

# Bay Area Reviewers Present 1984 Awards, Hear of Anarchy and Independence

Sierra Club Books was the first recipient of a newly created Publishers Award established by the Bay Area Book Reviewers Association to honor a press in northern California "distinguished by both excellence of books produced and by involvement and identification with the northern California community." Jon Beckman, director of Sierra Club Books, accepted at BA-BRA's 1984 book awards ceremony in San Francisco March 15.

Ecco Press books won in two of the



Jon Beckman

five categories of works by writers living in northern California. The Belles Lettres Award went to *Twentieth Century Pleasures* by Robert Hass, winner also of a National Book Critics Circle Award. The second Ecco Press title, *The Separate Notebooks* by Czeslaw Milosz, won the Poetry Award. Citations were also presented to the book's translators, Hass and Robert Pinsky.

The Fiction Award went to *Stones for Ibarra* (Viking) by Harriet Doerr, which also won an American Book Award.

*Modern Meat* (Random House) by Orville Schell received the Contemporary Issues Award.

The Children's Literature Award, given for the first time, went to *Like Jake and Me* (Knopf) by Mavis Jukes.

The Fred Cody Award, given annually for lifetime literary excellence and community involvement, was presented to Robert Duncan, poet, playwright and essayist, whose most recent book is *Ground Work: Before the War* (New Directions). Duncan was cited for being one of the guiding forces at San Francisco State's Poetry Center in the 1950s and for giving shape to the poetics program at New College.

The keynote speech, "The Publisher as Enemy of the State," was given by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, writer, publisher and bookseller.

*Poetry Flash*, a local publication, suggested that his talk would be in the

true tradition of North Beach anarchism, while Ferlinghetti himself preferred to characterize it as the anarchy of Charlie Chaplin. "I have always seen the poet as the natural born enemy of the state," Ferlinghetti said. He went on to quote Terry Eagleton, who said that literary criticism, English departments and book reviewers "are all part of the ideological apparatus of the modern capitalist state" and that they served to support the state through the status quo and through deception. "Corporate publishing is the rule," Ferlinghetti said. "Conglomerates and other military industrial powers own New York publishing houses, while the computerized bookstore chains move in on private bookshops everywhere."

Peter Carroll, who presided over the ceremony at the Great American Music Hall, observed that the purpose of the awards is to call attention to the area, since San Francisco is the third largest city in the U.S. for book sales. In addition, he said, writing requires the interaction of the writer at his desk with the community of readers.

Pat Holt, book editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, said that the BA-BRA awards were to acknowledge the persistent and unique quality of Bay Area publishing. She suggested that New York has become homogeneous and predictable, while California still has a Gold Rush mentality where anything is possible; everyone has access to publishing. "Bay Area publishers are facile," said Holt. "They contract when money is tight and expand when they're hot." She praised the purity of independent publishing: "A book's message comes first; thoughts of making a profit second." LISA SEE

## Morrow and Jody Powell Sued for Libel

William Morrow & Co. and Jody Powell, former White House press secretary, are being sued for \$5 million each because of four paragraphs in Powell's 1984 book, *The Other Side of the Story*.

The suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., by Robert M. Garrick, a retired U.S. Navy admiral who worked for President Reagan's election committee during the 1980 campaign against Carter. Garrick charges he was libeled by Powell in the book when it falsely accused him of spying on the U.S. government and supervising an espionage operation against the Carter administration.

One of the paragraphs cited reads: "A former admiral, David [sic] Garrick, revealed to the *Washington Post* that he had personally supervised an

operation in which retired and active duty military officers reported to the Reagan campaign on the movement of American ships, troops and aircraft. The purpose was to obtain forewarning of any sudden break in the Iran crisis, but the effect could have been calamitous."

The other cited paragraphs, in which Garrick is not mentioned again, deal with the harm such an operation could have done if the administration had attempted secret actions to free American hostages in Iran. H.F.

## Obituary Notes

**James Mitchell**, cofounder of Mitchell Beazley, one of the most successful postwar British publishing houses, died at his home in Hampshire, England, after a long illness. He was 45.

Mitchell Beazley was in the vanguard of British co-edition publishing in the 1970s. Books such as *The Moon Flight Atlas* by Patrick Moore, *The World Atlas of Wine* by Hugh Johnson, *The Compleat Astrologer* by Julia and Derek Parker and *The House Book* by Terence Conran presaged the firm's own magnum opus, originally published in Britain as the 10-volume *Joy of Knowledge Encyclopaedia*. In the U.S., these 10 volumes were re-edited into one 2900-page volume under the title of *The Random House Encyclopaedia*. Ultimately it was sold in 28 editions in 23 languages.

Mitchell entered publishing as a bookseller with Hatchards in Piccadilly. He was an editor with Constable, then editorial director of Thomas Nelson. There he met John Beazley, the firm's production and design editor, and together they set up the publishing house that bears their names in 1969 with the backing of school book publisher George Philip.

After eight years of undimmed success, the firm suffered the shock of Beazley's early death from cancer in 1977 at the age of 44. Between 1982-83 American Express took a controlling interest in Mitchell Beazley, but at the time of Mitchell's death he and his fellow directors had bought back the Amex interest. ION TREWIN

## New Ventures

**Quinlan Press** has been created by Henry M. Quinlan, president of Addison C. Getchell & Son, commercial printers, and E. Michael Quinlan, president of Quinlan Publishing, publishers of 14 legal newsletters. The new company will offer nonfiction trade and mass market titles. Quinlan Press may be contacted in care of Sandra E. Bielawa, 131 Beverly St., Boston, Mass. 02114; (617) 227-4870. □