

NEWS

BYU PROFESSOR UNDER FIRE FOR VIOLENT BOOK

WITH THE dust still settling from Brigham Young University's recent explosive academic freedom debates (which included the termination of two faculty members), some say another eruption is looming. A young associate professor of English and a dark, violent, new book are at the center of this latest controversy.

Early in 1994, shortly after earning a double Ph.D. in literature and critical theory from the University of Washington, Brian Evenson was hired as an associate English professor at BYU. During the intervening sixteen months, he has seen his Alfred A. Knopf-published book, *Altmann's Tongue*, receive both national acclaim—including a \$20,000 fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts—and local vilification. On the dust jacket, the collection of short stories and a novella is touted as “strangely fascinating,” “brutal,” and “chilling.” Juxtaposed with those descriptions, Evenson is described as a “devout Mormon,” an “unequivocal believer,” a father of two little girls, and a faculty member at BYU. “In other words,” the publisher writes, “Evenson appears, in every particular, to be the very destroyer of what—in this most shocking book—he is instead the maker of.”

An Anonymous Letter. Like some other BYU faculty controversies, the twenty-eight-year-old writer's trouble began when an anonymous student sent a letter to the university's general authority-led board of trustees, decrying *Altmann's Tongue* as a “showcase of graphic, disgusting, pointless violence.” (Some administrators know the identity of the letter writer, but Evenson was told only that she is a female

graduate student in English.) She wrote that reading the book made her “feel like someone who has eaten something poisonous and is in desperate need to get rid of it.” She also said she was “terrified” that someone like Evenson could be hired at BYU. “As Latter-day Saints and hopefully disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ, I believe we have a responsibility to use our gifts to bless the world with truth and hope—not revel in darkness and degradation,” she added.

The letter, passed down through the university hierarchy, reached Evenson in mid-November (about six weeks after it was written) through a meeting with English Department Chair Jay Fox. According to Evenson's written account of their meeting (Fox asked him to document it for the administration), Fox reportedly told Evenson that he found the book “perplexing” and the writing “very sophisticated” but that the university would probably not support Evenson if he published a second book of similar content. Fox told Evenson that the department values him but that he is “on a collision course,” and unless he is willing to change his writing, he would likely be let go at his third-year review. Fox also asked Evenson to write a letter to the unnamed student, responding to her allegations.

During that same meeting, Evenson defended the moral nature of *Altmann's Tongue*, explaining that he was “trying to jar people into a moral reevaluation of that which otherwise floats over them unexamined.” One of the major concerns Evenson expressed was that the letter had passed through so many administrators' hands before reaching him. Evenson said he thought

the anonymous letter either should have been discarded or sent from the general authority who received it directly to the department chair. “I indicated that I had no difficulty in having the letter pass back up the line of authority in company with my response, but that to have it pass down alone was unfair and might cause legal problems for the University [if it affects my standing],” he wrote. Evenson also said it was ironic that BYU would have reservations about the book when representative portions from it had been included with his application materials and when he had read portions of it to a “good part of the faculty” during an on-campus employment interview. “If there were complaints to be made, they should have been made at that time,” Evenson wrote.

Publish and Perish? After the meeting, Fox wrote a 16 January 1995 memo to Academic Vice President Todd Britsch, expressing “serious concerns” about the book, adding, “The bottom line is that [Evenson] knows that this book is unacceptable coming from a BYU faculty member and that further publications like it will bring repercussions.” Fox said he also worried that the violence in the stories “might be imitated by an impressionable and unstable reader.” When Evenson sought clarification from Britsch about whether Fox's statement reflected just the department chair's opinion or that of board members, Fox dissembled. Later, BYU spokesperson Brent Harker told the Associated Press that Fox, who has declined all interview requests, now regrets the statement and wants it known that nobody has threatened Evenson's job. That situation apparently changed several weeks later, when Evenson met with BYU President Rex E. Lee, Provost



Evenson could lose his job over conflicting interpretations of what makes fiction moral.

Bruce C. Hafen, Fox, and Humanities Dean Randall L. Jones. Evenson told the AP that the meeting was helpful in that he now knows where BYU really stands. “There were a couple of remedies” suggested in the meeting, Evenson said. “One would be not to publish other works that might be offensive to them. And the second would be that I could go elsewhere.”

A Moral Text? Meanwhile, Evenson elaborated on the use of violence in *Altmann's Tongue* in his letter to the anonymous student. Evenson wrote that the book is an attempt to “paint violence in its true colors and to let it reveal for itself how terrible it is. I neither support the violence nor glamorize it; I show it strictly for what it is, to let it condemn itself.” Evenson writes that his book doesn't glorify evil like some recent movies do. “My violence is a kind of violence that you can't cheer for. Movies glamorize killing. My book, however, shows how pointless violence is.” Evenson explained that he wrote the book while he was in a bishopric, often praying about it. “The book is a difficult one, one which demands new ways of reading, and one not for everybody, yet it is worthwhile,” he wrote. “It is, I firmly believe, a justified book and an oddly

moral book." This moral perspective is "not imposed upon the work like propaganda but is subtly woven through the whole fabric of the work."

Evenson, who says he has been influenced by writers like Beckett, Kafka, and Camus and music like that by The Fall, Tom Waits, and Severed Heads, adds that ultimately he hopes readers will see that, stripped of all justifying rhetoric, "violence is not fun, violence is not entertainment, violence hurts people, kills people, ruins lives, and finally makes no sense. . . . Violence of all kinds is diametrically opposed to Christ, and when we accept violence as justified, we participate in the moral decline of the world."

Ever protective of his protégé, Gordon Lish, editor of the literary journal *The Quarterly* and Evenson's editor at Knopf, told the AP that BYU's position seems untenable for a university, especially one with a motto that reads, "The Glory of God Is Intelligence." "They want the man to think thoughts that would be congruent with their wishes, which I find so entirely hostile to what it is to be an American and what it is to be an artist," he said. "I would think it also would be hostile to the notions of what it is to be a Christian." Lish also told the AP he believes Evenson "will produce himself as one of the major writers of the twenty-first century."

