

Arts & Entertainment

Poet tells of hippie move into corporate yuppiedom

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

For most people poetry and finance are worlds apart. Poetry looks at Wall Street the way a tiger looks at a cage and Wall Street rarely takes the time to even glance at poetry, where losing money is considered an integral part of the craft.

For poet/stockbroker Trish Murphy however, a mixture of lucre and lyric is her stock in trade. Murphy will read from her work "Paradise Tossed: A Yuppie Creation Myth" in the Georgian Room of the Lincoln YWCA Thursday night. The poems deal mostly with the transformation of the American hippie into the American yuppie. It is a personal as well as a social metamorphosis for Murphy who ran away to "live off the land" in the early '70s, setting up an organic farm on an island in British Columbia where she raised goats and "grew her hair long."

Murphy says what most people think of as a hippie was really a yuppie.

"A hippie lived off the land and lived a natural healthy existence," she said. "A yuppie was involved in the radical campus political actions."

Hippies and Bach

Murphy insists that most people who weren't hippies have the wrong idea about the subculture. Her friends didn't do drugs and listened to more Beethoven and Bach than Neil Young and Jefferson Airplane.

There are similar misconceptions about yuppies, according to Murphy, who sees yuppies as the positive culmination of what the hippies started.

"Hippies started an awareness of holistic health and lifestyles that yuppies have injected into the corporate level," she said. "Soon the positive effect the yuppies have had upon the workplace will make blue-collar work more healthy and satisfying, too."

Murphy, whose poetry has appeared in the Nebraska little magazine, Plain-songs and Ensign, believes that the only real problem with yuppies is their children.

Yuppie children

One of her poems, "Valley Yup" deals with the spending habits of yuppie children raised on "buy it now street" where "eternity lies rotting in

valley View Mall."

"As hippies have become yuppies," she said, "they have put so much energy into their work that they don't share their ideals with their children."

"Plus there are people who are running and who use whatever movement is popular to hide. These people are hiding instead of contributing creatively to the yuppie culture. They get very busy and forget how beautiful they really are."

"Paradise Tossed" is also Murphy's dissertation for her Ph.D. in creative writing. The 21 poems and five short-stories that make up the collection are accessible satires on the cyclical aspects of living and the changes that, though they seem to contradict what has come before, are actually logical continuations of experience.

Much of the satire is geared back at herself, Murphy says, and the changes she's viewed in her own life as she moved from hippie to yuppie.

The apparent contradictions between the life of a stockbroker and the life of a poet don't phase Murphy.

"Poetry gets to the heart of people and being a stockbroker is a job that involves people's dreams," Murphy said. "Both of these efforts deal with people on a very personal level."

"The main purpose of a stockbroker is not to play the market but to help people realize their goals."

Diverse concerns

Murphy's concerns freely range between articles in the Wall Street Journal and the typical idealism most people expect from a poet.

"Like a sponge my poetry and I soak in everything around," she said.

Unlike most poets, Murphy doesn't consider the writing of poetry a financially bust occupation.

Speaking with the researched optimism of a stockbroker, Murphy related a news story she heard about poets in Britain actually being able to feed themselves from the writing of poetry alone.

And Murphy has done everything in her power to make her work accessible, hence marketable.

"It's not a personal poetry," she said. "It's more universal, catholic than most poetry."

Murphy will begin her reading at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.



Courtesy of Dr. Roger Libby

Dr. Roger Libby and "horny toad" Roxanne Ribbit: still waiting for stardom.

Orgasm week coming soon

Roger Libby and his frog, Roxanne Ribbit, promote pleasure

In the AIDS-ridden '80s, both liberals and conservatives have spoken against the dangers of casual sex and promiscuity, but such talk doesn't scare up-and-coming "sexologist" Dr. Roger Libby. He wants to claim Dr. Ruth Westheimer's media throne and tell the kinky kingdom of America that there's nothing wrong with sex for pleasure's sake — as long as people approach it responsibly.

"I think that some people can have more than one lover," he said. "And that's not a 'playboy' philosophy."

Libby, a former sociology professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, has appeared on CNN's "Newsnight," "The David Susskind show and the Playboy Channel discussing the virtues of responsible sex. His "horny toad" Roxanne Ribbit, a five-foot, soft-sculpture frog who sports lingerie and huge false eyelashes, travels on the lecture circuit with him while he promotes responsible sex and the use of condoms.

"What I wanted was a symbol of a coed," he says of Roxanne. "She's an icebreaker who relieves people's anxieties about sex."

Roxanne always carries the obligatory elements of the sexuality Libby lauds: birth-control foam, Trojans and massage lotion.

"Occasionally she'll carry a vibrator," he says with a slight laugh.

