

Bad' books, language censored in schools more often now than in '60s, report says

By PATRICIA McCORMACK
UPI Education Editor

Felt tip markers and erasers, tools "censors," are busy in a controversial way along the academic trail these days, opponents of censorship argue.

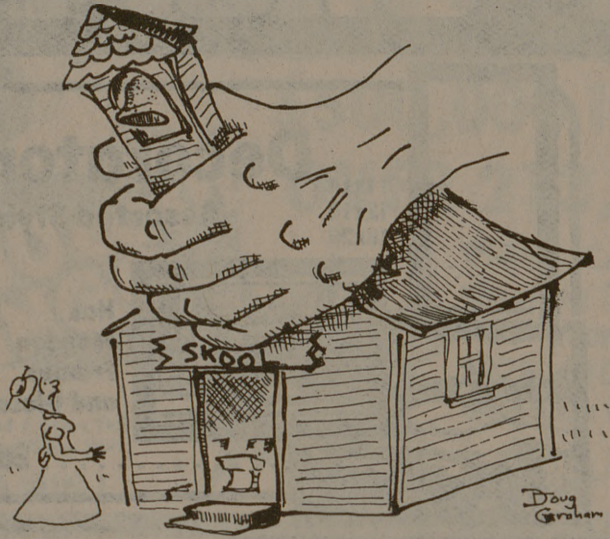
The censors want to protect developing minds from four-letter words and ideas that many adults find dangerous or offensive for the young, including high school students.

The markers and erasers are last in a series of efforts — blacking out and scribbling out alleged bad words after attempts to remove objectionable reading matter from classrooms and libraries have failed.

Another activity of censors is making purchases of reading material of potential deleterious effect on the budding mind.

The censorship movement has never been more active, according to Edward B. Jenkinson, Professor of English Education at Indiana University in Bloomington. Jenkinson heads the National Council of Teachers of English Committee Against Censorship.

A committee report, due out in March, will charge that censorship books, school papers, and other curriculum material has increased in the last 15 years.



A preliminary briefing of findings was given at the recent annual meeting of the NCTE in Kansas City, Mo.

Committee Member Lee A. Burress Jr., English professor from the University of Wisconsin, Steven's Point, prefaced his report by saying questionnaires were sent to 2,000 secondary school teachers who are NCTE members. Replies came from 630.

Responses showed the greatest increase in censorship was in the area of books and school newspapers.

Slightly more than 30 percent of the responding teachers reported pressure for book censorship. This compares to 20 percent in a similar NCTE survey in 1966.

"This seems a significant difference," Burress said. Parents raised 78 percent of the objections to books reported through the survey. Nineteen percent of the objections came from

some member of the school staff — principal, teacher, superintendent, librarian.

Burress said this is a dramatic shift. In the 1966 survey, 48 percent of the objections came from parents and 42 percent from school staff.

"It appears that the most common objection was to the language of the books," Burress said.

Next in frequency were objections to sex, or erotic qualities in the books.

"In a given year," Burress said, "one out of five teachers hears objections to books. The result is that in approximately one-third of the cases, books are removed from the library and recommended reading lists."

"Thus, one-third of the time censorship efforts are effective in getting books out of use."

"These groups are well organized," he said. "There are 15 or 16 groups around the country involved in efforts to censor school materials."

He reported that several standard dictionaries were banned in Texas schools in 1976 by the State Commissioner of Education on grounds they contain "objectionable language."

As an example of what the commissioner considers objectionable, Burress cited "bed" — saying that many dictionaries contain a definition of "bed" as a verb, which includes sexual intercourse.

Burress reported that even the Bible is objected to by some censorship groups.

"Our Puritan background paves the way for censorship for two reasons," he said. "One, people cannot identify 'bad' language. And, two, people object to sexually permissive and frank language."

Therefore, he argued, the very book that led to the puritanical point of view created a situation in which that book, the Bible, has been banned in some schools.

Burress believes the trend toward censorship has increased since 1960 because school libraries have improved.

The improvements have given students greater access to a range of broader range of reading material.

The NCTE is a professional organization of teachers and administrators of English language arts programs at all levels of education, from kindergarten up to undergraduate and graduate courses in colleges and universities.

Parents fight for son to have Laetrile treatment

United Press International

PLYMOUTH, Mass. — A custody fight between the state of Massachusetts and the parents of a 3-year-old boy stricken with leukemia could become a test case for the controversial cancer drug Laetrile.

Gerald and Diane Green of Scituate, Mass., have been fighting for nearly a year for the right to treat their son, Chad, with Laetrile and their own special metabolic diet, instead of chemotherapy, the traditional treatment for the disease.

The state Supreme Court last year upheld a lower Superior Court ruling that said the Greens must continue to bring the boy to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston for chemotherapy.

Doctors testified the boy will die unless the chemotherapy is continued.

Plymouth Superior Court Judge Guy Volterra opened a hearing Monday on the Greens' motion to have the custody order overturned so they can regain full custody of Chad and treat him with Laetrile and the special diet.

"We hope that custody of our child will be returned to us," Mrs. Green said.

She said she and her husband will present at least four witnesses who will testify on the use of Laetrile as a "good cancer treatment."

Assistant Massachusetts Attorney General Jonathan Brandt, who is representing the state, called the Greens' witnesses part of a "political and medical movement" interested in the wide use of Laetrile.

