fundamental rights threatens them all.

Whose First? One infringement will raise another question: Who's next?

As Irving Brande, the distinguished constitutional authority and journalist, thoughtfully pointed out in his history, THE BILL OF RIGHTS, James Madison and his colleagues “knew what they were doing...” English history had demonstrated to them that without complete religious liberty, without freedom of conscience and separation of church and state, there could be no freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of assembly.

Continued on page 14
coupled with hoped for changes in her body. She spends time on chest-building exercises, talking with her friends about their bodies and secretly trying on sanitary napkins. Similarly, Tony is conscious of his emerging sexuality and the body of his neighbor Lisa; there are occasional references to wet dreams and erections. Deenie includes a physical education class discussion of masturbation; Deenie also asks questions about sexual intercourse (unanswered in the book). Activities in these four books include gossiping about a classmate's development; spying on a girl neighbor's bedroom while she is undressing; undressing in a doctor's office and putting on a sheer body stocking, being concerned with what he can see; masturbating; being kissed with an accompanying attempt of the boy to feel the girl; and forcing a classmate to show her underwear to the boys.

The language of these books includes, as can be assessed from the listed activities, references to undergarments (direct) and the body (indirect), these being natural to the context. Additionally, an occasional taboo word is used in each except in Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret (perhaps I missed it?).

Herein lie the objections: taboo words, activities and topics. In contrast to children's fiction of yesteryear, these children are imperfect; as 'models' they are not always respectful or certain of the 'right' road or true values. Sometimes they choose the 'wrong' path and when they do they are not always caught or punished. The adults are also imperfect. In addition to being flawed in their behavior and values, they occasionally misjudge children, are blind to their crimes and to certain aspects of their development. And they do not always interfere in these ways to stop such activities.

One response to these objections must come out of the contexts of the books and the reality of the world of the readers. As has been described in the thematic discussion above, the direction of the novels is positive. Though Blume includes antisocial aspects of relationships such as stealing, cruelty and gossip, these are clearly shown in a negative light; the central characters conclude on the side of kindness and justice, adopting humane values, exhibiting humane behavior. The picture of the adults in not one-sided either. Supportive parents, expressing wisdom and kindness, balance those who are misguided. Margaret's mother is understanding, sympathetic. Jill and Tracy's parents are firm and just in meting out punishment; and there are others. In these regards it must be acknowledged that the world which the rea'er brings to these books is populated with such children and adults. And the reader shares the concerns of the characters, is faced with comparable choices of values and behavior, and hears taboo language much more extensive than the several included samples.

In the final analysis, the readers create their own experience with the books. Looking into Blume's mirror of the world, they react to her text, incorporating their individual psyches and cultures, relating through their own concerns. (It is these concerns, I suspect which lead them to these books in such numbers.) Seen in this light, the mention/discussion of taboo topics is part of the larger patterns of text and reader. Their 'natural' treatment in a framework of humane goals should help the readers to observe and evaluate, to gain perspective of themselves and the world.
To speak of the text as a constraint rather than a norm or "system of norms" suggests a relationship rather than a fixed standard. Instead of functioning as a rigid mould, the text is seen to serve as a pattern which the reader must the text create even as he is guided by it. The text presents limits or controls; the personality and culture brought by the reader constitute another type of limitation on the resultant synthesis, the lived-through work of art. The reader's attention constantly vibrates between the pole of the text and the pole of his own responses to it. The transactional view of the "mode of existence" of the literary work thus liberates us from absolutist rejection of the reader, preserves the importance of the text, and permits a dynamic view of the text as an opportunity for ever new individual readings, yet readings that can be responsibly self-aware and disciplined. (p. 129-30)

Rosenblatt argues that each of these readings created from the text by individual readers is for him/her the poem, rejecting thereby the concept of "correctness" or absolutism of interpretation. She recognizes that there are degrees of thoroughness and depth of interpretation and that some reader-created poems will vary from the text. However, the basic criteria of validity are established: "... that the reader's interpretation not be contradicted by any element of the text, and that nothing be projected for which there is no verbal basis. (p. 115)

