

CONTACT US

► David Wiegand,
Daily Datebook Editor
datebook@sfgchronicle.com
(415) 777-7006

ONLINE

► sfgate.com/datebook

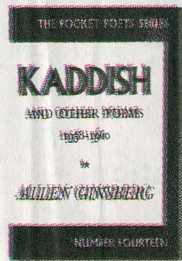
San Francisco Chronicle

DATEBOOK

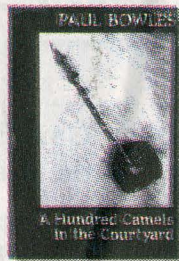
Zone 1 3 5 6 7
SECTION

D

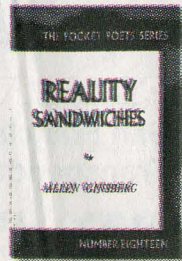
Monday,
June 9, 2003



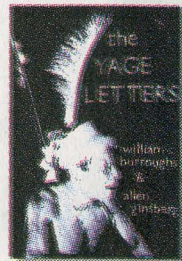
1 9 6 1



1 9 6 2



1 9 6 3



1 9 6 3



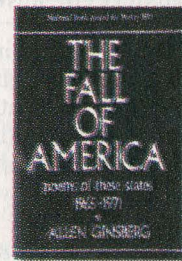
1 9 6 5



1 9 7 1



1 9 7 1



1 9 7 2

**CITY LIGHTS
BOOKSTORE
50TH ANNIVERSARY**



City Lights and the counterculture: 1961 - 1974



© Larry Keenan 2003

Robbie Robertson, Michael McClure, Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg (from left) duck out of City Lights Bookstore into what is now Kerouac Alley on Dec. 5, 1965, in a previously unpublished photograph.

AND THE BEAT GOES ON

CHAPTER TWO

LAURENCE FERLINGHETTI: In the '60s, I was thinking maybe we should go to the Haight. At one point, it seemed like that's where everything was happening. I was going to the Fillmore [Auditorium] some. But Shig [Muraio] was against it. He said, "No, we're going to stay put. This is the center of the universe."

City Lights Bookstore wasn't even a decade old by the dawn of the '60s, but it had already made its mark on the literary world as a mecca for writers like Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure and Kenneth Rexroth. It had also been at the center of the famous "Howl" obscenity trial, a landmark event in the free speech movement. But the times they were a-changin'.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

The Beats were articulating for the first time what became the main themes of what became the 1960s counterculture. The first articulation of any ecological consciousness, in writers like Gary Snyder and Ginsberg; the turning toward Far East philosophies; and toward pacifism, activism. The '60s I saw as really a youth revolt against industrialization, the dehumanization of people. The Beats were really like Stone Age hippies.

ROBERT SCHEER, author, columnist:

In 1960, I went to Cuba. The Monday edition of the official paper, *Revolución*, had a big arts section that had been taken over by all these beatniks, writers like Heriberto Padilla and Pablo Armando. They were publishing Ferlinghetti and Corso and all these guys every Monday. The shock wave of the Beats was felt around the world.

DIANE DI PRIMA, poet:

The early '60s were kind of like a continuation [of the '50s], in a way, but when the psychedelic consciousness really took over from the, say, speed consciousness of the early '60s, and people were out on the streets more, making political demands, what I felt was that things had opened up and I could come out of the closet about who I was politically. My mother's father was an anarchist, and I was raised on those kinds of beliefs. How I felt it was different was the kids that were coming out here didn't have the good sense, they didn't have the street paranoia, which they needed.



THE EARLY '60S WERE KIND OF
LIKE A CONTINUATION
[OF THE '50S], IN A WAY,
BUT THEN WHEN
THE PSYCHEDELIC
CONSCIOUSNESS REALLY
TOOK OVER FROM THE, SAY,
SPEED CONSCIOUSNESS OF
THE EARLY '60S, PEOPLE WERE
OUT ON THE STREETS MORE.

— DIANE DI PRIMA

○

1961

City Lights publishes *Journal for the Protection of all Beings*, an early ecology magazine, and *City Lights Journal* #1, an international literary review.

○

1961 – Alan Shepard Jr. makes the first U.S. space flight, a five-minute sub-orbital ride on the Freedom 7 capsule.

○

MICHAEL McCCLURE, poet, playwright:

In 1960, David Meltzer and Ferlinghetti and I edited the *City Lights* publication, *Journal for the Protection of All Beings*. We had Norman Mailer, Thomas Merton, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, [William S.] Burroughs, Antonin Artaud, Robert Duncan. We wanted to hear what they would like to say that they could not say anywhere else. We asked Linus Pauling and Harpo Marx. . . . No, Harpo didn't contribute.

GARY SNYDER, poet:

Journal for the Protection of All Beings was the entry of ecological thought, and what we now call Deep Ecology, into the literary and liberal political world, and into the counterculture. For the most part, the literary avant-garde disdained the environment. There was a lack of interest on the part of the Old Left in anything having to do with environment. They thought that was just a kind of a bourgeois interest, or maybe a peasant interest. So the *Journal for the Protection of All Beings* crosses that line, it carried over into the counterculture and the left.

ROBERT SCHEER:

Lawrence gave me a job for a buck and a quarter an hour. I got my basic education at *City Lights*. Lawrence would let you borrow the books. It was a great school. I got in a fight one night with a guy who'd just got out of the Marines and he was [urinating] on the books. It wasn't literary criticism, he was just crazy. I wrestled him to the ground and bookcases came falling down on us. Saul Landau of the *Mime Troupe* happened to be there. I yelled to Landau, "Call the cops!" And he said, "Can we call the cops? Is that the right thing to do?"