The Campus Climate. Of course, these events play into the sense of fear that already permeates parts of BYU's campus. "I get nervous as a writer when I see another writer getting censored," Bruce Jorgensen, another BYU English professor, told the *Deseret News*. "It does make me anxious—it makes it harder to write." Jorgensen also said he was confused by why the student would want to turn a personal offense into a public, institutional problem. He told the *News* that Christ's New Testament words teach that a man should

deal with problems with another directly, so that both could be edified. "It really disappoints me to see that another member of the church would fail to follow this counsel," he said. BYU employee Glenn Anderson, in a letter published in *BYU's Daily Universe*, agrees with Jorgensen: "For this student to have gone directly to a general authority of the Church violates" our religious standard of settling offenses "between him or her and thee alone." The other question bothering Anderson is that of how far the administration will go in regulating art and literature on campus.

All of this has placed the BYU administration in a very difficult position. Letters to the editor, like Anderson's, assert that this is just another BYU blunder that further tarnishes the University's academic reputation, not to mention its effect on the worth of a BYU degree and students' graduate school opportunities; other letters defend the University's right to limit academic freedom and texts published by BYU professors. In an interview with the *Student Review*, BYU's unofficial campus paper, BYU spokesperson Brent Harker made it clear that at least one board member has strong opinions about the book and has passed them on to BYU administrators. "Obviously we as an institution are struggling with it. This is tough. Brian is a gifted writer, the publisher is a premier publisher, and Brian's objectives and purposes are sincere. . . . This is a moral act for him," Harker told the AP.

However, Harker told the *Review* that BYU wasn't too concerned by the negative publicity. "The hiring of graduates only gets better and better over the years," he said. "These controversies that come and go affect different audiences in different ways. They tend to reinforce the support of the tithing payers and tend to alienate a certain segment of the public that doesn't like us anyway, and never paid a penny to support the institution." Harker also pointed out that

when you think about BYU's reputation, you have to think about its various audiences. "Our most important audience is the board of trustees, then the students and the tithing members," he told the *Review*. But at the same time, "It is not our desire to censure the book," Harker emphasized in an interview with the *News*. "The question is, does BYU want to be a party in the production of more books like this one? This is a difficult dilemma to an institution like us that has an honor code. . . . We must now decide when violence becomes obscene, and that's not an easy thing to do."

Holding BYU Accountable.

Like it or not, BYU may soon have to face that question: Evenson is dedicated to his work; he writes nightly from midnight to two A.M. and recently completed his second book, *Dark Property*. (The NEA grant will help him finish his third book, the mystery novel *Pergolesi's Death*, a draft of which has been completed.) Evenson says two of *Dark Property's* three novellas are much less violent—but the third and central story rivals any of the brutality of *Altmann's Tongue*.

Although Evenson told the *News* that he believes this confrontation, which is now being handled on the departmental level, could have the capacity to turn into a heated confrontation, he says he doesn't want it to.

Neither does the university, Harker says. "We didn't plan for this to be a public struggle," Harker told the *News*. "We need to talk to Brian directly and for Brian to have access to the administration. But I don't expect this to come to any immediate official action. I don't think it will come to a confrontation, either."

Nonetheless, confrontation may be hard to avoid. "The fact [is] that they don't see it as an academic freedom issue, and to me, that's absurd," Evenson told the *News*. "If it's not a problem that deals directly with academic freedom, then I don't know what it is."

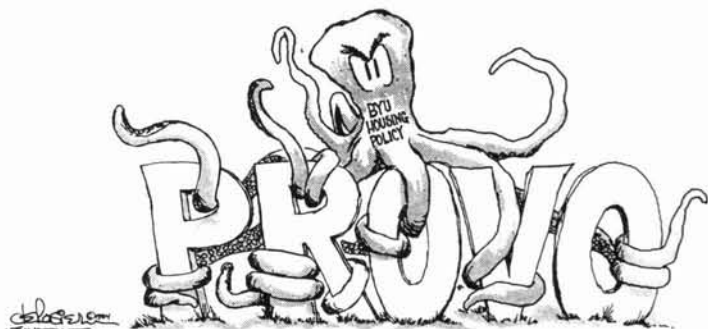
Even though Evenson is on a year-to-year trial contract and could be let go at any time, Harker told Salt Lake City's *Event* newspaper that Evenson is "not in immediate jeopardy." Ultimately, his fate will be decided "by a committee of his peers—not by President Rex Lee or the Board of Trustees dictating a decision—and that's a three-year process," Harker said. And despite the fact that he needs the support of Fox and Jones to have any chance of receiving continuing status (tenure), Evenson says he plans to see *Dark Property* through to publication. "I'll start looking for jobs, but I am very tempted to stay here and play this out," he told the AP, "because I think BYU needs to be accountable for these kinds of things like other universities." ☐

ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

- The Church, at the beginning of the year, through twenty-six different religious and charitable organizations, donated over seventy-nine tons of food to help the hungry in **Atlanta, Ga.**
- Recently, more than 3,000 families in **eastern Russia** have received 160,000 pounds of food, 40,000 pounds of winter clothing, and 2,000 blankets donated by the Church and distributed in conjunction with Catholic Relief Services.
- After the 17 January earthquake in **Japan**, hundreds of members joined local relief efforts to assist the homeless and injured. The Kobe Ward meetinghouse and adjoining Japan Kobe Mission Home, for example, were used as shelters for members and non-members, and as makeshift distribution centers.
- Students from Utah's Snow College sent 45 tons of excess food from local Bishop's storehouses to **Croatia**.

UPDATE

COURT RULES FOR BYU IN HOUSING BAN



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY has apparently reached an end to its off-campus housing woes. About two years ago, the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah, charging that Provo apartment owners discriminate according to gender, marital status, and religion, filed a lawsuit against twelve landlords. While not named in the suit, BYU soon joined the fray, contributing legal advice and funds to apartment owners (see "BYU Joins Landlords in Fight against ACLU," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1994).

