

IDAHO CENTER FOR THE BOOK NEWSLETTER

"...because people read t-shirts."

VOL. 1/NOS. 1 & 2
October 1994

News from the Center for the Book: New Idaho Center Emphasizes Book Arts



The Idaho Center for the Book marked its dedication and opening at the Hemingway Western Studies Center on the campus of Boise State University on April 9-12 with three

days of exhibits, lectures, book arts workshops and demonstrations, and the publication of its first book.

The program of activities and events was organized by Tom Trusky, Idaho Center for the Book director, around two

themes: "Missing Pages: Idaho & the Book"; and "Literacy & the Book Arts." Guest speakers included Boise State University President Charles Ruch and LC Center for the Book Director John Y. Cole, who spoke at the dedication ceremony on April 9. Martha Carothers, chair of the Art Department at the University of Delaware, was a featured symposium speaker.

Missing Pages: Idaho & the Book by Tom Trusky is a colorful and ingenious (each copy is unique) catalog of the Idaho Center for the Book's dedication exhibition, "The All-Idaho Book Exhibit," a three-part, multimedia show that combines artifacts, printed material, books, photographs and video presentations.

The 20-page catalog chronicles the history of Idaho book culture from the Lapwai Mission Press to the contemporary Idaho artist book makers and includes a four-color gatefold featuring "Outsider" James Castle and his books and an accordion-fold catalog insert for "A Booker's Dozen," the Idaho center's first traveling exhibition.

Other major sections in *Missing Pages* describe and illustrate the history of printing in Idaho and outline the program for the April 10-12 Teacher's Symposium on Literacy & Book Arts. In addition to Martha Carothers, principal symposium leaders were Sandy Hartborn, curator of exhibitions, Boise Art Museum; Byron Clercx, assistant professor of art, University of Idaho; and Tom Bennick, English Department, Mountain Home High School, Boise.

The traveling exhibition, "A Booker's Dozen: 14 Idaho Artist's [sic] & Eccentric Books," the first in a bi-annual series, will be seen in nine locations throughout Idaho in 1994. It contains indigenous contemporary works by artists who live in Idaho or "eccentric" works made by Idahoans who are not necessarily artists.

According to the catalog, "Eccentric" books may be nontraditional codex-format works, such as accordion fold, rivet, spiral or ring-bound, loose-leaf/boxed, sculptural or die cut books. They may be traditionally bound codices with 'eccentric' features, such as pop-ups, folded pages, inserts, pull-tabs, or volvelles. Or they may be conventionally bound books made with or containing unconventional materials or artifacts.

continues—
back of t-shirt

book art

A Booker's Dozen

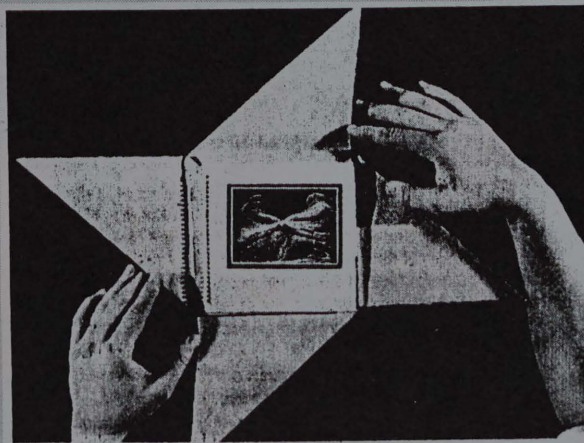
CHALLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY
CHALLIS, IDAHO, AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

In Challis - located far, far from civilization in conservative east-central Idaho - the Public Library is hosting an exhibit entitled "A Booker's Dozen," the first in what will be a biannual traveling exhibition of artist's and eccentric books selected for touring by the Idaho Center for the Book. Eleven of the fourteen books in this exhibit were handsomely enclosed in a vintage glass-front oak bookcase three shelves high. Three other books, because of large size or unusual format, found their place nearby. This body of work, culled from submissions by Idaho book artists, was curated by Tom Trusky, Boise State University English professor and founder of the new Idaho Center for the Book.

Some of these indigenous contemporary works are notable for their non-traditional format, such as a hammer resting on two pillows: [Untitled] *Power/Tool* by Byron Clercx, or use of unconventional materials, such as edible artifacts: *Edible Book* by Louise McBride. While expanding the definition of what a book may be, these Idaho artists are also well spoken in addressing unsettling issues, such as the AIDS epidemic (*A Wan't B4 Apple Anymore* by Will Spearman), domestic violence (*The Good Victim* by Nadine Chaffee), and desecration of Native American burial grounds (*Save Eagle Rock. Save Castle Rock*) *To the Mayor of the City of Boise* by Teri Micco.