DAVID MELTZER, poet:

In the midst of setting up the magazine piece that I wrote about the birth of my first child, it came under the scrutiny of the typesetter, who

► **CITY LIGHTS:** Page D4 Col. 1

CITY LIGHTS AT 50

Sunday in Insight: An oral history of the early days of *City Lights* Books, from its founding in 1953 through the "Howl" trial and the Beat years.

Today in Datebook: *City Lights* is at the heart of the counterculture movement in the '60s and the Vietnam era.

Tuesday in Datebook: *City Lights* in modern times.

Wednesday in Datebook: Lawrence Ferlinghetti, in the words of some of the writers and artists whose lives have been touched by *City Lights*.

**INSIDE
DATEBOOK**

Justin and Christina in harmony
PAGE D2

Goodman gets "Lucky"
PAGE D3

Cinderella goes to the Opera
PAGE D9



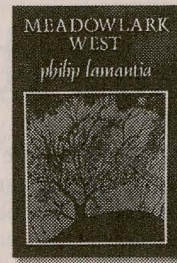
1973



1983



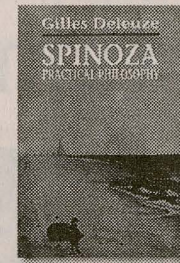
1983



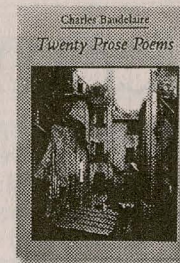
1986



1988



1988



1988



1989



Allen Ginsberg, Peggy Hitchcock, Timothy Leary and Lawrence Ferlinghetti go out on the town at the old Sinaloa nightclub in 1963.

► CITY LIGHTS

From Page D1

didn't want to print certain vernacular words that were sex-oriented. Ferlinghetti, the great civil libertarian, at first said, well, we have to print it as written. Then he called back a couple days later and said, "We'll have to censor it somewhat. We can't afford to go to another printer." And I sort of sighed. But it was subsequently reprinted with the words intact.

PETER COYOTE, actor, former member of the Diggers anarchist group:

One of the great milestones in my life was the work called *Journal for the Protection of All Beings*, which was published by City Lights in 1961. People like Gary Snyder and Michael McClure were in it. And 25 years later I was in the anniversary edition. It was the most meaningful diploma I'd ever received.

ROBERT SCHEER:

I went to Russia in 1963. I had met a number of Cuban poets and was curious as to why they were getting involved with the Russians. I was part of the New Left, and we were anti-Soviet. Ferlinghetti gave me all these names and numbers of poets like [Yevgeny] Yevtushenko and [Andrei] Voznesenski. They were reading in stadiums for crowds of thousands. They gave me their poems, which I brought back and Lawrence published in a little white book with red letters: "Red Cats."

DANIEL HALPERN, poet, publisher of Ecco Press:

I was from L.A., so I'd never met a writer, let alone a poet. I had met Ginsberg at a high school event. He said, "You have to hang out at City Lights Bookstore." I spent a lot of time there because you could pull a book out and you could sit down and read it. I always thought I'd run into Kerouac or Ginsberg. I did hear Gregory Corso read — I thought he was crazy. He was a wild man, but he was fun. He kind of electrified everyone reading his birthday poem.

MAXINE HONG KINGSTON, author:

I do remember going to the Fillmore, and Allen Ginsberg stepped on my toe while I was dancing!

DANIEL HALPERN:

I remember running across Wallace Stevens' collected poems, I pulled it out and was blown away by it — he ended up being my favorite poet. Later I was with Ginsberg in Paterson, N.J., in the late '70s, at a reading of William Carlos Williams' work. I walked into the room, and Ginsberg said, "What are you doing here? You love Wallace Stevens!"

JOANNE KYGER, poet:

When I came back from Japan in '64, it was a whole other scene. At that point, the Beat Generation had really kind of dispersed. And there was this whole era of Bob Dylan and hippies and psychedelics. At this point, it had become a much larger phenomenon.

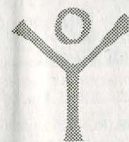
ROBERT HASS, poet, UC Berkeley professor:

In the late '50s, Broadway was a place to go hear jazz, to go to the hungry i. The strip joints changed the character of Broadway. It wasn't a place where anybody who was at all hip would go.

GARY SNYDER:

The music changed from jazz to rock 'n' roll. The style had changed from somewhat more severe and existential-looking clothing to flowery garb, and what had been an interest in the dry, emptiness-logistics of Buddhism had actually gone to Hindu devotionalism, mantra chanting with lots of incense. Us old beatniks said, "Gee, these guys aren't getting their history and politics down."

CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE 50TH ANNIVERSARY



I STARTED WORKING ON
BROADWAY IN THE MID-'60S.

I WAS A TOPLESS
ENTERTAINER AT
THE CONDOR. I HARDLY WENT
TO CITY LIGHTS. I KNEW
IT WAS THERE AND THAT
PEOPLE WENT THERE, BUT I
DIDN'T. IT WASN'T IN MY JOB
DESCRIPTION.

— CAROL DODA

DANIEL HALPERN:

We'd go out and sit in coffee shops — we were too young to drink — or sit outside the Jazz Workshop. Miles Davis had a drummer, Tony Williams, and he was under 21. So to let him play there, they had to let in people under 21 — they had a section where they didn't serve drinks. They allowed us in that one part of the club.

GARY SNYDER:

When I was around, women took their tops off for free. It wasn't an economic display. We were all bemused that somehow North Beach had turned itself into such a tourist destination. And for something as harmless as bare breasts.

MICHAEL MCCLURE:

I remember there was a topless shoeshine shop right next door to City Lights for a while.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

I didn't pay much attention to what was happening on Broadway during the topless era.