In her concluding chapter, Rosenblatt asserts two key insights that offer significant implications for the teacher: that the reader needs to realize fully and "to honor" his/her own literary experience; and that the ordinary reader be given credibility in contrast to the elitist view of literature which focuses on the ideal reader and the critic. The latter view implies that literature is only accessible to the gifted few, producing an overall negative response among average readers and negative expectations among their teachers. Referring to the dependence upon, indeed devotion to, literary critics, who cannot after all read all the books for us, she states: "Literature became almost a spectator sport for many readers satisfied to passively watch the critics at their elite literary games." (p. 140) Thus she comes round full circle to the need to recognize the key role of the individual reader, providing impetus for the evolution of classroom strategies and classroom foci.

Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

**BOOKS**

**FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**


The game of "I Spy" which has intrigued children for generations is presented in *Each Peach Plum Plum.* On each left-hand page, a rhyme introduces the game such as "Each Peach Plum Plum I spy Tom Thumb." On the opposite page the reader searches the picture for the object of the "I spy." In this case, Tom Thumb who is hiding in a peach tree. On successive pages readers can search for Mother Hubbard, Cinderella, the Three Bears, Baby Bunting, Bo-Peep, Jack and Jill, The Wicked Witch, and Robin Hood. The trouble is of the Wicked Witch who is camouflaged among the briars of a blackberry bush.

The Three Bears hold together the thread of a small story. Dressed in English tweeds and equipped with hunting rifles, they accidently shoot the rope that holds Baby Bunting's cradle in the river, cradle and all. However, the Three Bears intercept the cradle and rescue Baby Bunting at the next bridge. All is well as all of the characters gather on the last page for a feast on Plum Pie.

The pastel-hued water color illustrations are set in a pastoral landscape which is gentle and restful. They integrate well with the nature of the book. The illustration on the title page displays a composite of the complete landscape where each section of the story takes place. By careful comparisons, the reader can trace the bears' journey and identify where each nursery character was seen.

This is a book which is a true treasure for sharing with young children.

Mary Jett-Simpson, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

---


In *Felita,* Nicholasa Mohr tells a story about a nine-year-old Puerto Rican girl and at the same time she tries to convey a sense of Puerto Rican identity and pride. We learn about Felita and her family through four loosely related events. The first episode concerns the family's move from their old neighborhood and friends. Felita's parents had hoped that the move would improve their living and school conditions. Instead, the family is taunted and abused by their prejudiced neighbors. Felita and her brothers are delighted when they move back to their old neighborhood for they never wanted to leave.

In this episode we learn of the variety in Puerto Rican people and families through Mohr's extensive descriptions of Felita's family and friends. Mohr uses Abuelita, Felita's grandmother, as a spokesperson for the Puerto Rican family. As Abuelita comforts Felita after her new neighbors' abusive attacks, Abuelita speaks at length of the need for inner strength.

The other three episodes center on a neighborhood fire, an argument Felita has with her best friend, and the impending death of the beloved Abuelita. In each episode Mohr interjects, usually through dialogue, some sense of the need for Puerto Rican strength and pride.

Mohr is successful in creating four interesting episodes. Each is unpredictable and readers will want to find out what happens. She is successful in creating a warm, spirited family. Felita's problems with her brother and mother will sound familiar to many readers. She also relates a great deal of information about Puerto Ricans and their homeland. But the book has flaws. Mohr seems ill at ease with a nine-year-old narrator. Felita speaks like a child, but she thinks like someone much older. Instead of assuming natural conversation patterns, Felita's mother and grandmother sometimes seem to be giving the reader a lecture. Surely the book is a worthy one and it is under-represented in children's books, but Mohr is not very subtle in developing it. Nevertheless, there are enough strengths in *Felita* to engage the interest and empathy of eight to eleven-year-old readers.

