

Obscenity vs. Censorship Is Comic-Book Control Dilemma

By PHILIP B. LOWRY
State Senator

Last week, Representatives Littrell and Mann and I received petitions signed by 1,301 Jackson county residents urging our support of legislation to control the distribution of obscene publications and those tending to incite the commission of crime. These petitions specifically requested support of Senate Bill 173, which is a companion measure to Senate Bill 172. The two bills are commonly known as the "comic book legislation."

Because these two bills have raised such widespread support and contain so many policy and legal questions, Jackson county citizens have a right to be fully informed about them.

Senate Bill 172 seeks to establish a censorship board at the county level. Its duty would be to segregate good and bad publications in the hope of effectively deterring the sale, distribution and reading of those listed as unfit.

Bans Block Booking
Senate Bill 173 proposes to make illegal what is commonly referred to as "block booking." This is a practice by which a magazine distributor makes the standard best-selling publications available to a retailer only if the retailer accepts for sale other magazines designated by the distributor. In effect, a block-booking contract may provide that if a buyer wants one good item he must take a questionable one along with it.

These two bills were assigned for study to the Senate Judiciary Committee. After general committee discussion, it was agreed that the subject merited the creation of a subcommittee to study intensively the problem presented. Senator McMinimee of Tillamook, Senator Geddes of Roseburg and I make up the subcommittee.

'Standing Room Only'
It was decided to hold a public hearing to get the public's reaction and to get at the facts. The developments at the hearing are worthy of reporting in some detail. As you would anticipate, there was "standing room only," and very little of that, when the committee started the hearing.

The subcommittee had decided to limit the audience to adults. Some of the testimony, which was of a very direct character, proved the wisdom of this decision. Exhibits were offered in evidence by both the proponents and the opponents. These exhibits fully justified the most critical indictments that have been made about some of these publications.

Briefly, the hearing developed these points:
Definitions Lacking
No one seemed to be able to define a "comic book." The bills are not aimed against Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck or the Lone Ranger, or publications of that type. Nor do the bills seek to elevate the reading standards of the juvenile followers of those publications. Neither are we talking about literary works of art which have occasional sordid passages. What the bills are intended to eliminate are certain publications which are vicious and tend to incite crime. The distributors appear to say that these publications are intended for adult consumption only. The testimony, however, indicated that the teenagers are avid purchasers.

Several organizations in Oregon have, in various localities, attempted to enlist the cooperation of the distributors without much success. An organization which has made a lengthy study of the problem in Oregon unequivocally recommended against any form of censorship. Censoring and marking "for adults only" is only a boost for teenagers as well as adult demand.

Great Volume
This material with which we are concerned is published in such vast quantities (over 200 publications a week) and so frequently that a censorship board would probably be overwhelmed in attempting to segregate the decent from the indecent. The testimony tended to indicate that some of the paper-bound pocket books may be among the worst offenders.

There seems to be a tremendous demand for this trash. Many youngsters are eager to and do buy it. It then circulates widely on a "trade" basis. Much of it is read without the knowledge of parents. The juvenile readers come from families in every walk of life. Scientific studies have not yet determined if there is any relationship between this type of reading and the incidence of juvenile crime. Specific case studies show particular crimes of violence have been directly connected with the reading of "comic books."

The public seems not to be generally aware of how bad some of the stuff is that is being served up on the newsstand for our children. Most distributors, according to the testimony given, make little, if any, attempt to control the situation.

Deny Block Booking
Distributors who testified under oath denied that "block booking" is in use in Oregon. Other witnesses claimed that it is. There is a tremendous profit in this business. The horror, sex and crime books and magazines appear, in many cases, to command a better price than the decent ones.

The publishers have done some self-regulating and cleaning up through a self-appointed censor. This may have resulted from a drop-leaf in sales because of an aroused public. But not all publishers have gone along with the self-censorship plan. The distributors who talk about the self-imposed censorship seem to have one standard of decency for the minors and a different one for adults. But they all buy from the same newsstand and have the same selection of publications. There is absolutely no restriction, other than the price, on who may buy what off a newsstand. Mailing through the United States mail is no assurance of decency.

real expression of opinion. We are not going to join the "book burners."

Audience Hostile
The audience appeared openly hostile toward the witnesses who opposed this legislation. The opponents made it plain that they, too, were opposed to obscene publications, but sought to control it in a different manner without abridging any constitutional freedoms. It is the duty of the subcommittee, however, to find out if constitutional arguments are being used to give respectability to offensive publications.

Considered legally, there is no question that the type of censorship proposed by Senate Bill 172 has been declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court.

The block booking problem, sought to be solved in Senate Bill 173, presents legal problems, because it could impair the right of freedom to contract. A slightly different approach, without legal complications, would make it unlawful to refuse to sell a particular publication to a retailer because the retailer refused delivery of obscene publications.