The Federal District Court for Utah heard the case in January—a trial was not necessary since all parties agreed to virtually all the facts in the case. What they didn't agree on was the application of two opposing U.S. federal laws: Title IX, which applies to universities, and the Fair Housing Act, which regulates what private landlords can do. The *Deseret News* said BYU attorneys argued that Title IX takes precedence, giving the school power to contract with off-campus landlords to provide sex-segregated housing for single students. The ACLU, however, claimed that the Fair Housing Act alone controls what landlords can do. ACLU attorney Bruce Plenk acknowledged that BYU legally can segregate men and women in housing it owns and operates; it is when private landlords do the same in their BYU-approved

housing that discrimination occurs, he said. These two laws are clearly in conflict, said BYU general counsel Eugene Bramhall. "It's up to the court to find a way to harmonize the two."

The following month, Judge David Winder ruled in favor of BYU's housing policy on all counts, saying landlords of BYU-approved housing have the right to segregate students from non-students and segregate those students by sex and marital status. The ACLU is now appealing the decision before the 10th Circuit Court in Denver.

BOOTH SAYS MORMONS NEED TO DEVELOP A CRITICAL TRADITION

WAYNE C. BOOTH, George M. Pullman Distinguished Service Professor of English emeritus at the University of Chicago, during the opening session of the Association of Mormon Letters 1995 Annual Conference in January, said that Mormonism will not have its great writers and playwrights until it develops a critical community that artists consider in producing their works. Shakespeare, he said, didn't produce in a vacuum, but wrote for a critical community that consisted of actors, other playwrights, and theatergoers who had standards he strove to meet or exceed.

The following day, BYU professors Neal Kramer, Gideon Burton, and Grant Boswell spoke on Booth's writings. Boswell said he agreed with Booth's assertion that Mormonism needs a critical literary tradition. "Our problem is that we have been writing passively, rather than cultivating it," he said.

Also at the conference, Catholic thinker Patricia Coleman gave a paper comparing the humor of Catholic writer David Lodge and Mormon writer Neal Chandler. She said both do a good job reminding us "how foolish we are, if not in our principles, certainly in our practices." Susan Howe, in her presidential address, defended authors' rights to publish on a broad spectrum of topics but was disturbed by some of the violent writings of a number of contemporary Mormon authors. "Violence is easy, not worthy of the best Mormon

PEOPLE

TRANSFERS

- **Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Carolyn Susan Kisslinger, and Larry Windland** have all accepted positions on the John Whitmer Historical Association Board.
- **Elder Henry B. Eyring**, former member of the Seventy, has been sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve.
- **Elder James E. Faust**, member of the Council of the Twelve, has been sustained as the second counselor in the First Presidency.
- **Jake Garn**, former U.S. senator from Utah, is among ten people named to an advisory board that will oversee the Center for Science, Technology, and Congress.
- **William Gay** has retired after serving on the Polynesian Cultural Center board for thirty years.
- **President Gordon B. Hinkley**, former first counselor in the First Presidency, has been sustained as the President of the LDS church.
- **Richard P. Lindsay**, former member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, has been named national education director for the

Religious Alliance against Pornography.

- **President Thomas S. Monson**, former second counselor in the First Presidency, has been sustained as the first counselor in the First Presidency.
- **L. Jackson Newell**, former dean of liberal education at the University of Utah, has been named the next president of Deep Springs College, an exclusive men's college in California.
- **Bruce L. Olsen**, managing director of the Church's Public Affairs Department, has been named the new chair of the National Interfaith Cable Coalition's membership board.
- **Kay Schwendiman**, a retired Army chaplain and colonel, will be the first Church member to head the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces.

AWARDS

- **Lowell Bennion**, noted Mormon humanitarian, was honored in January by Salt Lake's Community Services Council. A renovated building that houses Utah's Food Bank and other service organiza-

minds," she said. We need to "transfer violence into other ways of resolving conflict." Howe encouraged Mormon writers to "use your language, use your imagination" to write "powerful stories" that teach us other ideals. During an evening social, AML award winners, who were announced at the conference, read from their works.

GRITZ QUITS THE CHURCH

FORMER THIRD-PARTY U.S. presidential candidate James "Bo" Gritz and his family have asked that their names be removed from LDS church membership rolls. The former Green Beret said he decided to leave the Church after his stake president asked him, in a temple recommend interview, if he was going to file a 1993 income tax return. (In his presidential campaign, Gritz had been critical of U.S. tax law, frequently calling it "unconstitutional.") Gritz, who has been a Church member for ten years, told the *Deseret News* he doesn't want to be part of a church that "appears to be more controlled by the government than God. . . . We just don't want to be members of a corporate church that isn't led by Jesus Christ," he said.

Gritz, who said later that he paid his taxes, still has one question: "Where in the equation of salvation does the [Internal Revenue Service] fit?" Church spokesperson Don LeFevre told the *News* that members are obligated by the twelfth article of faith to obey the laws of the land. "A member who refuses to file a tax return, to pay required income taxes or to comply with a final judgment in a tax case is in direct conflict with the law and with the teachings of the church," he said. "If a member disapproves of tax laws, he may attempt to have them changed by legislation or constitutional amendment." Since his 1992 campaign, Gritz and his followers, according to the *News*, have purchased 280 acres of land near Kamiah, Idaho, where they hope to build a "Christian covenant community" named "Almost Heaven" (see "Gritz Denies Building Base in Idaho," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1994).

In a lengthy personal essay published in the November issue of his *Center for Action* newsletter, Gritz said he and his family had been ostracized by many friends and followers since leaving the Church. "Now that I have stirred up a storm by inquiring why the LDS corporate church is acting more like tax collectors than witnesses for the

Lord Jesus Christ, some of our fair-weather friends have abandoned ship," he writes. "Better now than when things really begin to buffet."

Some speculate that Gritz's break with the Church will end any shot he may have had in politics. In his 1992 presidential bid, Gritz received about 90,000 votes, a third of which came from Utahns.