Libby officially proclaimed the first week of spring (March 22 through 28, which happens to be UNL's spring break) "National Orgasm Week." He suggests that college students hold a "fantasy ball" where everyone "would dress up as their favorite fantasy — and a king and queen of Eros would be selected for the uniqueness of their costumes."

Such suggestions often induce ridicule when his name is mentioned to his peers, but he is not kidding.

"I'm not advocating 'free love,'" he said. "I'm advocating that people enjoy sex and enjoy pleasure."

He would like to knock Dr. Ruth from her respected perch on TV talk shows; he feels that she's too conservative because she promotes monogamy.

"She's not threatening," he says of this ribald rival. "She's an older woman who's more conservative and that's why she appeals to the public."

The reactions to his views have

been mixed, but he says that colleges in all parts of the country love him.

"I lectured at Southwest Georgia Baptist College, which is in the Bible belt, and after I talked all these students came up and told me they liked the lecture even though they didn't agree with everything I said."



Harrah's
Hollywood

by Scott
Harrah

But reactions aren't always that tolerant, he explains. In 1984, University of Massachusetts officials refused to grant him tenure because of his outspoken views on sexuality. He filed a lawsuit against the university for \$165,000 in U.S. District Court and drew national attention. An article on him, "The Defrocked Professor of Sex," appeared in Penthouse Forum magazine, of which Libby is a board member. In the article Libby claimed that his First Amendment rights were violated because the university didn't agree with the values he expressed during six years of teaching family and sex studies classes. He recently received a settlement out of court.

Some of the issues that got him axed included the ideas that monogamy is not good for everyone and that masturbation and premarital sex are legitimate topics that must be discussed openly. Libby insists that he also caused a stir in the usually liberal Northeast because when it comes to sex, people get nervous and Puritanical.

The religious right and the anti-pornography movement are factions Libby lives to revile. He feels that the AIDS epidemic is hardly a reason to deny sexuality and induce repression.

"I think AIDS has made us more conscious and honest about our sexuality," he says. "There's still intimacy around. What I'm promoting are responsible sexual choices."

He's manifesting such sentiments with National Orgasm Week, which he designed to celebrate the sexual rites of spring and his belief that our libidos flourish despite the media hype and paranoia about AIDS.

Libby has co-authored numerous books on his favorite subject, including "Sexuality Today and Tomorrow" and "Marriage and Alternatives." He also wrote the forward to the national bestseller "Open Marriage," which sold almost 4 million copies in paperback.

Why is he so fascinated with the flesh? What compels him to talk about a topic that has made some write him off as a flake seeking press and sensation?

"There's nothing that interests me more than sex," he explains. "When I first entered college, my parents told me to go into the area that interested me most. So I chose sex."

Libby, who advocates open marriage as long as spouses mutually agree to see other lovers, belongs to the American Sociological Association, the National Council on Family Relations, the International Academy of Sex Research and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. Members of those organizations feel that although Libby is all for non-traditional forms of sexuality, he is completely legitimate.

"Within the fields of sociology and social psychology, Roger Libby's academic research is quite well-known and respected," Ira Reiss, head of the sociology department at the University of Minnesota, told a reporter for "Hampshire Life" magazine last year.

Now Libby is ready to take on Hollywood, but he needs money. His only income comes from his lectures, and he only makes \$1,500 an appearance, compared to Dr. Ruth's \$15,000. Nonetheless, with the help of Roxanne, films of stuffed frogs getting it on and his own sense of humor, he's making a name for himself.

"I'm basically a man of ideas," he said. "And I want to become a major media figure."

He's currently working on a book, "Caring Sex," based on his views and is also writing a humor book about a sexual utopia. His dream is to appear on David Letterman's or Joan Rivers' shows and introduce Roxanne Ribbit as the new amphibian sex goddess of the Western world.

But will America buy his act and his sensibility? That question remains unanswered, but one thing's for sure. Roxanne Ribbit should give Kermit the Frog a run-for-his-sex appeal.



Courtesy of Trish Murphy

Poet Trish Murphy (above) will speak in the Georgian Room of the YWCA Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Lincoln artist gets awards for 'English Art'

Karen Dienstbier's "Cambridge Collection," a series of 25 mixed-media works of watercolor and gouache, is showing at the Haydon Gallery.

The series was begun last year during the Lincoln artist's six-month visit and art study in Cambridge, England.

Her traditional interest in portraying plants and fabrics and patterns

created by sunlight has been influenced by that visit; traditional English flower-garden borders and boundaries and unique English fabrics weave their way into these latest works.

A reception for the artist will be tonight from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Haydon Gallery, 230 No. Seventh St. The show will continue through April 12.