

Poetry

Books raise censorship question

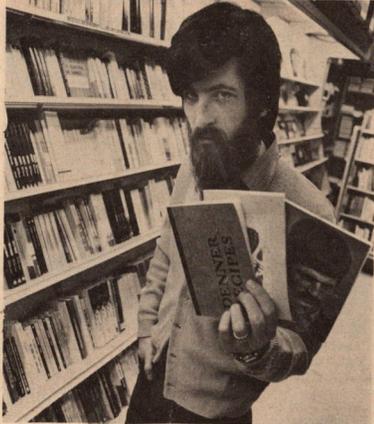
by Barbara Rhines

The question of who has the right to decide what UA students may read has arisen with the censoring of a book of poetry from the university bookstore.

"In Roth vs. United States, 354 S 476 (1957) 'obscenity' was defined by Mr. Justice Brennan as that which was 'utterly without redeeming social importance.' What did Brennan intend by 'obscenity?' Material 'which deals with sex in a manner appealing to prurient interests.'"
--Censorship Landmarks
Edward DeGrazia 1969

The book, written, illustrated and printed by student Richard Denner, was termed "unsuitable" by William Hogan, manager of Business Service and omitted from bookstore shelves.

Hogan is the superior of Leroy Rich, manager of the UA bookstore. "I thought it was ob-



"Some candy, little girl?" Student poet Richard Denner displays copies of his works now on sale at the University Bookstore. Photo by Jon Metzger

scene," Hogan stated. Denner had originally agreed to provide six books for sale in the bookstore. Upon receiving the books, Rich was concerned that one of the books would be considered pornographic.

After consulting his superior, the decision was made to "omit" the book. The rest of the books were to be kept under the counter and sold only if asked for specifically.

At the same time, English instructor John Hulbert presented copies of the books to the library. In a letter which accompanied the books, Hulbert wrote, "My own opinion is that he (Denner) is a sincere and talented artist, and that as he grows the university will be glad to have collected his early attempts at writing and printing."

Hulbert also wrote, "I'll be using several of his things during this term as reference material." (Hulbert was referring to a graduate writers workshop.)

The library accepted the books, Director Ted Ryberg

said, "Our function is to present both sides of all topics and let our patrons make up their own minds. We don't have a position on any topic. We are to support the curriculum."

When Rich and Hogan were informed of the library's decision, the books were classified as text books, and supposedly put behind the text counter. The "black sheep" of the lot was included, making the total again six.

Rich said, "The bookstore and the library should have the same policy about books, I'm not going to back the library."

In an attempt to explain the original censorship, or "selection" as Hogan prefers, he offered the following statement:

- 1) "Because of faculty children we are compelled to censor;
- 2) The fact that we don't carry it in the bookstore doesn't mean we are denying it...we're pressed for space anyway. We don't carry every book that has ever been published; and
- 3) I think it's reasonable that

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Denner

CONT. FROM PG. 1

material other than texts should be judged."

Hogan suggested that because the books had been printed by hand and were made by a student that they had attracted undue attention. "If this was intended to throw sand in the machine, it has done it," he said.

Hulbert commented, "It wasn't meant to bother anybody and I'm surprised that it has. A lot more graphic and bothersome things have been classics for the last 15 years."

Terrance Choy, professor of art, said, "I'm an artist, not a poet, and I think the books have artistic merit. Richard shows a proficiency in dealing with woodcuts."

Choy was concerned that there were no rules or an official definition of censorship for the university. "Pornography exists in the mind of the beholder. Any person who is offended by it can ignore it," he stated.

Director of Student Activities, Don Scott, said, "It's not that the books are great, or really bad...it's just because they are different."

Lyle Harris, associate professor of journalism was refused the opportunity to see the books while they were being kept under the counter.

Harris stated, "I went over to the bookstore and asked to see 'Poemebooks.' The girl clerk said she didn't know where they were. I asked her to find out, and she looked around the store

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POLAR STAR

for several minutes. She returned and said she couldn't find them. I asked her to find out why they weren't around. After a conference in the back she returned and told me that the books were thought to be unfit to be sold by the manager. She said the manager was out of town."

Harris commented, "I think the whole thing was utterly ridiculous to advertise a book and then pull it off the shelf because it offends one person's standards."