TWO RARE LDS PHOTOGRAPHS RECOVERED

THE LDS CHURCH has recovered two rare photographs that Church police believe were stolen from the Church historical department in the early 1980s, the Associated Press reported. One is an 1850 portrait of Brigham Young; the other is of the 1853 Salt Lake Temple groundbreaking. According to the AP, Church archivists discovered the photos were missing about four years ago, but assumed they had only been misplaced. But in July 1991, a New York dealer called the historical department to see if it would be interested in acquiring two photos. After hearing descriptions of the daguerreotypes (photographic images on chemically treated silver plates), the historical department told the dealer that they seemed to match those missing from Church archives. The AP reports that Church officials flew to New York to personally examine the daguerreotypes. Both were returned after the Church sued to regain possession.

U. PRESS DROPS MORMON BOOKS

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH PRESS announced in January that it had decided to drop its Mormon Studies series and will be placing its emphasis on more lucrative regional history and natural science titles. The Associated Press reported that publications in the Mormon Studies series that are selling well—like Jessie Embry's *Mormon Polygamous Families* and Martha Sonntag Bradley's *Kidnapped from that Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists*—will remain in the catalog. And those books in the series that are under contract will be printed. Mary Bradford's biography of Lowell Bennion, LDS theologian, U. sociologist, LDS Institute teacher, and Salt Lake humanitarian, which was under consideration, will not be published by the press.

tions was named after Lowell and his late wife, Merle.

- **Brigham Young University** was ranked tenth in the nation in its enrollment of National Merit Scholars in fall of 1994. BYU also placed sixth in the nation in the number of Merit Scholars sponsored and funded by the university (in contrast to those who have corporate or National Merit sponsorship).
- **Brigham Young University's** student public relations society recently received the "Outstanding Chapter" award from the Public Relations Student Society of America.
- **Larry EchoHawk**, a BYU law professor and former BYU football player, was given the Silver Anniversary Award in January by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The award is presented to former college athletes who have had exemplary careers.
- **Gordon B. Hinckley**, then first counselor in the Church's First Presidency, was honored in February by the Utah region's National Conference of Christians and Jews for his leadership in promoting morality and culture in America.
- **Gifford Nielson**, former All-American BYU quarterback, was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in December 1994. Nielson is the first BYU player to receive this honor.

- **Elder Boyd K. Packer**, president of the Council of the Twelve, and **Beverly Campbell**, director of international affairs for the Church in Washington D.C., recently recipients of the BYU Management Society's annual Distinguished Public Service Award.
- **Elaine Sorenson**, associate dean of BYU's School of Nursing, was inducted into the Western Academy of Nurses in May. She is the second Utah nurse to receive this honor.
- **Steve Young**, BYU law school graduate and San Francisco 49er, was named the National Football League's Most Valuable Player for the 1994 season and the 1995 Superbowl.

DEATHS

- **Hyrum Larsen**, former chair of the BYU microbiology department, died 18 January 1995 from congestive heart failure.
- **Rowena J. Miller**, former personal secretary to President J. Reuben Clark Jr., died of natural causes 7 January 1995. She was 86.
- **Edwin Rossiter**, former BYU professor of chemistry, died of cancer 5 February 1995. He was 41.
- **Maurice J. Taylor**, former physician to numerous LDS general authorities, died of natural causes 13 March 1995. He was 87.

PAGEANT WINNERS ABOUND AT BYU

A RECENT front-page article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* noted that if the number of Miss America contestants on campus is any indication, some of America's most "attractive, accomplished women attend BYU." The article listed Brook Hammond (Miss Nevada), Miss Wyoming, Miss Colorado, Priscilla Packard (Miss Utah Valley), Jennifer Lee Kerns (Miss Uintah County), and Amy Osmond (national Junior Miss) as current or recently graduated BYU students. Pageant organizers and participants say they believe the culture's emphasis on education and talent development is what sometimes gives Mormons an edge. The Miss America pageant represents "what the LDS faith believes in—the well-rounded woman, someone who is service-oriented, someone who has integrity," said Brooke Anderson (Miss Utah), a University of Utah student. Not everyone at BYU thinks this is a coup. English professor Gail Houston told the *Tribune*, "It reminds me of the Victorian period when women were supposed to have accomplishments. They learned how to paint a little and they learned how to play the piano and they learned how to speak a little French. All of it was amateur. The whole reason for it was to make them marketable for marriage."

MOST UTAH COUNTY RESIDENTS THINK BYU HAS ENOUGH ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A YEAR after the firings of two controversial professors, 71 percent of residents in Utah County (the county in which BYU is located) say they think BYU has "about the right amount" of academic freedom, according to a copyrighted *Deseret News* story and poll from January. Of the 401 residents polled, only 12 percent said they felt BYU should have more academic freedom; 3 percent said professors should have less freedom. The poll has an error rate of plus or minus 5 percent.

Some BYU faculty said they aren't surprised by the results of the poll. Douglas Tobler, a BYU professor of history, said he feels that the only controversy surrounding the firings of Cecilia Konchar Farr, former BYU assistant English professor, and David Knowlton, former BYU assistant anthropology professor, existed in the minds of the media ("BYU Fires Two Controversial Faculty Members, SUNSTONE, July 1993). "I think the newspapers made a bigger deal out of it than what it really was," Tobler told the *News*. "I think you'd find that what

happened affected very few people, and that for the most part, the faculty supports what the administration did." John Hughes, a BYU communications professor who is on a year's leave to be director of communications at the United Nations, agrees. "I have never felt muzzled while I've taught at BYU," he told the *News*. "I have worked for a lot of different institutions, and each has its own rules. I think the role of the individual is clear-cut—you work with the respect of the institution you are employed by. If you don't like their rules, then you work for someone else." Knowlton said the poll's results are pretty much what he would expect. "I don't think it is a burning community issue," he told the *News*. "I am sort of surprised that it is only 70 percent. The BYU faculty is a very small group when it is included with the entire county. I think even the 12 percent who think there should be more academic freedom is quite high."