CAROL DODA, former topless dancer:

I started working on Broadway in the mid-'60s. I was a topless entertainer at the Condor. I hardly went to City Lights. I knew it was there and that people went there, but I didn't. It wasn't in my job description.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

Lenny Bruce lived in the hotel right next to the Condor. The Marconi. It's still there. He fell out of a second-story window. He broke his leg. He had his leg in a cast when I saw him at the Fillmore Auditorium a couple of months before he died. He got more and more paranoid. His last raps, his act was totally taken over by his legal defenses and the various busts he had around the country. He was so paranoid. He had published a book called "Stamp Help Out" — it was a large format with a picture of him on a toilet on the front — and he sent us a telegram from some other part of the country saying, "Burn all the copies." We had a whole supply of 'em that he'd left here when he left town. No, we didn't burn 'em, of course. We just kept them, and now we don't have one. They disappeared fast.

GARY SNYDER:

I came back around '65. (Before), we thought it was pretty good with lots of people in blue jeans and black berets going up and down the street in North Beach. Then I made another trip back in '66, and was present at the Human Be-In in Golden Gate Park. By this time, of course, nobody said "beatnik," they all said "hippie." And the numbers had grown enormously. City Lights was obviously playing a very vibrant role in the whole counterculture evolution. Although the later people didn't read so much; they were more musical.

LARRY KEENAN, photographer:

I was living at home, and my parents were very strict. They didn't like the Beats, the hippies, nothing like that. I had to mow the lawn before I could even come in to take the picture of the "Last Gathering." That was my job on the weekend.

JOANNE KYGER:

Philip Whalen was going to go to Japan in '65, and I was going to go to Europe, and Lawrence said, "Let's have a big group photograph in front of City Lights." So I invited Philip for lunch. I was living out on Pine



1 9 9 0



1 9 9 0



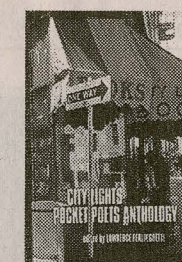
1 9 9 1



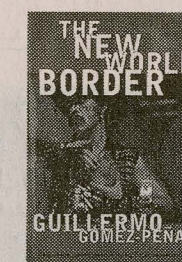
1 9 9 1



1 9 9 4



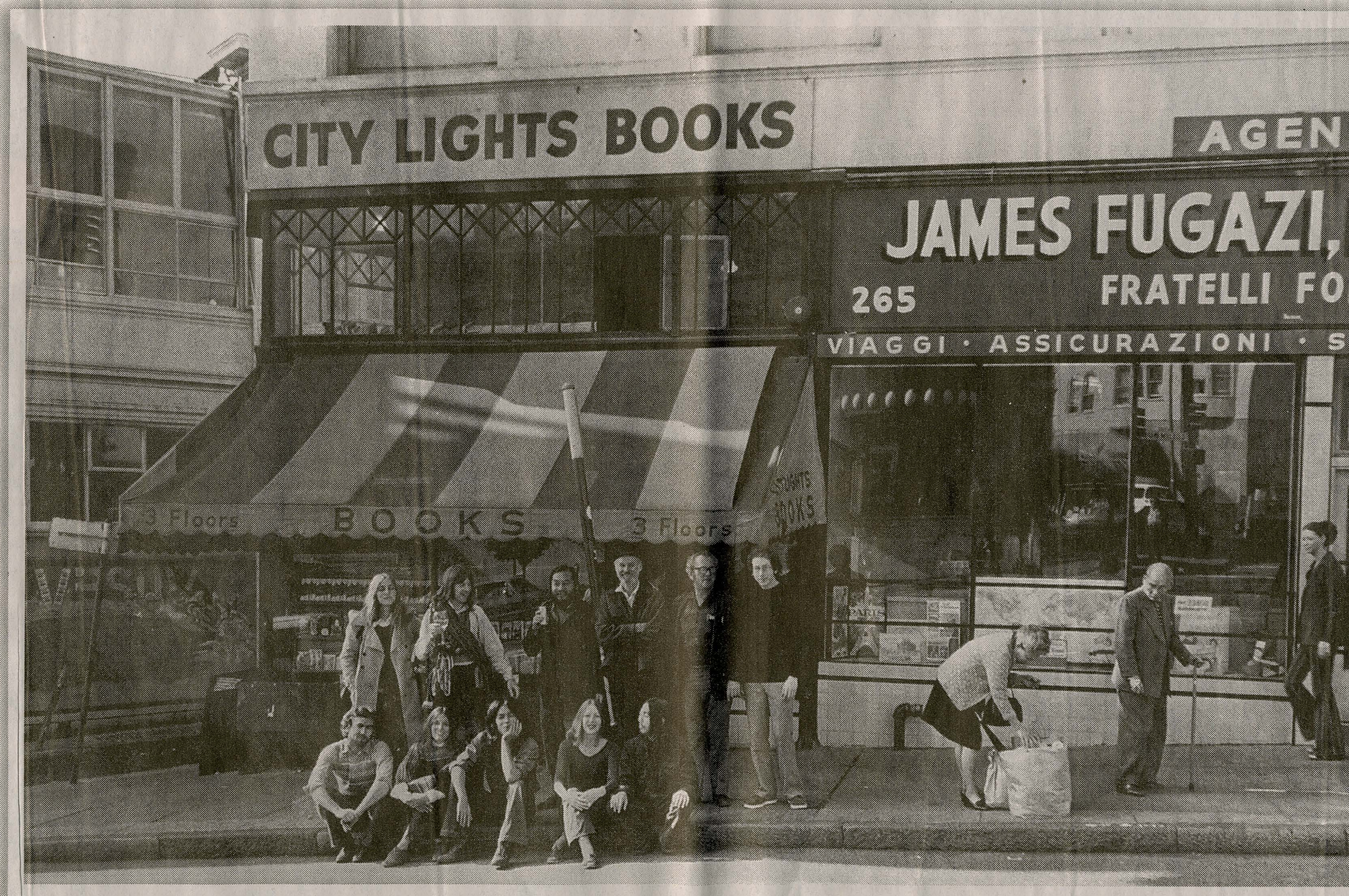
1 9 9 5



1 9 9 6



1 9 9 7



The City Lights staff poses in front of the store on Columbus Avenue in 1972.