Another Hearing Planned
The subcommittee proposes, in a further hearing, to try to get at the bottom of the existence of block booking in Oregon, and, if it exists, legally to regulate this part of the problem. If the retailers are in fact being pressured into the sale of the offending publications, as claimed, they need assistance. Consideration will also be given to imposing some type of restriction on sales to minors who are unaccompanied by parents. Possibly, there should be a re-evaluation of the penalties.

There is on the law books today in Oregon a statute which makes it a crime to sell, or offer for sale, obscene, lewd or criminal glorification publications. The penalty for violation is six months imprisonment, \$500 fine, or both. Testimony before the committee revealed most persons are not even aware of this law, and no known complaints have ever filed to the knowledge of the witnesses.

The best and the ultimate protection must be the constant vigilance of the parents and the public.

Some retailers probably are not going to concern themselves with this problem until the public lets them know that they have no intention of buying merchandise from those who offer these offensive publications.

Suggests Check
I have no personal knowledge of the present situation in Jackson county. Nor does the subcommittee have any way of knowing whether the distributors will get some of this stuff off the newsstands while the matter is under investigation. Nevertheless, it would perhaps be a good idea for Jackson county parents to actually check some of the newsstands and see what the situation is. A casual glance does not always suffice to reveal what is there.

No one should expect the legislature to pass some laws which are going to suddenly and miraculously eliminate this problem. Regulation of morality by legislation is, at best, difficult to accomplish.

This is not only a state problem but a national one. All of the exhibits offered in evidence arrived in Oregon through interstate commerce. The roots of the problem seem to lie with a few Eastern publishing concerns.

Parents are naturally and properly anxious for the legislature to help them with this problem, which has no easy answer or solution. I wish there were some method by which we could constitutionally and effectively legislate to dry up this source of rotteness in our midst immediately. Notwithstanding the many obstacles, the subcommittee intends to do its very best to make some proposals to aid in solving this problem.

4-H Club News

Ashland Sewing Club
The Ashland 4-H Sewing club met March 11 at the home of our leader, Mrs. E. Johnston. Mrs. Johnston explained how to make a pocket with mitered corners. After the explanation each girl made a pocket to keep as reference. Refreshments were served.

Nylia Cooper
Reporter

EATON'S DINNER HOUSE
812 Crater Lake Ave.
ITALIAN AND AMERICAN DINNERS
SPECIAL—All the Spaghetti and Homemade Ravioli you can eat. Includes Home Made Bread, Butter and Coffee \$1.00
5 COURSE ITALIAN DINNER \$1.50
Open 5:30 P.M. Till 9 P.M. Fri., Sat., Sun., and Mon. Only

Psychiatric Worker Speaks for Activists

Miss Mary Vandenberg, who does social psychiatric work for the Southern Oregon Child Guidance clinic, spoke Thursday for Active club members when they met at the Rogue Valley Country club. Roy Tibbetts was program chairman.

The club members voted to enter a queen contestant in the Pear Blossom festival and to sponsor a float in the festival parade.

Ashland Elks Lodge Entertains at Camp

Camp White — The Ashland Elks lodge entertained the veterans here Friday night with a variety show from the Ashland Senior High school. Tom Swift was master of ceremonies. Phyllis Knapp was the feature soloist.

Others in the program were Yvonne Stimson, Betty Paske, Evelyn Deets, Nancy Jeffries, Rex Clark, Ken Zimmerlee, Gerald Stowell, Lanie Knox, Laurel Scriber, Bill Finnell, Ted Silver, Jack Reynolds, and Betty Sorenson. Accompanist was Marilyn Bushnell.

Chairman Emil Kroeger was assisted by E. E. McLaughlin, and Roy Hartley for the Ashland Elks. Coffee and doughnuts were served.

The first transcontinental airship voyage was made by the Shenandoah, Lakehurst to San Diego, in 1924.

AT YOUR Drive-In Theatres
Gates open 6:30 p.m. Show at 7 p.m.

STARLITE 2-4507
SO. PACIFIC HIGHWAY
ENDS TONITE

Ma and Pa Kettle on Vacation
MARJORIE MAIN PERCY KILBRIDE

PLUS
THE DUEL AT SILVER CREEK
with Technicolor

ROGUE 3-2924
CRATER LAKE HIGHWAY
Tonite MON. TUES.

HELD OVER
A GREAT ADVENTURE HIT MOVES HERE FROM CRATERIAN

GREAT SAGA OF THE FABULOUS FIGHTING LEADER OF THE SIOUX!

CHIEF CRAZY HORSE
with Technicolor

VICTOR MATURE SUZAN BALL JOHN LUND
A UNIVERSAL INTERNATIONAL
PLUS

...THE DOOR'S OPEN... COME ON IN!

She's the BAIT in a man-trap!