Linda Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee


Arnold Adoff probably has been best known as anthologist, teacher and speaker despite his earlier poetry books such as *Tornado* (Delacorte Press, 1977). His two fall, 1973, books surely will increase his reputation as poet. They are similar in form of poem in the two books, but there are also distinct differences in the tone as well as subject matter of the two books. *I Am The Running Girl* is a poetic statement of a young girl's feelings about long distance running--the part running plays in her life and the bodily and mental feelings associated with running in competition. On the whole, this is a serious realistic poem. Glimpses of humor of the everyday do creep in, however, such as the description of interaction before the race, "... we smile and lie a little about experience and time." Comparisons of the feelings expressed may be made with two other new books, *Running With Rachel* (Frank and Jan Asch, Dial, 1979) and the story of a nine year old record holder, *Wesley Paul, Marathon Runner* (Julianna A. Fogel, Kippincott, 1979). Comparison of the three books reveals several similarities as well as the differences in perception and expression, in poetry and prose, and in illustration.

In comparing Adoff's *I Am The Running Girl with Raikes,* an obvious difference is in the light and humorous tone of the latter book. Further, whereas *I Am The Running Girl* has straightforward expression of feeling, *Raikes* abounds with imaginative, and at times absurd but oh so right, images and expressions related to food sources, cooking, and enjoyment of food. Even recipes, in good recipe form, are given in poetic form and with humor, and the enjoyment felt by every "eater" and "maker." The book's title and artwork put off this reviewer at first, but on further sampling of
the poems, the glaring impact of the illustrations subsides and the illustrations become supportive of the poems.

Try a sample—chocolate, apple pie, or long distance running. You'll probably like it! So will children.

Bette J. Pelcza, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee


*A Midsummer Night's Death* is a mystery of sorts. It begins with a death, leads the reader through an exploration of some misleading clues, and builds to a climax between the sleuth, Jonathan Meredith, and the suspect, Charles Hugo. Jonathan is an English school boy, sixteen years old perhaps, and a most grudging, reluctant sleuth. Hugo is Jonathan's esteemed mentor: an icy, implacable man who might never fall under general suspicion if anything were to happen to Jonathan. The dying is finely dramatized in a scene in which Jonathan and Hugo climb cliffs along the coast of Northern Wales, roped together.

K. M. Feyton works wonderfully within these familiar story lines. She makes good use of shifts in setting, moving from the warm, green idyllic school grounds, where the death occurs, to the cold, thin air and inhospitable cliffs and ridges where Jonathan and Hugo grapple with the tension breaks. She writes allusively, including, for example, a suicide attempt by an emotionally fragile girl whose resemblance to Ophelia extends even to her choice of a willow-lined brook for her plunge, and a rescue scene, pitting Jonathan against a strong river current, that caused me to recall at once the river fording scene in *As I Lay Dying*. Most impressively, she gives us the character of Jonathan Meredith. Utterly stable, accomplished, astute enough to keep his sharp tongue mostly under control, he is a welcome anomaly in adolescent fiction, where self-absorption, peevishness, and general incompetence are the norm. I hadn't thought it possible to imagine a sane Holden Caulfield, or a Graham Greene-ish character minus his wound, but Jonathan is such a one.

Richard D. Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee


"Emotionally disturbed," the social worker murmured, writing in her book.

"Unstable," Uncle Ralph said, and Toby thought of wild horses, their manes flying in the wind. But she knew her mother was crazy, had gone crazy, no matter what anyone called it.

Twelve year old Toby and six year old Anne had already lost a father, but he could remain for Toby as a vision of the handsome artist; her mother, however, was now reduced to a meaning, raving unknown person, no longer the person who had made them a family. Family now means a foster home with the Selwyns and Toby is both relieved and resentful as Anne adapts easily to the sensitive Selwyns. Toby, living in ignorance of her mother's condition, expects that nervous breakdowns are temporary (afterall, nerves are something everyone has and cars break down) and unpacking is unnecessary; this is not her real home. As weeks turn into months, Toby's feelings are turned inside out as she alternates between a growing affection for the life she has and loyalty to the life she recalls and wants back. Constance, a former foster child of the Selwyns, provides a counterpart to Toby's frustration and Susan, her friend, offers a mirror image of growing up. As Susan deals with the death of her lifelong pet, Toby wonders if it is better never to love anyone or anything so you would never have to feel so dreadful, and she is secure enough at this point to know it would not be at all better. Toby's awareness of which factors contribute to feeling secure and feeling good are traced through realistic dialogue and natural characterization. While the story culminates in the reunion of Toby and her mother, there is no simplistic nor moralistic ending. *Toby Lived Here* is good adolescent fiction.