Will Spearman's piece was hastily removed from the north window by the chair of the library board out of fear it would invite controversy. To the librarian's credit, the briefly censored piece was replaced in the window with a small sign near its label, telling viewers to call someone who cared (the phone number placed callers in the care of individuals fighting Idaho's anti-gay initiative). The 23" square book comprises four ring-bound pages of see-through laminate, encasing artifacts (a glass slide with blood, alchemical symbols for putrification and purification, a latex condom glove, plus text and other symbols) related to the AIDS crisis. Viewers flipping through the book may be subliminally reminded of oversized, sturdy books of symbols and pictures for preliterate children, all the while being versed in the seriousness of this crisis. It has immediate appeal, bringing this health issue home in a very straightforward manner.

The Good Victim, a unique pop-up book by Challis artist Nadine Chaffee, was inspired by a local domestic violence tragedy involving two homicides and a suicide. While the local gossip mill was churning this event, Chaffee was resolutely collecting all manner of news clippings related to the killing of Bertha Martinez and her friend by her estranged husband. Lines from the obituary of Martinez were interspersed with grim statistics from the Idaho Council on Domestic Violence, forcing one to "read between the lines." Chaffee also made a scathingly keen comparison of the characteristics of battered



Teri Micco, *[Save Eagle Rock, Save Castle Rock] To the Mayor of the City of Boise, 6' x 6', 1993.*

continues—
back of t-shirt

BALLAST QUARTERLY REVIEW

Volume 10 Number One

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Tom Trusky, *Missing Pages: Idaho & the Book* (Boise, ID: Boise State University, 1994). ISBN 0-932129-20-X. This is a wonderfully inventive catalog for an equally wonderful cluster of shows held earlier this year (9 April through 15 May) at the Idaho Center for the Book at Boise State University. Three "book art" exhibitions, held concurrently in adjoining galleries, featured rare volumes from the history of Idaho, book-related videos, and, of particular interest to us, a collection of eccentric books (using ink made from soot and saliva) by a naive artist, an illiterate Idaho deaf mute named James Castle (1899-1977). We were unable to attend the exhibition, but the catalog itself is astonishing. Actually entitled *Missing Pages*, it is a one-of-a-kind "artist's catalog," in that each copy is missing hand-torn portions of three pages, while each cover is also unique, having been printed on discarded color proofs donated by Idaho printers. Such energetic wit is rare, and this catalog, as well as the Idaho Center for the Book itself, is further proof that the most innovative efforts in this country originate in places other than the coasts. *Missing Pages* is \$13.95 postpaid from the BSU Bookstore, Boise, ID 83725 or by calling 1-800-992-TEXT.

Ballast Quarterly Review
2022 X Avenue
Dysart, Iowa 52224-9767

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 "Whatever the formats or features of the works selected for the exhibit, all are testimony to the creativity of Idaho book artists. The biblio 'dozen' should expand our definitions of what a book may be or do, as well as inspire us to read, write, and make our own books."

The Idaho Center for the Book's first publication, *The Lapwai Mission Press*, is by Wilfred P. Schoenberg, a historian of Jesuit mission presses. It is the definitive history of the first press in the Pacific Northwest and

the oldest surviving press in the American West.

The press itself was on display in the "All-Idaho Book Exhibit," and Father Schoenberg was present to explain how it worked. The region's first eight imprints, all printed on the Lapwai Mission Press, were also on display—and are described in *Missing Pages: Idaho & the Book*.

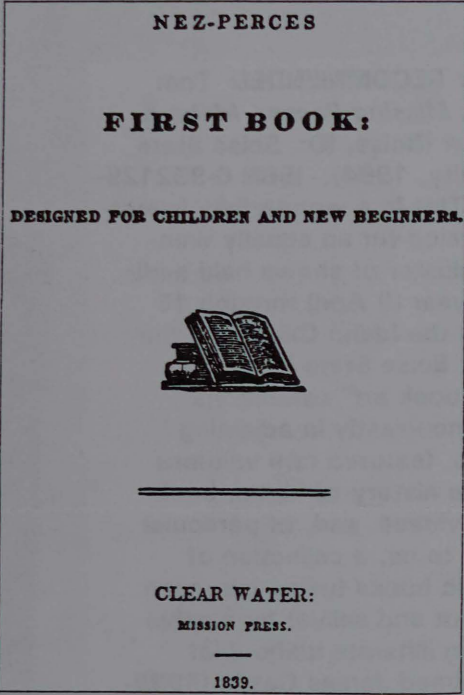
In all, three books are available from the Idaho Center for the Book's dedication and opening events. Each may be ordered from Nancy Money, The Bookstore, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725. To order by tele-