Assistant professor of journalism, Don Wright, who was with Harris when the incident occurred, commented, "I'm against any form of censorship." He also brought up the age-old, "Who shall judge the judges?"

Author-artist Denner said, "I'm upset that people have no sense of humor about the whole situation. I wanted them to be received with a sense of humor."

Denner said the uproar "aroused a bewildered feeling."

"The works will endure no matter how much they are criticized," he commented,

Asked if he was angry, Denner replied, "About the only thing that would make me angry is if someone should destroy them."

The books are now on the poetry shelf, accessible to the general public, but the vital question of the authority of UA employees and administrators to censor or "select" student reading material remains.

Quipped Ryberg, "A little bit of censorship is like a little bit of pregnancy...it just ain't."

NEWS OF THE NORTH RICHARD DENNER



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News of the North is a part of the “Journalism” section of *Jampa Dorje’s Worldly Dharmas: An Abcdeary*, my autobiography (written as a third-person narrative by my persona, Bouvard Pécuchet, about Jampa Dorje, my monastic name), published by D Press in 2022.



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“Say, I’d better take a good look, myself.”

ogy tags along when it is superseded by new technology, for example the term “cut and paste” is still parlance in graphic design being done on a computer. When Jampa worked as a layout artist, you actually used scissors or an Exacto knife to cut the paper copy, and you used wax or glue to paste together the ads, which were then put onto master sheets to be photographed and the negatives to be burned onto metal plates. Now, you just “click” and print.

Jampa worked at the Queen Anne News six-hour days, four days per week, until he saw a want ad for a cattle foreman on a ranch near Ellensburg, Washington. OM OM on the range.

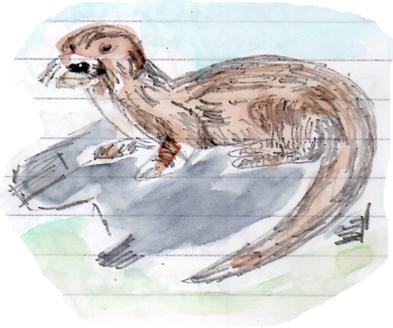
Jampa worked for the Ketchikan Daily News, starting in the late fall of 1967, after the closing of Ketchikan Cold Storage. He and Cheri had lived in Berkeley through the winter of 1966 and the following “Summer of Love,” which climaxed with the “Human Be-In: A Gathering of the Tribes.” They left the Bay Area before the “Death of Hippie,” Governor Reagan’s reactionary and repressive tactics on the peace demonstrations, the Battle for Peoples Park, and the tragedy of Altamont. At the Ketchikan Daily News, Jampa worked in the back shop. He did layout, developed photographs, burned plates, and assisted a man, named Ron, run a 3-unit Goss Community Press. These many skills Jampa has put to use in the formation of his literary oeuvre.



Lew Williams, the editor of the paper, assigned Jampa a column, “Waterfront News,” and on Thursdays Jampa would hoof it down to the docks and the marina and get his story. At first, he

stuck to plain data on what boats had brought in what hauls, but before long he was reporting on other activities along the waterfront, which for Ketchikan is most of the town, lying as it does along the inland strait. Polaroid cameras were new, and Jampa had one.

He took pictures, and his words were used as cutlines and appeared on the "People" page. Sometimes, he could combine stories of more general interest with his Waterfront News. A photo of a cute girl surveying the area along Tongass Avenue, where the road was going to be widened after the demolition of the cold storage building, long a local landmark. A photo of his friend, David Wieler, a marine biologist, working in his lab, looking very like a mad scientist. A photo of the smoking, twisted remains of the "flowered bus" which belonged to his friend, Kristi Lee, burned in a fire in a storage facility on one of the piers, a follow-up story to a photo he had taken of the colorful arrival of the bus at the ferry terminal. A lengthy piece with photos of the transfer of sea otters from one location to another, where Jampa had accompanied the Fish and Game Department workers on a sea plane.



it all boils down to 'Love everyone you can,' which philosophy I agree with."