► CITY LIGHTS

From previous page

Street. We went down to wait for the bus. We waited for an hour and half and I realized we were never going to get a bus. We finally took a taxi. But by the time we got there, they had already taken all the photographs.

LARRY KEENAN:

Ferlinghetti wanted one of those French postcard images, with all the French poets and artists together, something like that. He realized that some of these guys were dying, or in jail. They were losing about two to three Beats a year. They wanted to get an idea how they could maintain some stability with the group.

MICHAEL McCLURE:

Dylan wanted Larry to do a photo of him for his next album. And he wanted Allen and me in it. Robbie Robertson's in some of the photos because he was there. Bob wasn't with the whole tribe of poets. He didn't want to be photographed. The picture with Dylan was taken about 15 minutes later in what's now Kerouac Alley. I think we were in the basement of City Lights. We went up from the basement out the side door into the alley. He didn't want to attract attention.

LARRY KEENAN:

I knew Dylan was coming to perform at the Berkeley Community Theater, and I asked him to come. He showed up in a little station wagon, with Robbie Robertson and those guys. We went down into the basement, hung out there for a while, and when people started breaking the door down we ran out into the alley. He wanted to see the Beats, that was the whole point of being there, but Dylan was more powerful than they were in those days, for sure. So we took the photos in the alley, then went across the street to Vesuvio and had a couple of drinks. Actually, Dylan wanted tea.

JOANNE KYGER:

As the years went by, and I kept looking at that photograph, which has been often reproduced, I was very disappointed that we missed it.

LARRY KEENAN:

Dylan and Ginsberg had been friends for years. I remember Ken Kesey was at the Dylan party also, and he was kind of speeded up and Dylan couldn't wait to get away from talking to him. He was just babbling on, you know? They couldn't even talk to each other. They were both up too high. It was amazing.

WES NISKER, author, radio personality:

I came to San Francisco in '67 with the intention of being a beatnik, but I was too late. I did go to North Beach immediately and was completely enthralled. Going to City Lights was like going to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem or to Mecca. I was in awe when I went to Caffè Trieste and Ginsberg was there just drinking coffee. My beatnik scene dream came true.

HERB GOLD, author:

Richard Brautigan used to be there a lot. He used to describe himself as the "Gestetner Rabbi" because he was producing his poetry on the Gestetner mimeograph machine. He would come into City Lights and sell to people who were presumably there to buy City Lights books. I used to see (Brautigan) curtsy. It was very odd. When people would ask him to sign a book, or when he met a young woman he liked, instead of bowing, he would curtsy. It was a funny gesture, to see this tall "Confederate general" curtsy.

IANTHE BRAUTIGAN, daughter of Richard Brautigan:

1963 – President Kennedy assassinated in Dallas.

○

1964 – Berkeley Free Speech Movement grows after university bans distribution of political material on campus.

○

1966

San Francisco police again raid City Lights, this time for selling Lenore Kandel's purportedly obscene "The Love Book." Francis Oka, a clerk at City Lights, founds, with Janice Mirikitani, Aion magazine, one of the first Asian American literary journals.

○

1966

City Lights opens on the mezzanine an Underground Comix section (Zap!, etc.)

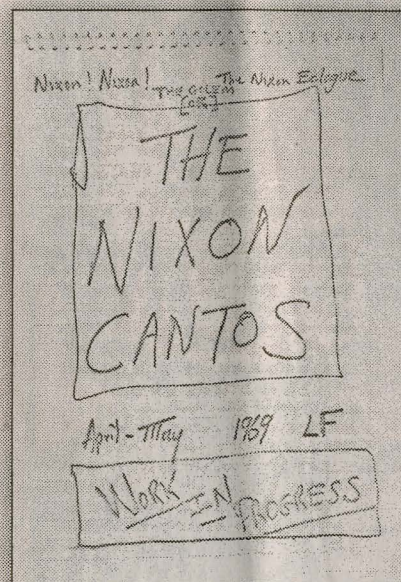
○

1968 – Richard Nixon elected president.

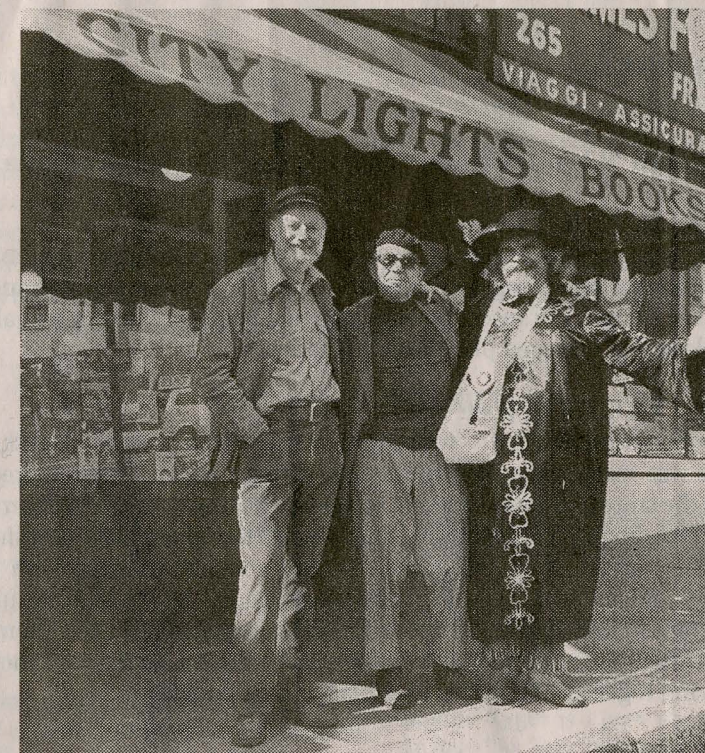
○

1971

Nancy Peters joins Ferlinghetti at City Lights Publishers. First City Lights Poets Theater performance, with Andrei Voznesensky. Followed by later visits and readings by both Voznesensky and Yevgeny Yevtushenko.