Mary Meiser, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 28 — Black Fiction and Biographies: Current Books for Children and Adolescents. Compiled by Nicholas J. Kariolides, UW-River Falls. 50c

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 29 — Index: *Wisconsin English Journal* Volumes 1-15. Compiled by Eugene Engelkinger and Barbara Stevens, UW-Eau Claire. $2.00 — member/member libraries; $3.00 — non-members

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 30 — Bibliography of Science Fiction. April, 1974. Compiled by Roger D. Suen, UW-Platteville. A listing, briefly annotated, of almost 300 recommended novels, short stories, and anthologies, 43 best films from 1902-1972, and 78 secondary sources. More extensive annotations of progenies, fanzines, and basic reference sources included. $1.00

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 31 — Censorship in Wisconsin Public High Schools, 1973. Lee A. Burress, UW-Stevens Point. A follow-up of his 1964 study, Dr. Burress explores current censorship trends and developments in relation to recent Supreme Court decision. 75c

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 33 — Creative Writing — Two Approaches. The winning and runner-up essays of the Lucille S. Pooley Creative Writing Award: "Remaining Potential - The Key to Creative Writing" by Betty Walls, Stanley-Boyd Area Schools; "Multi-progam Introductory Unit for Creative Writing Courses: Self-Actualization and Creativity" by Shirley Swenson, Kettle Moraine Area Schools. Included: objectives; excerpts from daily plans, student "text" and evaluation materials; proofreading and revisions packet. $1.00

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 34 — Books Students Recommend to Their Friends. Compiled by Mary K. Fetra and Joyce S. Steward, UW-Madison for the Committee on Current Reading. $1.00

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 35 — An annotated Bibliography of Fantasy Literature. Compiled by Robert N. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zborski, St. Norbert College, DePere, Wis. An annotated listing of fantasy primary works, reference tools, full-length critical works, essays, magazines, associations, dealers, and publishers. Complements Swan's Bibliography of Science Fiction (Service Bulletin No. 30). $1.00

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 36 — Research: Composition Teaching Methods and Teaching Purposes. "Teaching Public Written Discourse: The Blending of Communicative Effectiveness and Mechanical Correctness" by Joanne Yavvin, Crestwood School, Madison; "Writing Competencies Needed by High School Graduates" by Robert A. McKee, UN-Oshkosh. 75c

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 37 — Wisconsin Authors: Literary Map and Bulletin. Compiled by Duane and Maureen Rosen. The twenty-three by twenty-nine-inch map includes drawings of scenes from the lives of the books of thirty-seven major Wisconsin authors. The map also includes a list of 126 adult authors and 60 juvenile authors. The 41-page bulletin includes all of the information found on the map, as well as a wealth of bibliographical and bibliographic material. Many titles listed are labeled as ones suitable for either elementary or secondary students. $3.00 plus $1.00 postage for map and bulletin ($1.00 for bulletin alone).

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 38 — Bibliography of Native American Books for Elementary Grades. April, 1979. Compiled by Maxine Burress, UW-Stevens Point. A selected annotated bibliography of books for children in grades K-8. Appropriate grade levels are indicated. 75c

**SERVICE BULLETIN** No. 39 — Index: *Wisconsin English Journal* Volumes 16-20. Compiled by Barbara Stevens, UW-Eau Claire. See Service Bulletin No. 29. $1.00

Order from: WCTE, Dr. Nicholas J. Kariolides, UW-River Falls, River Falls, WI 54022