Cine Moore • Haas • Agar



BETRAYING NONE OF ANIMOSITY which has characterized relations between them, Sen. McCarthy (right), (R), Wis., smiles as he shakes hands with Sen. McClellan (D), Ark., who succeeded him as chairman, as Senate subcommittee reopens hearings on promotion, honorable discharge of Maj. Irving Peress, center of McCarthy's "Fifth Amendment" charges. (International)

Electric Typewriter Workshop Scheduled

Dr. Fred E. Winger of Oregon State College will conduct a teachers' workshop devoted to classroom work with electric typewriters on Saturday, March 26. The workshop will be held at the Robertson School of Business and is sponsored by the International Business Machines corporation.

Herb Kinder, local IBM sales representative, reported that invitations have been sent to all commercial instructors in Southern Oregon and Northern California. Approximately 40 persons are expected to attend. The school will be held from 9 a. m. to noon and from 1:15 to 3 p. m. A no-host luncheon will be held at noon. All in attendance will be furnished an IBM electric typewriter for use during the conference.

Woodland, Wash. — (U.P.) — Eight-year-old Patricia Keisala, Woodland, was fatally injured Friday when she was struck by an automobile as she waited for a school bus.

Use Mail Tribune Want Ads

VARSITY
• ASHLAND •
GARLAND-MASON
A STAR IS BORN
CINEMASCOPE

THE NEW CRATERIAN
STARTS WEDNESDAY!
Special Matinee 1:00 p.m.
DARING, INCREDIBLE, TRUE!

Doors Open
Matinee 12:30 p.m.
Evenings 6:45 p.m.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN:
Not since THE JAZZ SINGER brought up sound in 1927 has there been, in my opinion, an entirely new type, unbelievable motion picture. At last, now there is one!

It is called "KARAMOJA." It was filmed in the wonderful new Eastman-color. It is the story of the Land of the Last Lost Tribe of Israel.

Karamojans practice today the ancient rites of Baal. They worship the Golden Calf. They are of the Iron and Stone Age, living on a diet solely of blood and beer. They have changed nothing, made no progress. They are untouched by modern civilization.

White man had never seen inside Karamoja until Dr. William B. Treutle and his wife succeeded in entering this unchanged land of the Labor mountains, two years ago. Dr. Treutle, a novice with a camera, filmed this unbelievable movie.

I would recommend this film—it's so different—if it were playing some other theatre. Yet, I am extremely happy HALLMARK selected this theatre for its exclusive local showing. "KARAMOJA" will never be shown on TV. So be sure to see it at the CRATERIAN THEATRE starting Wednesday, March 23.

CRATERIAN MANAGEMENT

THEY'RE SHOUTING ITS PRAISES!
"ONE OF THE BEST!"
Walter Winchell

WARNER BROS.
"Battle Cry"
WARNERCOLOR CINEMASCOPE STEREOPHONIC SOUND

VAN HEFLIN ALDO RAY
MONA FREEMAN NANCY OLSON
JAMES WHITMORE RAYMOND MASSEY
TAB HUNTER DOROTHY MALONE
LEON MURKIN ANNE FRANCIS

THEY'RE CHEERING ITS PEOPLE!
CONTINUOUS TODAY FROM 12:45 P.M.

HOLLY

THE NEW CRATERIAN
STARTS TODAY
THE SILVER CUP THAT BEGAN THE QUEST OF THE AGES!

THOMAS B. COSTAIN'S RECORD-SETTING BEST-SELLER—READ BY MORE THAN 25 MILLION PEOPLE TO DATE!

ADDED ENJOYMENT CARTOON and LATEST NEWS

NO ADVANCE IN ADMISSION

CONTINUOUS SHOWS FROM 1 P.M.

FULLY AND INCOMPARABLY WARNER BROS. NOW PRESENT EVERY BREATH-TAKING MOMENT OF THE MIGHTIEST STORY OF TRUTH AND TEMPTATION EVER WRITTEN—EVER LIVED!

THE SILVER CHALICE

DEBORRA THE INNOCENT whose virtue defied all of tyranny!
SIMON THE MAGICIAN who struggled the world to tear-chuck!
BASIL THE DEFENDER the slave who battled to save the sacred Cup!
PETER OF THE MIRACLES whose faith made the impossible possible!

HELENA THE SEDUCTRESS who embarked on a wretched life of sin!

VICTOR SAVILLE PRODUCTION IN CINEMASCOPE WARNERCOLOR—STEREOPHONIC SOUND
STARRING VIRGINIA MAYO • PIER ANGELI • JACK PALANCE AND INTRODUCING PAUL NEWMAN

NOW!
LOCALLY OWNED PH. ASH 9-6231
LITHIA DRIVE-IN THEATRE
2 1/2 Miles North of ASHLAND

Actually filmed by M.G.M. with all the...
MOGAMBO
CLARK GABLE AVA GARDNER
GRACE KELLY
TECHNICOLOR
PLUS! JAMES STEWART in "THE JACKPOT"

Also News & Color Cartoon • Gates Open 6:30 - Show at 7