The Ferlinghetti file at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library holds his mementos.



JIM WHITE / Courtesy Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley 1977

Lawrence Ferlinghetti (left) in front of City Lights with Henri Lenoir, owner of Vesuvio Cafe across the alley from the store, and poet and North Beach character Paddy O'Sullivan (right).

When I was a little girl, 3 or 4, we'd go in to City Lights and my father would check to see if any of his poetry pamphlets had sold. It'd be little bits of cash, and then we could go do something else. When I think about going to other bookstores then, I think about "Jonathan Livingston Seagull." My dad, I remember him leafing through that and saying, "I don't understand. Why are people buying this?"

LENORE KANDEL, poet:

When I first arrived in town, the first thing I did was to leave a bunch of poems on the desk at City Lights. Somebody picked one up. They were having a festival, and someone was reading my poems all over town. Ron, a clerk at City Lights, was arrested for selling "The Love Book." It was the same problem for both stores [City Lights and Haight Street's Psychedelic Shop]. I used to ride to court with Ron. He'd pick me up on his motorcycle.

NANCY PETERS, co-owner of City Lights:

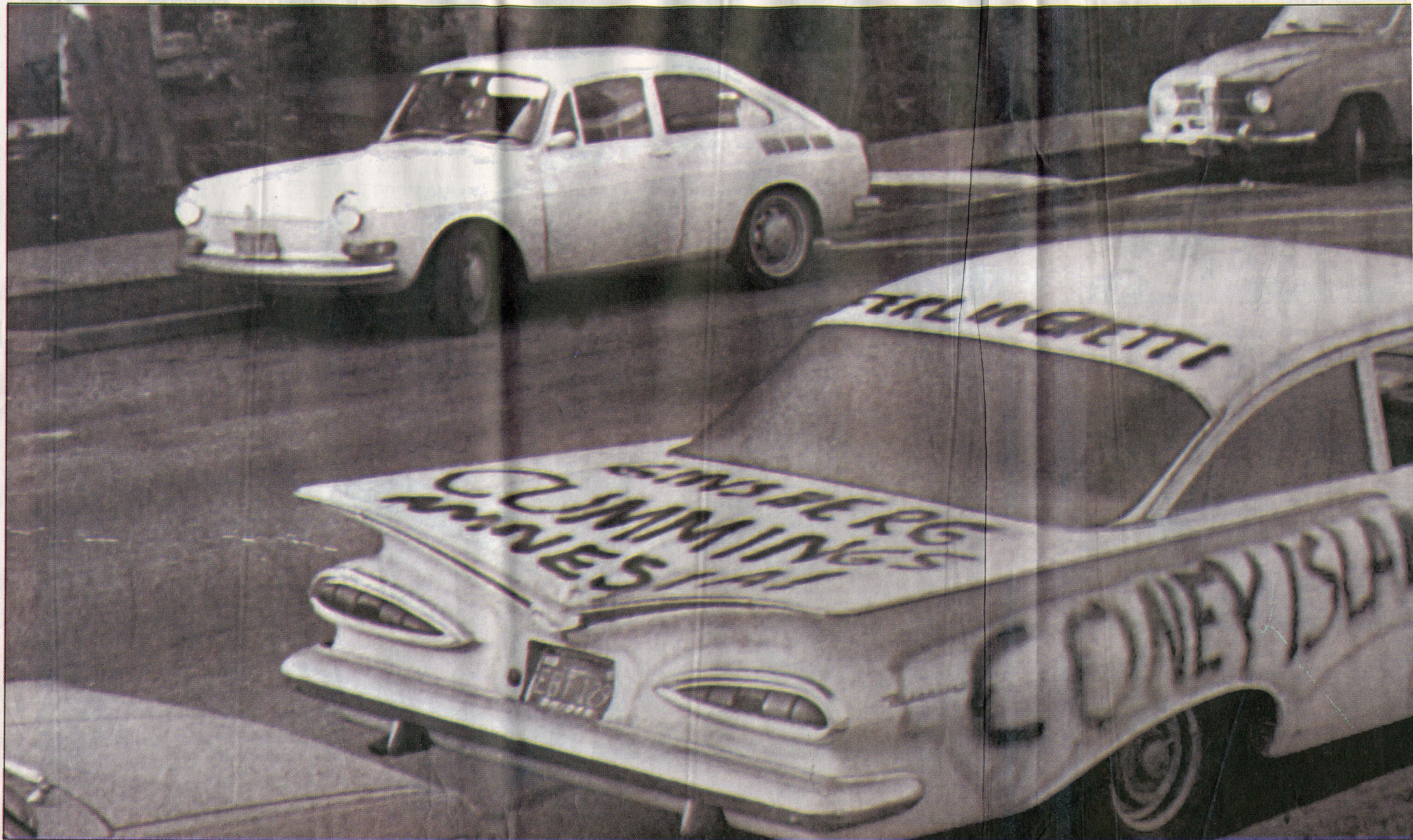
In the '60s, City Lights was one of the first places to carry all the new Zap comics and all the other underground comics. That was a new genre that hadn't really made it into other bookstores.

