

## *Commission on Obscenity and Pornography: Buried Alive?*

*Reported from Office of Intellectual Freedom  
American Library Association*

RUNNING 1,050 PAGES, the Report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography has finally been published. The first run only consisted of enough copies for members of Congress, the press, and the Commission itself. Bantam Books, however, is bringing out a paperback edition of the complete report. Priced at \$1.50, it was released on October 12.

The report contains an overview and findings, the reports of the Commission's four panels, and the formal testimony received by the Commission. It does not include empirical data from the studies performed under the auspices of the Commission. This material was published by Bantam, in ten volumes, around Thanksgiving.

The Report and the Commission have been sources of controversy since last winter when two Commission members, Rev. Winfrey Link and Rev. Morton Hill, began holding unofficial hearings around the country. Official hearings were held in May, and ALA appeared and gave testimony. Hill, Link, and Charles Keating, "President Nixon's only appointee to the Commission" and founder of Citizens for Decent Literature, have consistently claimed that the proceedings have been biased by the preconceptions of the majority of the commissioners, and particularly Dean William Lockhart, chairman.

In late August, the preliminary report was leaked to Associated Press which promptly publicized the major findings: that pornography does not have a direct casual relationship with anti-social behavior, and that adults should have free access to pornography. Since then, a disheartening series of statements and events have effectively held up publication of the report and undermined its impact. President Nixon's press secretary, Ron Ziegler, and Vice President Agnew have both made public statements to the effect that the Commission (with the exception of Keating) was not appointed by Mr. Nixon, and this administration will not accept a recommendation that adults should have free access to pornography.

In September, Keating sought and received a court injunction against publication of the report to allow him time to write a lengthy "minority" statement. Every major newspaper, and many with smaller circulations, have carried editorials about the report (as leaked to AP) with the majority taking a moderate or critical view of its findings. In effect, the Commission's report has been "tried and found guilty" by many factions, because it failed to confirm long-held "folk-beliefs" about the "evil" of obscenity and pornography.

Whether the recommendations of the Commission will have any effect on federal and state legislation can't really be determined. It seems safe to say

that any immediate influence will result in tightening (in over-reaction) the laws concerning pornographic materials, rather than lifting restrictions for adults, as recommended. As one source close to the Commission sadly commented: "The Commission majority is twenty years ahead of the rest of the nation."

H. L. Mencken seems to have provided a suitable epitaph for the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography: "Human beings never welcome the news that something they have long cherished is untrue; they almost always reply to that news by reviling its promulgator. Nevertheless, a minority of bold and energetic men keep plugging away, and as a result of their hard labors and resultant infamy, the sum of human knowledge gradually increases."

## BOMAR RECEIVES AWARD

(Continued)

concerned with library and media services has been expert and valuable.

Professional associations at the state, regional, national and international levels have had her active support. Elected to membership in Beta Phi Mu, the international library science honorary society, she served as its president in 1965-66. She has been president of the American Association of School Librarians, of the Library Education Division of the American Library Association and of the Southeastern Library Association. She served as chairman of the State School Library Supervisors group. In addition to Beta Phi Mu she has been elected to membership in other honor societies such as Delta Kappa Gamma and Pi Gamma Mu.

Birds and books, dogs, cats, rocks, music, and people—these are just some of Cora Paul Bomar's varied interests. Intensely aware of the world around her, she is constantly seeking new knowledge and new experiences. Wherever she goes, to institutes, conferences and workshops,

she spreads the word about good school media programs, and she has the happy ability to do more than talk. Of all the people I know, Cora Paul Bomar has the quality of being able to dream dreams, to see ahead, and at the same time she is able to translate dreams into reality and plans into action. The tremendous growth of school libraries in North Carolina which occurred under her leadership is clear evidence of this. The preservice and inservice school media specialists who now have the privilege of knowing her and working with her at the University at Greensboro are fortunate indeed, and through them Cora Paul's philosophy of service and high professional standards will spread in ever-widening circles, continuing her effective contributions to the school libraries of North Carolina.

On behalf of the members of the North Carolina Association of School Librarians, it is my privilege to present to you, Cora Paul Bomar, the Mary Peacock Douglas Award for outstanding contributions to North Carolina school libraries. ■