UTAH, CHURCH FIGHT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

THE UTAH legislature has passed a bill that will, if ruled constitutional, prevent the marriages of same-sex couples performed outside Utah from being legally recognized in the state. As the end-of-session midnight deadline approached, Senate leaders fast-forwarded the document past other important bills and rammed it through with little time for debate or amendment. Opponents of the measure hoped its post-midnight (12:03 A.M.) passage would make it invalid. But since clocks in the chamber are not all in agreement, the judgment of midnight's passing falls on the Senate president and House speaker, both of whom voted for the bill. The LDS church has declared itself neutral in regards to the legislation. But last year, the First Presidency released a statement urging members to lobby "legislators, judges and other government officials" to prevent the legalization of same-sex marriages. The statement may have been a reaction to the possible sanctioning of gay and lesbian unions by the state of Hawaii, where the state's Supreme Court has sent a discrimination suit, filed in 1991 by three same-sex couples, back to its court of origination, saying that the state must provide a compelling interest why same-sex unions should not be legal. Local Hawaiian LDS church leaders, led by Regional Representative Don Hallstrom, requested permission to supply extra legal manpower, expert witnesses, and research results to aid Hawaii's attorney general in the fight against the case,

BULLETIN BOARD

BYU Football Star Chooses Sabbath over NFL. Eli Herring, one of BYU's all-time best offensive tackles, despite being drafted by the Los Angeles Raiders, has decided to pass up playing in the National Football League so he can keep the Sabbath day holy. "When I was making my decision everyone brought up [San Francisco 49ers quarterback] Steve Young as being an LDS guy who has been a good influence for the Church through the fame he's received in the NFL. He has been a good example for the Church, but for me, [playing on Sunday] isn't an option," Herring told the *Deseret News*.

Church Urges Members to House Foster Children. In response to Utah Governor Mike Leavitt's plea that more care be provided for foster and other needy children, the LDS First Presidency has issued a statement urging all members who are "in a position to help" to do everything they can.

Church Hires Public Relations Firm. In February, the Church hired Edelman Public Relations Worldwide to work on interna-

tional relations. "Our objective is a long-term program that supports the Church's global mission to share the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Bruce L. Olsen, managing director of Church Public Affairs.

RLDS Church Considers Name Change. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will debate changing its unofficial name to "Community of Christ" during its 1996 World Conference. The February issue of *Saints Herald*, an official RLDS church magazine, urged members to discuss and reflect upon the proposed change prior to the conference.

LDS Church Organizes 2,000th Stake. In December, the Church reached a major milestone when President Howard W. Hunter formed the Mexico City Mexico Contreras Stake, the Church's 2,000th stake. It is the 129th stake in Mexico, which now has more than 700,000 members. In its number of Latter-day Saints, Mexico is second only to the United States, which has 4.5 million members.

which will go to trial on 25 September. "We do not see this as a civil-rights issue," Elder Hallstrom was quoted as saying. "We see it as a protection of traditional marriage." Dan Foley, who represents the gay Hawaiian couples, opposed the Church's intervention and asked the court to "sanction the church for this frivolous motion." Later, a circuit judge did just that, refusing to allow the Church to enter the legal battle. Meanwhile, gay organizations have vowed not only to challenge the legality of the Utah bill, which has since been signed into law by Utah Governor Mike Leavitt, but also to petition the International Olympic Committee to disallow Utah's candidacy in the bid for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE FINDS NO EVIDENCE OF LDS SATANIC ABUSE

RESPONDING TO a memo written by Glenn L. Pace (then a member of the Church's Presiding Bishopric) and other allegations of satanic ritual child abuse among some Mormon leaders and members, Police Detective Mike King launched a Utah legislature-funded investigation in 1991 ("Leaked Bishop's Memo Spotlights LDS Ritual Satanic Sexual Abuse," *SUNSTONE*, Nov. 1991). This February, at the conclusion of the probe, King announced that no evidence had been found to justify prosecution for the alleged crimes. He told Utah-based television station KUTV that he screened 225 cases and gave close scrutiny to 125. In the process, he says, he talked to hundreds of people who alleged they were raped, tortured, "forced to perform horrible acts," and brainwashed. Others told King they saw babies murdered or were forced to participate in ritual murders. "I really feel for these people and I would like to help them, but we just couldn't find the evidence," King told KUTV. King also called allegations involving Church leaders "absurd."

Bishop Pace's memo, written to the Strengthening Church Members Committee, summarizes over fifty interviews he conducted with men, women, and children who said they were abused in Utah,



Elder Pace's memo on child abuse helped spark a 1991 investigation.

California, Mexico, and other locations. Some victims told Bishop Pace that they were "baptized in blood" to cancel their Mormon baptism. The abusers reportedly included parents, Church leaders (including general authorities), temple workers, and members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Some victims reported that only when they went through the temple and participated in its rituals did they begin to have "flashbacks" of the similar satanic rituals they had experienced but had blocked out for years.

BYU FEMINISTS PROTEST JUSTICE THOMAS'S VISIT

MUCH TO organizers' dismay, the J. Reuben Clark Law School's annual moot court competition usually doesn't receive a whole lot of media attention. This year they probably wish it hadn't received any.

The problems began in February when BYU announced that U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas would be heading the competition's five-judge panel. Members of the BYU feminist organization VOICE were frustrated with the university's speaker and guest policies and wanted to know why Thomas, "whose respect for and treatment of women were seriously called into question" during his confirmation hearings, was an honored guest of BYU when the administration has denied petitions to bring "controversial" feminists to campus.

VOICE requested a protest permit only to have it rejected. Administrators said that not only was the request filed two hours late, but they felt that pursuing the matter further would be "a deliberate, irresponsible attempt to embarrass a sitting member of the U.S. Supreme Court and the university." So instead of rallying at the law school, VOICE moved its demonstration to the sidewalk in front of BYU's main entrance sign. Some twenty-five women and two men held banners reading, "VOICE welcomes Clarence Thomas. Now can we invite Anita Hill?" and "Where was the red carpet for Laurel Thatcher Ulrich?" (University administrators would not allow Ulrich, a Mormon Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard historian, to speak at the BYU Women's Conference in 1993.) Perry Smith, student leader of the "Ditto Head" [Rush Limbaugh] conservative club, organized a counter-protest. "These women need to get a clue," he told the *Deseret News*. "If you come to this campus, you are going to hear the views of people who support LDS doctrine. If they want liberal speakers, they can go to Berkeley."