Back down the Alkan Highway to the state of Washington and a small village called Preston. Cheri's parents owned two houses, side by side, and Jampa, Cheri and Theo moved into the smaller one. Cheri's sister, Joan, and her family lived nearby. Jampa found work in Seattle at the Queen Anne News. John Bader was not happy his son-in-law was working for State Senator John Murry, a Republican, but Jampa mollified him by explaining that the Queen Anne News was really a job shop that produced an assortment of local papers, like the Issaquah Press Democrat, the Lake City Star, along with a variety of ethnic papers, like the Swedish paper, out of Ballard.

Jampa worked solely as a graphic artist, doing layouts of advertisements, but in his spare time he would use the IBM Computergraph to set some of his poems. Most copy came from press services over teletype machines that punched chads out of a paper tape that was then inserted into another machine which automatically typed the message into words in columns. Computers were on the horizon. The Computergraph allowed you to change fonts and create justified line ends. Having justified lines is a style of typesetting left over from the era of letterpresses, when type was set in cases by a linotype machine. A lot of the outmoded technol-

She was going through a divorce and wanted, she said, “to unbutton herself.” She corrected this to “unburden herself.” Jampa trudged through the frozen tundra to Maxine’s house, but when he got there, he discovered another “reporter” had beaten him to the story. Jampa let his interview be “spiked.”

Mary, a fellow student in Jampa’s Canadian History and Literature class, had a story. Doing investigative journalism, Jampa attempted an exploratory cross-cultural study, and Mary revealed that her hymen was unbroken. Jampa tested the veracity of her story and found that the membrane was intact and exceptionally durable. This stopped the presses. After an appointment with her doctor, who removed the obstacle, Jampa crossed the border into hitherto uncharted territory.

Nichole, who was in both of Jampa’s philosophy classes, had been selected to be in the winter issue of Playboy Magazine—a feature called “Alaskan Snow Bunnies.” She confided to Jampa that she was not sure she wanted to go through with the photo shoot and asked him what he thought. Jampa told her that he thought she was a very serious person and that, although the idea seemed glamorous and the money tempting, she would come off looking like a bimbo, which was fine but perhaps not wise. She said, “I’m not always sure I understand what you say, but I think

Some of Jampa’s news items were self-promoting: the opening of the Ketchikan Coffee House, that displayed his and Cheri’s collection of dance posters from the Filmore Auditorium and the Avalon Ballroom, in San Francisco; and the psychedelic light show and dance that Jampa and friends put on at the local armory. Jampa was learning the print media.



When Jampa and Cheri moved to the woods, he took with him the Kelsey hand press he had bought at the Seventh Day Adventist print shop across the street from the Ketchikan Daily News. As Lew Harris says, in his essay, “D Press: A Jewel in the Net”: “Jampa became acquainted with every facet of printing: the feel and look of paper, the color and smell of ink, type-setting and the uses of different typefaces, the feeding and rolling of presses, the cutting and stitching of recto and verso.”

Lew continues the story: “Up the Alkan Highway, Richard travel to the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. He worked in the backshop of the student newspaper and graduated in 1972 with degrees in English and Philosophy. D Press was admitted to the campus library but banned from the UA student bookstore. Perhaps it was the explicit prints in Linoleum Nudes or graphic po-

ems such as ‘Musky/Hump/in US/for 69.’ Whatever, feathers flew, and the UA Polar Star (which later printed Richard’s works) put out the story ‘Books Raise Censorship Question.’ Professors came to his defense; Richard’s chapbooks were found to have literary and artistic merit; and D Press was back on the shelf.” The Polar Star was a weekly in a tabloid format. Jampa and his friend, Larry Kerschner, worked in the backshop. Once each month, they created the “Art-Lit Supplement” to the paper with poems and art they collected from students. Jampa had a series of negatives of poems and lino-cuts from his chapbooks that he had laid out for half-pages in the Berkeley Barb. Max Scherr, the editor, had the originals. Jampa does not know if Max ever used them, but Jampa ran these negatives in the Star.

In 1972, the University of Alaska’s Polar Star won an award for the best student paper in the country. A footnote to this story of success is that Jampa was chastised for going over budget for backshop materials by the Head of Student Activities (“Stud-Act”—Jampa had a T-shirt with that logo on the front). The wax machine was always on the blink, and Jampa had let his crew charge glue-sticks on the paper’s account at the bookstore. Howard Rigley, the editor of the Polar Star, was so proud of his staff’s work that he paid the bill out of his own pocket.