LENORE KANDEL:

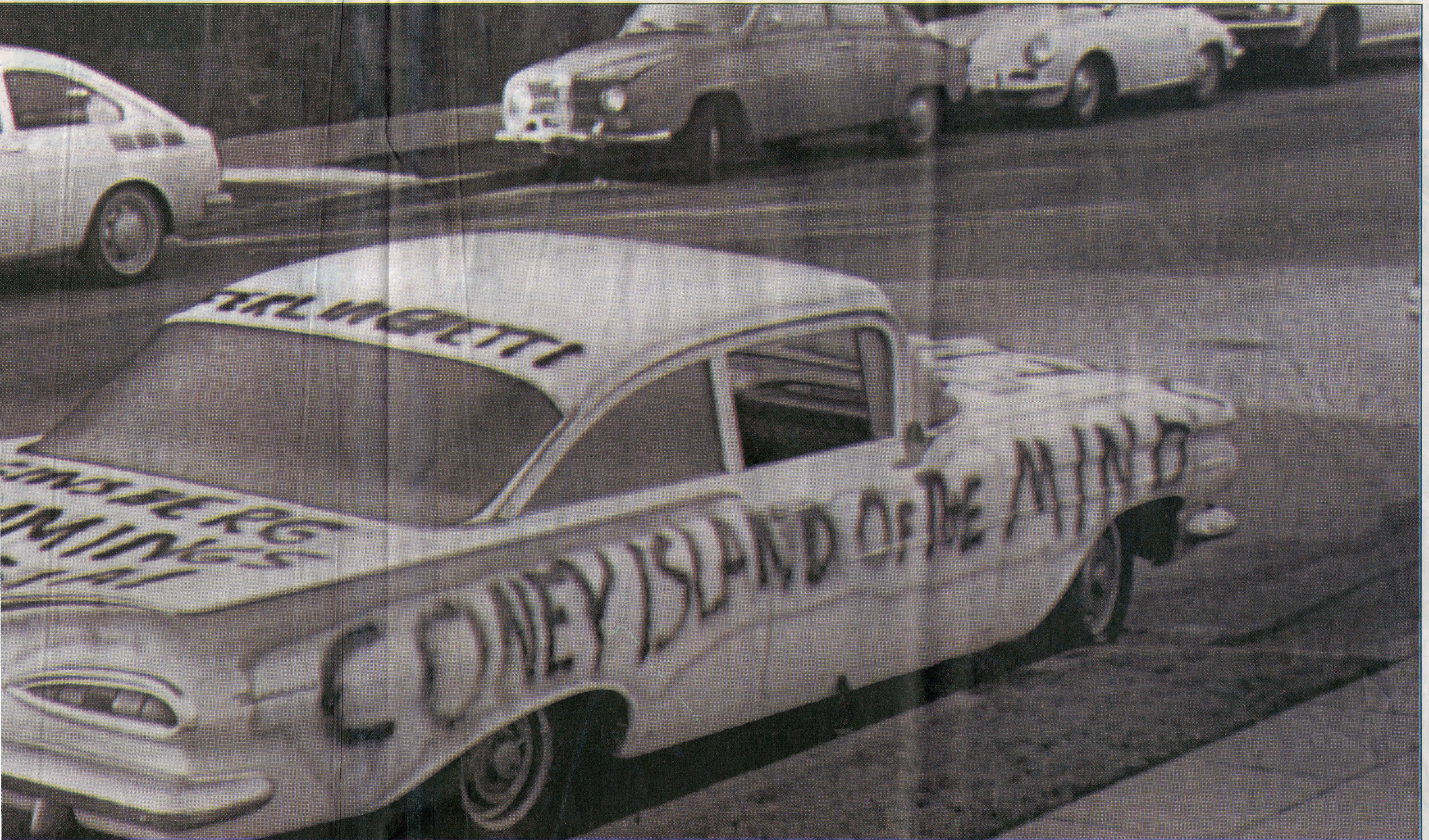
The trial was several weeks of unbelievable occurrences. One of the big problems they were debating was, Do angels have sex? Seriously. With no trace of humor. It was absurd, but also very enlightening. People went through amazing changes during the course of the trial. A man came up to me, furious at me at the beginning, and he ended up thanking me. I had no idea people were so hung up. Honesty won. Honesty one, hypocrisy zero.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

We published a lot of broadsides against the Vietnam War. There was one



A 1959 Chevrolet parked on a street in Berkeley in 1971 bears the spray-painted name of poet and City Lights Bookstore owner Lawrence Ferlinghetti, as well as the title of his 1958 collection "Coney Island of the Mind" and, on the trunk, the cryptic words "Ginsberg Cummings Amnesia!"



ice Ferlinghetti, as well as the title of his 1958 collection "Coney Island of the Mind" and, on the trunk, the cryptic words "Ginsberg Cummings Amnesia!"

► CITY LIGHTS

From Page D5

of mine called "Where Is Vietnam?" and Ginsberg's "The Fall of America."

THOMAS SANCHEZ, author:

I was very actively involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Everything that was going on was posted there. So it was a political and cultural epicenter. It transcended the idea of a bookstore. And it was also an island — a besieged place — as it is today.

ANDREI CODRESCU, poet:

Once this woman I met — we started talking about poetry — but she said she was really interested in sleeping with a woman. So we looked around the store and found a likely candidate leafing through Wittgenstein's "Notebooks," or something, and I said, "How about her?" and she said, "She's great." So I asked her, "Would you like to sleep with a woman?" and she said, "Yes, I've always wanted to." So we all went up to the Dante Hotel and got a room for \$5 there, but then I left them. About a week later, we met at Vesuvio's and they thanked me — they were living together! All of this took place in the bookstore.