Alan Osmond Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Alan Osmond, the oldest member of the Osmond singing group, says he has progressive multiple sclerosis—"the kind of MS that comes on very slowly and keeps getting gradually worse." He told *Entertainment Tonight* that the first indication he had the degenerative nerve disease came while he was playing the trumpet and could not finger it as quickly as usual.

BYU Graduate Creates Popular Violent Game. Sandy Peterson, a BYU graduate and father of five, is the co-creator of one of the most popular, as well as violent, video games on the market. In DOOM, characters fire shotguns and rocket launchers and use fists or chain saws to turn the enemy into red pulp. DOOM's graphic, bloody mayhem is partly responsible for a new ratings system designed in response to last year's congressional video game violence hearings. Peterson told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that there is a "pornography of violence," but said he doesn't think DOOM falls into that category.

Utahns Protest Scripture-Trashing Rock Band. Scores of compact disks by the rock group Nine Inch Nails were returned to Utah

record stores after a band touring with them, Marilyn Manson, tore up a Book of Mormon during a November concert. One record store owner, Terry Xanthos, told BYU's *Daily Universe* that within two weeks of the concert more than thirty CDs had been returned. David Whitehead, owner of Graywhale CD Exchange, said posters, hats, T-shirts, and at least ten CDs, had been returned to his store.

Old Salt Lake Mission Home Demolished. To make room for a parking lot, the historic Lafayette School has been reduced to rubble. The old school, which sat on the northwest corner of State and North Temple, had been built in the 1920s and used as a missionary home from 1971 to 1978.

Alleged Scripture Thief Nabbed. A Canadian fugitive was recently arrested in connection with a wave of scripture thefts in Salt Lake. According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the 63-year-old male suspect would allegedly go to local Deseret Book stores and steal enough books to fill customer orders for his "discounted scriptures." Investigators said about seventy books—worth about \$90 each—were recovered.



BYU feminist club VOICE protests Supreme Court Justice Thomas's visit.

The protest, which some felt was helpful in highlighting political bias on campus, also had another outcome: the president of BYUSA, the university's student service association, revoked VOICE's power to hold public events—unless they are approved and co-sponsored by BYUSA. The sanctions will last until the beginning of the 1996 winter semester.

BYU WORKS TO INCREASE CAMPUS DIVERSITY

ERLEND PETERSON, BYU dean of admissions, recently told *BYU's Daily Universe* that the university is making efforts to ensure its population better represents the membership of the Church. For example, "All students go through the [same] admissions process," he said. "However, before a minority student is denied admission, further consideration is made to evaluate whether or not an exception should be made . . . based on a total portfolio examination." Minority students comprise 6.5 percent of BYU's current student body.

Another area of focus is gender imbalance: last fall, women comprised only 18 percent of BYU's full-time faculty. One of the many departments lacking women is Religious Education; out of the fifty-seven full-time faculty members, three are women. Darlene Kelly, equal opportunity manager at BYU, told the *Universe* that twenty-four part-time faculty members, all women, were recently hired "to provide more female role models." (Shortly after the announcement, a minor brouhaha ensued on the *Universe's* editorial pages, with some students defending the hirings and others saying women in the work force set a poor example.)

The recent hirings and push for greater ethnic diversity could bode well for BYU's 1996 accreditation—the generally positive 1986 accreditation report criticized BYU for its "lack of diversity" and encouraged the university to "move forward positively to diversify, [which] will create issues and conflicts largely foreign to the institution" ("BYU Receives High Marks in Reaccreditation," *SUNSTONE*, Jan. 1987).

MORMONS AND OTHERS CONTINUE ANTI-PORN FIGHT IN NEVADA

RESIDENTS FROM predominantly Mormon communities in Mesquite and Bunkerville, Nev., and St. George, Ut., are still dedicated to a round-the-clock protest of the Pure Pleasure Book & Video pornography store ("Church Members Join in Anti-Pornography Crusade," *SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1994). "We won't be going anywhere

until they quit trying to peddle their filth in our communities," one protester told the Associated Press. Over the two-and-one-half years since Pure Pleasure opened, an estimated 8,000 people have put in time waving signs or marching around the small Mesquite store. They're organized in three-hour shifts with on-site facilities—a trailer, electricity, running water, a telephone, and a misting system for hot summer days. They even hold Sunday church services in the parking lot. It's a peaceful protest, generally. (Organizers say, however, that things did get a little rough when one porn store employee taunted them by tacking Elder Mark E. Peterson's 1960s handout on masturbation to the store's door.) Protest organizers from HOME (Help Our Moral Environment) say their most successful tactic so far has been logging the license plate number, personal description, and length of visit of each Pure Pleasure patron. (Protesters say they call the police when something seems out of line—like last year when several Utah state employees decided to visit the store in a state vehicle on state time.) HOME statistics indicate that 77 percent of the store's visitors have Utah license plates.

HOME's work has had measurable results. Sam Cianciola of Pure Pleasure told the AP that his business has fallen by half in the last year, resulting in a \$5,000-a-day loss. "They've tried everything including marching around the building like Joshua and Jericho to get us out—but don't hold your breath," Cianciola told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "We're not going anywhere." In fact, Cianciola has plans to expand. He wants to bring nude dancers to Pure Pleasure, build a house of prostitution on the Nevada-Utah state line, and start a direct-mail service for sexually explicit materials called Long Distance Sales (LDS). "I'm sure that will get their attention," he told the AP with a smile.

BYU MICROBIOLOGIST RECOVERS DNA FROM DINOSAUR BONE

BYU MICROBIOLOGIST Scott Woodward resisted the temptation to dismiss *Jurassic Park* as pure fantasy. He was already working on extracting DNA from dinosaur bones when the movie—based on a fictitious experiment in which Jurassic-era DNA was used to breed live dinosaurs—was released a couple of years ago. And his persistence paid off: last fall, Woodward and student research assistant Nathan Weyand coaxed DNA samples from two bone fragments that had been found by geologist Mark Bunnell in a Carbon County coal mine near Schofield, Ut. Woodward and Weyand were stunned when their tests yielded intact DNA sequences. "It's like nothing we've ever seen before," Woodward told the university's alumni publication, *Brigham Young Magazine*. "This is something that hasn't



BYU researcher Scott Woodward coaxes DNA from dinosaur bones.

been seen for eighty million years. Of all the gene sequences that have been studied . . . this is unique." While it is too early to draw any conclusions from his work, Woodward does know this much: there probably will never be any Jurassic Park-ish dinosaurs from his DNA. "To think we could take DNA from any organism, living or dead, and put it all back in the correct order and then turn it on, have it work right, is far beyond our capability right now," he said.