women with "the perfect Catholic wife," those being: traditional beliefs concerning home, family, and sex role stereotypes; acceptance of guilt for failure of the marriage; docility, selflessness, submissiveness, and low self-esteem. A photograph of Martinez, "the good victim," eerily resembles St. Theresa's image featured on a holy card. The book features a carousel binding and is impeccably handcrafted from Chaffee's own sooty, dark red-veined and dark blue-shadowed paste papers and marbled papers. It was hand-decorated, printed on Conson paper with an HP ink jet printer, and measures 8 3/4" x 6 1/4". Chaffee hopes to publish this book in a small edition to give it more exposure and circulation.

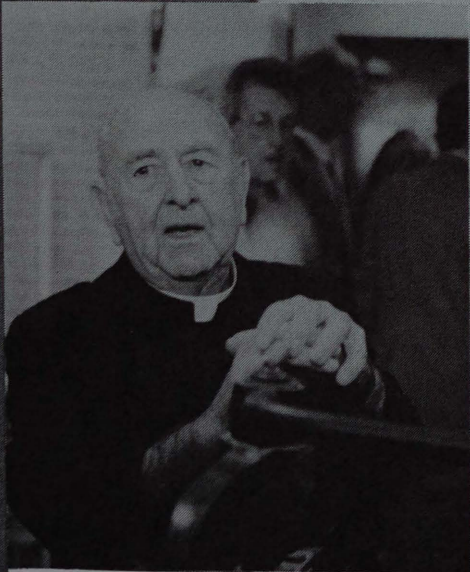
Unfortunately, not all of the books in this exhibit were accessible, of any political or social import, or even well crafted. Included were both unique and small editions, some well researched, some trivial, some slick, some handsome. Though the exhibit overall was a bit uneven in this respect, it is still extremely heartening to see the book arts thriving in Idaho.
 — Paris Almond



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phone call (800) 992-TEXT; locally, (208) 385-4031. Checks should be made payable to Idaho Center for the Book; add \$3 per order for shipping.



Father Wilfred Schoenberg is the author of the Idaho Center for the Book's first publication.

Library of Congress
INFORMATION BULLETIN
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HARUO AOKI
 1501 ELM STREET • EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA 94530
 July 23, 1994
 Mr. Tom Trusky, Director
 Idaho Center for the Book
 English Department
 Boise State University
 1910 University Drive
 Boise, Idaho 83725

Dear Mr. Trusky:
 Thank you for your letter of 23 March 1994, and for Spalding's *First Book*. I retired three years ago and I do not go to school on a regular basis to check mail. I came across your letter today and I apologize for the delay of this reply.

I think I saw Spalding's book around 1960 and had forgotten about it. I am not aware of any English translation of it.

- The following is a quick sketch of what is in it:
- p.1 Title page
 - p.2 Alphabet
 - pp.3 and 4 (blank)
 - p.5 Items for reading exercise
 - pp.5-6 Lesson One. Words for reading practice. They are mostly very short nouns and pronouns such as root, sister, you, I, mouth, food.
 - pp.6-7 Lesson Two. More words for reading practice. They are slightly longer nouns such as arm, foot.
 - p.7 Lesson Three. More words for reading practice. They are slightly longer miscellaneous words such as house, inside, belly, whose.
 - p.8 Lesson Four. A short reading material about hats, such as the hat material being fur of beavers, otters, or muskrats.

I hope the above is of some use.
 Sincerely,

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IDAHO CENTER FOR THE BOOK

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The Mission Press 1839
 The first printing press in Idaho was located at Lapwai, the Nez Perce word for "Place of the butterflies."

WANTED: CLIPPINGS/PRESS RELEASES FOR IDAHO BIBLIO EVENTS & ACTIVITIES (FORTHCOMING/Front, PAST/BACK, OF T-SHIRT)-- for future issues of *The Idaho Center for the Book Newsletter*.

WANTED: T-SHIRTS CELEBRATING IDAHO AUTHORS/BINDERIES/BOOKSTORES/LIBRARIES/PRINTERS/PUBLISHERS & DIVERSE BIBLIO EVENTS-- for future issues of *The Idaho Center for the Book Newsletter*.

Send shirts/news fit for a t- to:
 Idaho Center for the Book
 1910 University Drive
 Boise, ID 83725
 Deadlines: 15 September for October, 15 April for May issue

HEN KING THE ROAD

Inaugural ICB Newsletter t-shirt courtesy of Ex Libris Bookstore, Sun Valley, Idaho.