NANCY PETERS:

I came to town in 1970. The topless thing had already come in. Although the rest of North Beach was very much a village. There were two shoemakers who were still making sandals here. Lots of the old Italian ravioli factories were still here. Funny little shops. It was absolutely charming. It was very self-contained. You really didn't need to go through the Broadway tunnel the rest of your life if you didn't have to. Broadway was beginning to be pretty seedy.

DIANE DI PRIMA:

I remember when the City Lights offices were separate from the bookstore, and those demonstrations were going on in the '60s; we would drop in after a long march or something, me and my kids. And Lawrence would say, "You shouldn't take kids to demonstrations."

DAVID AMRAM, musician:

People like Lawrence — unlike so many people in the '60s at that time, who were out using the horrors of the Vietnam War as a platform for their self-promotion, and taking progressive politics down the drain and handing the country over to the right wing as a result of a lot of irresponsible action — Lawrence and a lot of thinking people took the much longer, harder road that wasn't about promoting oneself, but presenting ideas in a way that was so clear that they would stay in your mind.

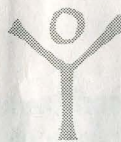
LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

Malcolm Lowry's "Under the Volcano" had a reputation of being a psychedelic book in the '60s. There was no psychedelic literature, unless you want to go back to Fitzhugh Ludlow in the 19th century, and maybe Edgar Allan Poe. In "Under the Volcano," the hero was an alcoholic — Lowry himself — who was the vice consul in Cuernavaca, and he drank a lot of mescal. He hallucinates on mescal in the famous scene at the end of the book. That was a top best-seller for many years. Then there was Gertrude Stein's cookbook, because it has a recipe for hash cookies. Books like Albert Camus' "The Rebel" and Sartre were very popular. Existentialism was very popular in the '60s.

NANCY PETERS:

When I joined City Lights in 1971 and started working with Lawrence, it was clear that it had been very much a center of protest, for people

CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE 50TH ANNIVERSARY



1972

Ginsberg's poem-chronicle of the Vietnam War, "The Fall of America," receives the National Book Award. City Lights publishes his "Chicago Trial Testimony."

○

I REMEMBER GOING INTO CITY LIGHTS AND SAYING TO SHIG, "I GOT MY FIRST BOOK TAKEN FOR PUBLICATION!" TOLD HIM IT WAS GOING TO BE A YALE YOUNGER POETS BOOK, AND HE SAID, "THAT'S TOO BAD. YOU'RE A PRETTY GOOD POET."

— ROBERT HASS,
former U.S. poet laureate



Allen Ginsberg became a leading exponent of the hippie philosophy.

with revolutionary ideas and people who wanted to change society. And when I first began working at the little editorial office up on Filbert and Grant, people that Lawrence had known through the whole decade of the '60s were dropping in all the time, like Paul Krassner, Tim Leary, people who were working with underground presses and trying to provide an alternative to mainstream media. This was a period of persecution, and FBI infiltration of those presses.

MICHAEL McCLURE:

I was close to Jim Morrison. When Jim would come up here, City Lights was a place we always went. Jim would get himself a cardboard box before we went into the store, and he would fill it with books he wasn't able to find in L.A., then have it shipped back to him.

ROBERT HASS:

In 1967 I moved to New York. I came back in '71. The year after that I got my first book taken for publication. I remember going into City Lights and saying to Shig, "I got my first book taken for publication!" I told him it was going to be a Yale Younger Poets book, and he said, "That's too bad. You're a pretty good poet." Shig's response was very funny. It was like something terrible had happened.

BRUCE CONNER, artist, filmmaker:

I started creating a legend that Shig never left the store. There was a trap door on the floor behind the cash register. He would open it up once in a while. And I was telling people that Shig couldn't leave the building, and that he went down into the subterranean chambers under Chinatown and lived down there.

BILL MORGAN, archivist:

From Allen's point of view, I know he always considered it his West Coast home. He had his mail delivered there, met people there, did interviews there for 40 years. His best friend, the guy he always stayed with, was Shig Murao, who lived on Grant.

THOM GUNN, poet:

I almost always dealt with Shig. He was a very nice man. I remember one time, early on in the '60s, I said, "How's things?" and he said, "Things are going wonderfully. We've finally got our poetry section alphabetized." All those years before, if you wanted a book by some poet you had to look through everything they had.

HERB GOLD:

I once pointed to someone who was leaving the store with an overcoat on, and I said, "Shig, he's got a bunch of books under his overcoat." And he said, "Well, he does that a lot. He's part of the family."

NANCY PETERS:

Ginsberg used to stay in the publishing house. Our editorial office had two rooms and a kitchen; it was a tiny place. And one of the rooms was kind of a guest room so that visiting authors could stay there. Allen would come sometimes for a week at a time or more. And he hung out in the store, also. The store had become quite a center for writers by that time. Ginsberg was working on "The Fall of America," which was his long chronicle of the Vietnam War, which is full of the anguish and passion and anger that so many people felt. The war had been going on for such a long time by then. That book won the National Book Award [in 1974].

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

Huey Newton and Erika Huggins knew Richard Baker — Roshi Baker — who was the head of the Zen Center. They told Roshi Baker they

had this manuscript they'd like to get published. So we went over to the Black Panthers' headquarters, which was in a building overlooking Lake Merritt on the opposite side from the jail. We went up in this elevator and the Black Panthers had the top floor. And there were these big guards up there. And Huey Newton was over at the window, looking through a mounted telescope into the prison. So he gave us the manuscript and we published this little pamphlet as a small-sized pocket book called "Insights and Poems."

NANCY PETERS:

In the '70s, we did (Living Theater co-founder) Julian Beck's "The Life of the Theater" and a comic book we published ourselves about the Chicago Seven trial. Then (in 1981) we did a book by Geoffrey Rips called "Un-American Activities," which was a documentation of the subversion of the underground press. That was when the Freedom of Information Act made those files available. We were shocked, we couldn't believe that our government had been bombing people, infiltrating their organizations. In fact, I think one of the files listed Lawrence as a "beatnik rabble-rouser."