One of the Polar Star staff wanted to be interviewed by Jampa.



“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire.” *Corinthians 3:15*



"See no evil, hear no evil, do no evil."



"Lori J is in town."



"Make way for progress."



"Hold that pose."

PHOTOS FROM KETCHIKAN



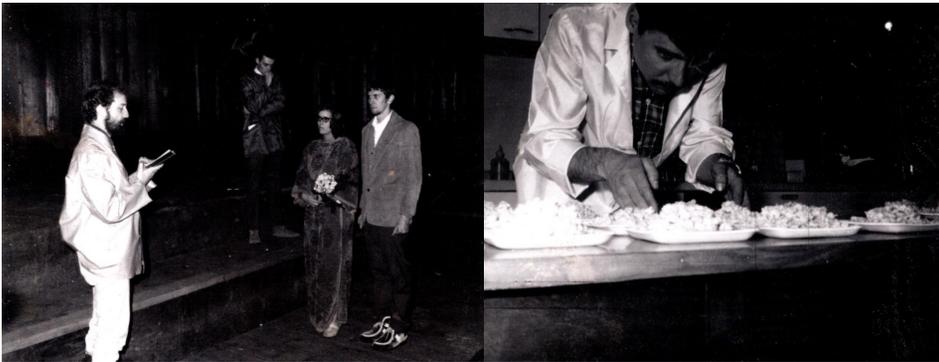
Clean up and burn day at Saxman Village in Ketchikan.



Cheri & Richard on arrival at Deep Bay.



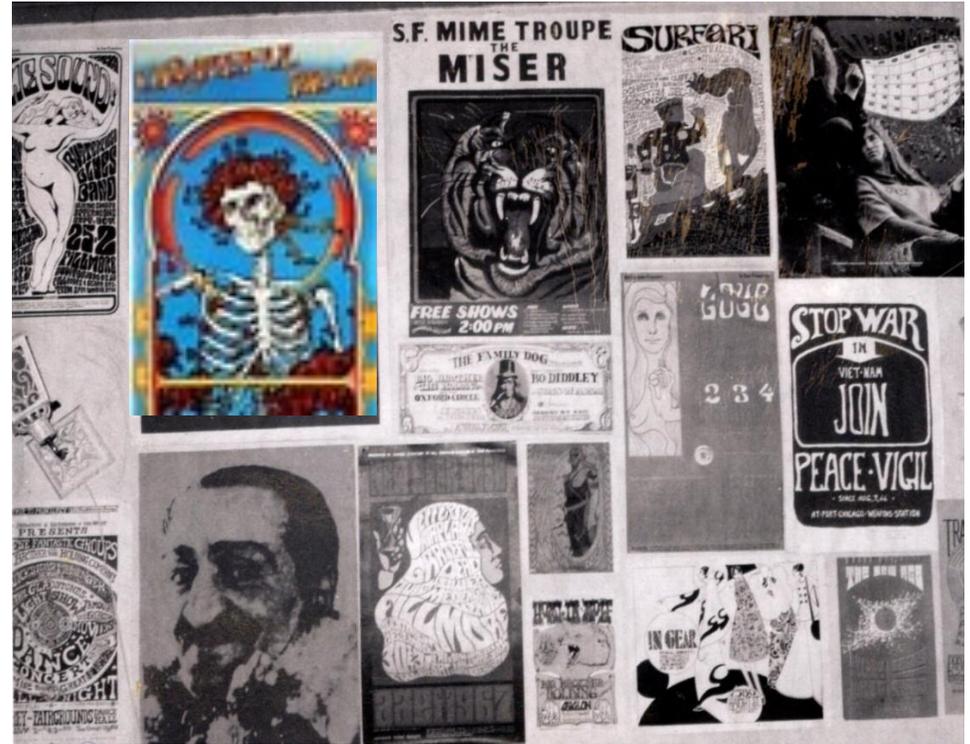
Theo bouncing on bed in Ketchikan.



Kelly Boen, Universal Life Minister, officiates. David Wieler looking for microbes.



Fire in a pier storage facility and the demise of the flowered bus.



“The counter-culture revolution reaches Ketchikan.”