Clements hires ex-employee for budget help

United Press International

AUSTIN — Governor-elect Bill Clements has named a former employee of his oil drilling company to serve as acting fiscal director and help would prepare the state budget. Clements presents to the 1979 Legislature.

Tom B. Rhodes, 61, served as general counsel, director and senior vice president of Clements' SEDCO Inc., and was treasurer of his governor's campaign. Clements said Rhodes will serve in the budget office for a minimum of 30 days, or until a permanent fiscal director is appointed.

"Tom Rhodes' business and legal background will help me immeasurably until I make my final selection of a fiscal director," Clement said.

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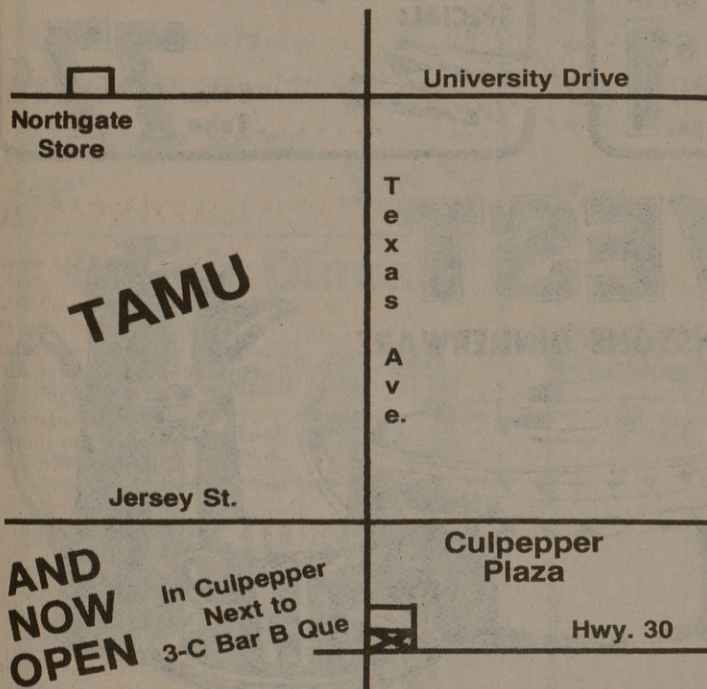
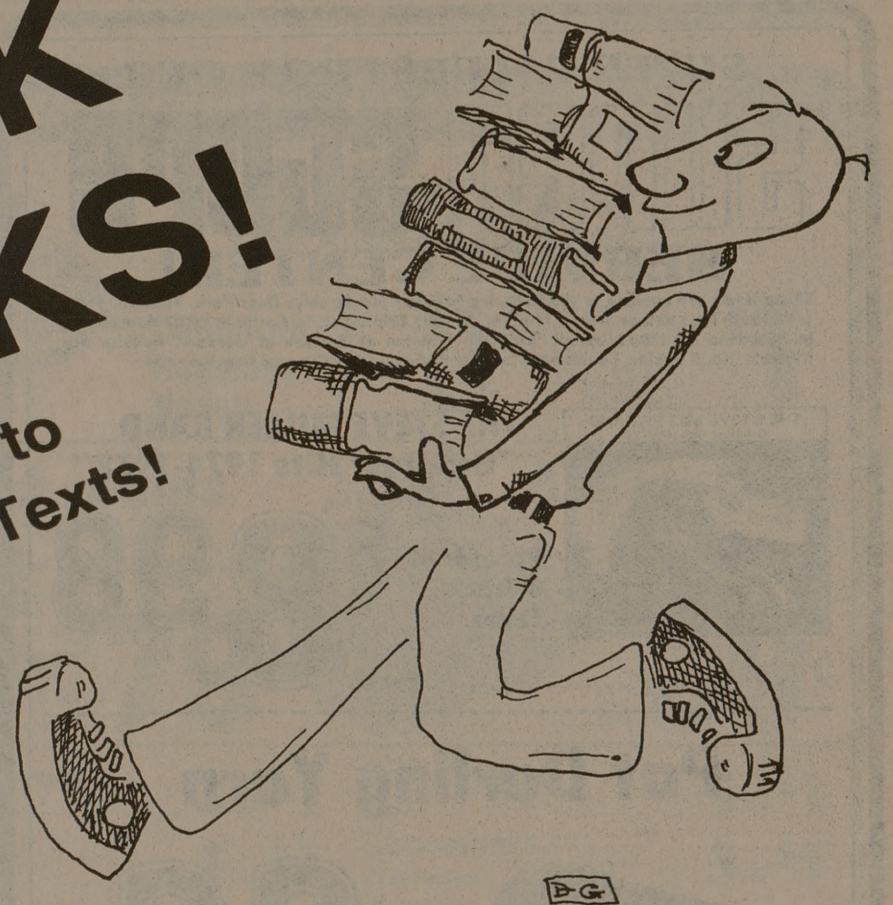
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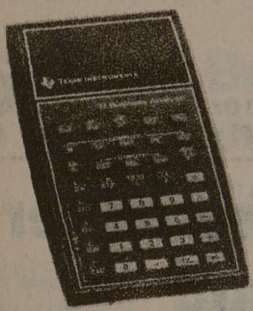
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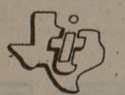
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