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

And probably a mental case. This was in a letter from J. Edgar Hoover, in his words. I was proud to be on the list.

NANCY PETERS:

During the '70s, when the Cold War was still on, we invited Voznesensky and Yevtushenko to come here. We had very large readings for them. It was a way of kind of culturally thawing the Cold War.

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI:

Charles Bukowski, who never gave poetry readings and always avoided literary milieus, came up and gave a reading after we published his first book. He stayed in our little editorial office on upper Grant. The reading was in the Telegraph Hill Community Center gymnasium. They had an old-fashioned refrigerator next to the table where he was



Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley

Nancy Peters and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, co-owners of City Lights, in the 1970s.



VINCE MAGGIORA / The Chronicle 1971

The Vietnam War brought protesters to San Francisco's Bank of America building.

○

1974 – Facing impeachment, President Nixon resigns; Gerald Ford becomes president.

Timeline source: City Lights Books

○

City Lights is having a party and you're invited

Here is a list of events celebrating the bookstore and publisher's 50th anniversary. All are open to the public. Unless otherwise noted, events take place at City Lights Bookstore, 261 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. For more information, call (415) 362-8193 or go to www.citylights.com/anniversary.html.

Week of June 9: Walking tours of North Beach with Bill Morgan, author of "The Beat Generation in San Francisco: A Literary Tour," published by City Lights and available this month.

6:30 p.m. June 12: Slide show and talk with Morgan, San Francisco Public Library's Koret Auditorium, 100 Larkin St.

7 p.m. June 19: Readings by poet and activist Diane Di Prima.

7 p.m. June 25: "Coming Back Home to Manila Town." An evening of "talk story" with Emil De Guzman, Nancy Hom, Al Robles, Bill Sorro and others on families, farm laborers, factory workers, Zen monks, pool sharks, cooks, children, lovers, preachers and more.

CHRONICLE STAFF BOX

Writers: Heidi Benson, Jane Ganahl, Jesse Hamlin, James Sullivan

Photo editor: Russell Yip

Design editor: Elizabeth Burr

Editing: Paul Wilner, John McMurtrie

Timeline editor: Richard Paoli

Research: Laura Perkins

Series editor: David Wiegand

sitting. He could reach into the refrigerator without getting up to get another beer. And he must've drank about a dozen beers. And the more he drank, the more officious he got toward the audience, and the more hostile the audience got. He was throwing the beer bottles into the audience and they were throwing them back at him. He stayed at our little apartment, and at the end of the weekend it seemed like a pack of junkies had been there for a month. Cigarettes ground into the rug, a window broken, a panel in the door broken. He claimed his girlfriend did it.

Tomorrow in Datebook: Modern Times

CITY LIGHTS ORAL HISTORY

Among the people interviewed or mentioned:

David Amram, musician, has collaborated with Jack Kerouac, Leonard Bernstein, Dizzy Gillespie and Willie Nelson, among others.

Enrico Banducci founded the hungry i and Enrico's Sidewalk Cafe in San Francisco.

Ianthe Brautigan is the daughter of the late **Richard Brautigan**, author of "Trout Fishing in America."

Lenny Bruce was a groundbreaking comedian.

Charles Bukowski was a genre-busting novelist.

Bruce Conner is an artist and filmmaker whose work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among other museums.

Peter Coyote is an actor, activist, author of "Sleeping Where I Fall" and host of "The Active Opposition" on World Link TV network.

Diane Di Prima, poet, is author of "Memoirs of a Beatnik" and "Recollections of My Life as a Woman."

Carol Doda is a former topless dancer who now owns Champagne and Lace Lingerie Boutique.

Thom Gunn is a poet whose books include "Boss Cupid," "Frontiers of Gossip," "The Man With Night Sweats" and "The Occasions of Poetry," a collection of essays. He was awarded a MacArthur Foundation fellowship in 1993. He lives in San Francisco.

Daniel Halpern is a poet and the publisher of Ecco Press.

Robert Hass is a poet and a professor of English at UC Berkeley whose books include "Sun Under Wood," "Human Wishes" and "Field Guide." From 1995 to 1997 he was poet laureate of the United States.

Lenore Kandel is a poet whose "The Love Book" was the subject of an ob-

scenity trial.

Larry Keenan is a photographer who frequently photographed City Lights figures.

Maxine Hong Kingston is an activist, artist and author whose books include "The Woman Warrior."

Joanne Kyger is a poet whose books include "As Ever," "Again," "Strange Big Moon: The Japan and India Journals, 1960-64" and "Some Life."

Peter Martin co-founded City Lights Bookstore with Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

Michael McClure is a poet, novelist and playwright whose books include "Rebel Lions," "Rain Mirror," the novel "The Mad Cub" and the Obie Award-winning plays "The Beard" and "Josephine the Mouse Singer."

David Meltzer, poet, editor of "The San Francisco Poets" and "Reading Jazz."

Bill Morgan is archivist for Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and author of "The Beat Generation in San Francisco: A Literary Guidebook."

Wes Nisker is a radio personality (KFOG, KPFA), Buddhist teacher and author of "The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom."

Nancy Peters is co-owner of City Lights Bookstore.

Thomas Sanchez is an author, most recently of the novel "King Bongo."

Robert Scheer is a nationally syndicated columnist and a contributing editor to the Los Angeles Times and The Nation and the author of such books as "Thinking Tuna Fish, Talking Death: Essays on the Pornography of Power" and "With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War." He lives in Berkeley.

Gary Snyder is a poet, essayist and environmentalist whose books include "Mountains and Rivers Without End," "The Practice of the Wild" and "Turtle Island," which won the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.