AWARDS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

Excerpts from the 1994 awards, given at the annual AML meeting, 14 January 1995.

An Award in the Novel

ANNE PERRY*The Sins of the Wolf*

New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1994

Anne Perry's Victorian mystery calls out for a fireplace, a long winter's night, and a reader with the pleasure of time. This is a novel about family values, albeit with an unsettling twist. Closing the pages of *The Sins of the Wolf*, a reader can only find herself on the way to the bookstore and more Anne Perry.

An Award in the Short Story

WAYNE JORGENSEN*"Who Tarzan, Who Jane"**High Plains Literary Review*

9:1 (spring 1994)

Jorgensen creates a narrator's voice that races, halts, sputters, and tumbles on, mimicking the workings of the central character's consciousness as he wrestles with self-doubt and sexual desire. Mormon fiction involving sex—what little there is of it—typically focuses on illicit desire and congress; Jorgensen celebrates "immortal beauty's bodily moment" within a conventional Mormon marriage.

An Award in the Poem

PAMELA PORTER HAMBLIN*"Magi"**Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*

26:4 (winter 1993)

Pamela Hamblin combines the language of everyday speech with figures so commonplace that they seem to rise of their own accord from the subject. But out of the familiar story of Bethlehem and Calvary springs, for each of us, the death of an old and sterile way of life and the birth of a new way that demands a contrition that "will break our hearts."

An Award in the Essay

RICHARD D. POLL*"A Liahona Latter-day Saint"*

SUNSTONE 17:2 (Sept. 1994)

In early 1994, the distinguished career of Richard D. Poll came full circle. His Liahona/Iron-rod dichotomy, borrowed from the Book of Mormon, had entered the lexicon of Mormon thought almost thirty years earlier. In a time when some are called sinners for a word; when the terms "alternative" and "dissident" are being redefined as sinister; when some seek apostasy, while others have apostasy thrust upon them, Richard Poll's calm, reasoned, compassionate voice rings with a clarity that will live on in our hearts and minds.

An Award in the Drama

ERIC SAMUELSEN*Accommodations: A Play in Three Acts*

SUNSTONE 17:1 (June 1994)

In a place where love and brutality must co-exist, what compromises are acceptable, even essential, and at what point do they become manipulations or betrayals of ourselves or others? *Accommodations* unflinchingly confronts these dilemmas, "warning" us of dangers, hinting at possibilities, and, wisely, despite a hopeful ending, guaranteeing no solutions.

An Award in Children's and

Young Adult Literature

DEAN HUGHES*The Trophy*

New York: Knopf, 1994

Books for young readers fall mostly into one of two categories: those which adults love and think children should love; and those which children actually love. *The Trophy* is a story that belongs in a special category of books that charm both children and adults.

An Award in Biography

WILLIAM G. HARTLEY*My Best for the Kingdom:**History and Autobiography of**John Lowe Butler, a Mormon Frontiersman*

Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1993

Hartley's recent biography of Mormon convert John Lowe Butler (1808–1860) has all the trappings of historical treatise. But Hartley bodies forth one of Mormonism's ordinary men living an extraordinary life. Hartley has made him our neighbor, friend, brother.

An Award in Criticism

GIDEON O. BURTON*"Towards a Mormon Criticism: Should We Ask 'Is This Mormon Literature?'"**The Association for Mormon Letters Annual, 1994*

Passion for the question of whether there is a Mormon literature has been easy to engender. Gideon Burton makes a major, restorative contribution to the discussion of the dilemma articulated by Richard Cracroft and Bruce Jorgensen. By shifting the discussion of LDS criticism from its focus on the content of literature to the way in which literature is conceived and received, he makes us stop, take stock, and begin again. For Burton, Restoration—the act of Restoration—is the heart of Mormon literature and the eye of Mormon criticism.

Honorary Life Memberships

WAYNE C. BOOTH

As a teacher, scholar, and academic leader, Wayne C. Booth has mixed reasoned argument and irony with a keen sense of the need for faith and the moral life. Upon receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, Wayne went first to Haverford College and then to Earlham College, where he began his first scholarly book, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Once at the University of Chicago, he was named dean of the college and served with great distinction during the student upheavals of the late 1960s. During those years, he edited two collections of essays and was becoming recognized as the foremost rhetorical critic in the U.S. The resulting book, *Critical Understanding*, presents a powerful argument for both the ethics and rigor of pluralism as a critical tool. Booth has confirmed what we Mormons have known all along, that changed lives result "from a close reading of beloved . . . and sacred books."

MARY LYTHGOE BRADFORD

Much has happened in the Mormon literary world because of Mary Lythgoe Bradford's work: the reconnection of Virginia Sorensen to her Mormon roots; Mary's biography of Lowell Bennion; the recovery of *Dialogue* during her editorship (1978–83) from financial instability. Mary created another literary link for us in 1981 through *Mormon Women Speak*, the first collection of personal essays by Mormon women. Her own collection of personal essays, *Leaving Home*, was published in 1987. It is her indomitable enthusiasm for Mormon letters, her insightful intellect, her genuine warmth, and her intuitive quest for a better world for all of us that help tie us to her and to each other.

WILLIAM A. (BERT) WILSON

Bert is both the foremost American scholar of Finnish folklore and the foremost scholar of Mormon folklore. A mission to Finland led him to Ph.D. work at Indiana on Finnish folklore and to the publication in 1976 of *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland*. Bert's first published essay, in 1969, was based on "Three Nephite" legends collected from Mormon faculty and students at Indiana; he has now published over thirty essays that describe and interpret Mormon culture for both Mormons and non-Mormons and nearly as many essays that illustrate and champion the crucial role folklore plays in humanizing people. Bert's voice is always compassionate, challenging, humane, and grounded in fierce integrity.

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

MORMON ORGANIZATIONS MEET

AFFIRMATION will hold its annual national conference in Seattle on **4-6 August 1995**. Keynote speaker will be Mel White, author of *Stranger at the Gate*. Contact David Johnson (206/820-5729), Karen Swannack (206/874-8362; e-mail canoeplay@aol.com), or Rob Killian (716/232-3149; e-mail robkillian@aol.com).

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS will sponsor a session at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association's 1995 meeting in Spokane, Wa., this fall. Submit proposals or manuscripts to Neal Kramer, General Education and Honors, Brigham Young University, 350-B Maeser Building, Provo, Ut. 84602.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY will hold its annual Education Week **21-25 August 1995**. Contact the Education Week office at 801/378-2987.

FAWN BRODIE'S NO MAN KNOWS MY HISTORY: A 50-YEAR PERSPECTIVE will take place on **9 August 1995** in the Behavioral Science Auditorium at the University of Utah. Admission free. Contact William Mulder (801/328-2768).

THE SOCIETY FOR UTOPIAN STUDIES will hold its twentieth meeting in Toronto, **19-22 October 1995**. Send abstracts to Merritt Abrash, Box 237 RD 1, Stephentown, N.Y. 12168 (518/733-5586).

WORKSHOP ON CHURCH MUSIC will be held at BYU on **8-11 August 1995**. Contact BYU Conferences and Workshops, 352 Harman Bldg., Provo, Ut. 84602-1503 (801/378-7692).

SUNSTONE CONFERENCES

THE 1995 SALT LAKE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held **9-12 August** at the Salt Lake Hilton Hotel. For more information, contact the Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, Ut. 84101 (801/355-5926; fax 801/355-4043).

NORTHWEST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM
CALL FOR PAPERS

13-14 October 1995

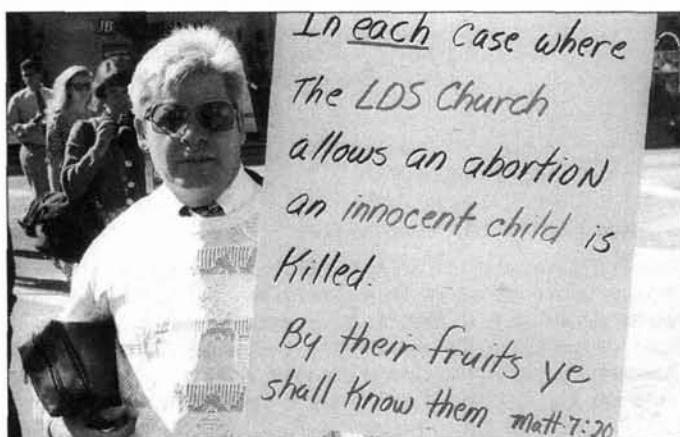
Contact Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Ave. E,
Seattle, Wa. 98112 (206/325-6868).

CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM
CALL FOR PAPERS

20-21 October 1995

Contact Ann Stone, 2705 Thayer, Evanston, Il. 60201
(708/475-2583) or Susan Paxman Hatch (708/482-3518).

ALL-SEEING EYE



The usual protesters—upset with the Church's "liberal" position on abortion—parade outside Temple Square during general conference.



Chips off the ol' Sunstone: The foundation's editors and publishers meet for the 1994 Salt Lake Symposium. Daniel Rector, 1986-91; Peggy Fletcher Stack, 1978-86; Elbert Peck, 1986-present; Allen Roberts, 1978-80; Scott Kenney 1975-1978 (from left to right).



Bill Martin, a non-Mormon and a professor of philosophy at DePaul University of Chicago, taught a class on "The Mormons: History, Philosophy, Community" last winter. Guest lecturers included BYU philosophy professor James Faulconer, University of Chicago literary critic Wayne Booth, and Donny Osmond (above with the class), who was in town performing Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

SUNSPOTS



NOT THE EXPOSURE WE HAD IN MIND

BYU FANS like nothing better than a little national publicity for their (real or adopted) alma mater. San Francisco 49ers quarterback Steve Young's recent Superbowl victory gave them reason to cheer; drive around Salt Lake or Utah Valley, and chances are that even now, ten years after the fact, you'll see many proudly displayed "BYU—1984 NCAA Champions" bumper stickers. But Cougar fans may not spread the word so zealously about a four-page *Sports Illustrated* article featuring BYU basketball coach Roger Reid and his two sons, who are starters. It's not the content of the laudatory article; fans were ecstatic, in fact, about its appearance—until they found out it would end up sandwiched between photos of bikini-clad supermodels in the yearly *SI* swimsuit issue. An official at BYU, where possession of the issue in BYU housing appears to violate the Honor Code, recommended that students clip out the article and toss the remainder of the magazine. No recommendation was made, however, for the janitors responsible for emptying all those trash cans.

THE PLAN (10) OF SALVATION



An alien from Plan 10 from Outer Space.

WHAT DO space aliens, polygamists, the Deseret alphabet, and lyrics by W. W. Phelps all have in common? They're part of *Plan 10 from Outer Space*, Salt-Laker Trent Harris's 1995 Sundance Film Festival entry. From the opening credits, subtitled in the Deseret alphabet, to the final scene, in which Nehor, the female space alien (an erstwhile plural wife of Brigham Young), proclaims the advent of a matriarchal reign over Salt Lake, the film is saturated with Mormon insider humor. Such references include a flannel board explanation of Mormon history; horny, balding male RMs with panty fetishes;

a soundtrack that prominently features "If You Could Hie To Kolob"; flashbacks including Porter Rockwell in his role as Danite avenger; and the Masonic distress symbol, used to signal alien ships. Non-Mormons may find themselves entertained by the film, but the ideal audience would be made up of outside-insiders or inside-outsiders. When the film's protagonist, a twenty-something female jack-Mormon seeking to uncover the mystery of the ancient "Plaque of Kolob," hypothesizes: "Maybe Brigham Young was an alien—it sure would explain a lot about Salt Lake City," we feel certain that Harris's quirky flick is destined for yearly runs at Salt Lake's Tower Theater and a permanent place among Utah cult classics.

OXYMORMONS



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