

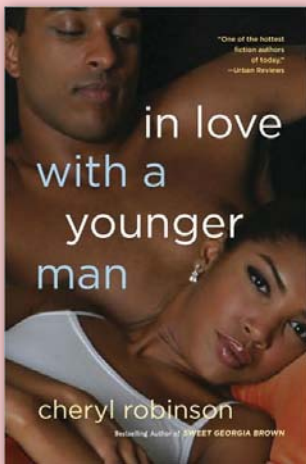
# Sacramento Book Review



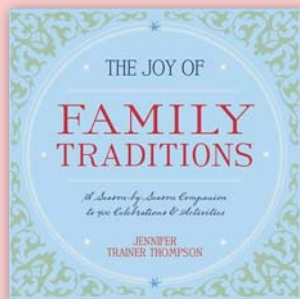
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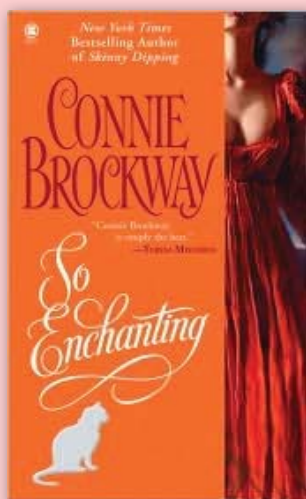
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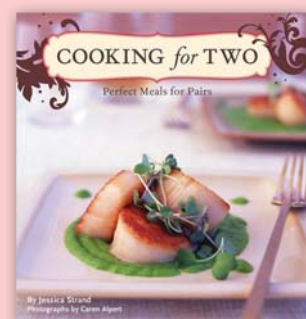
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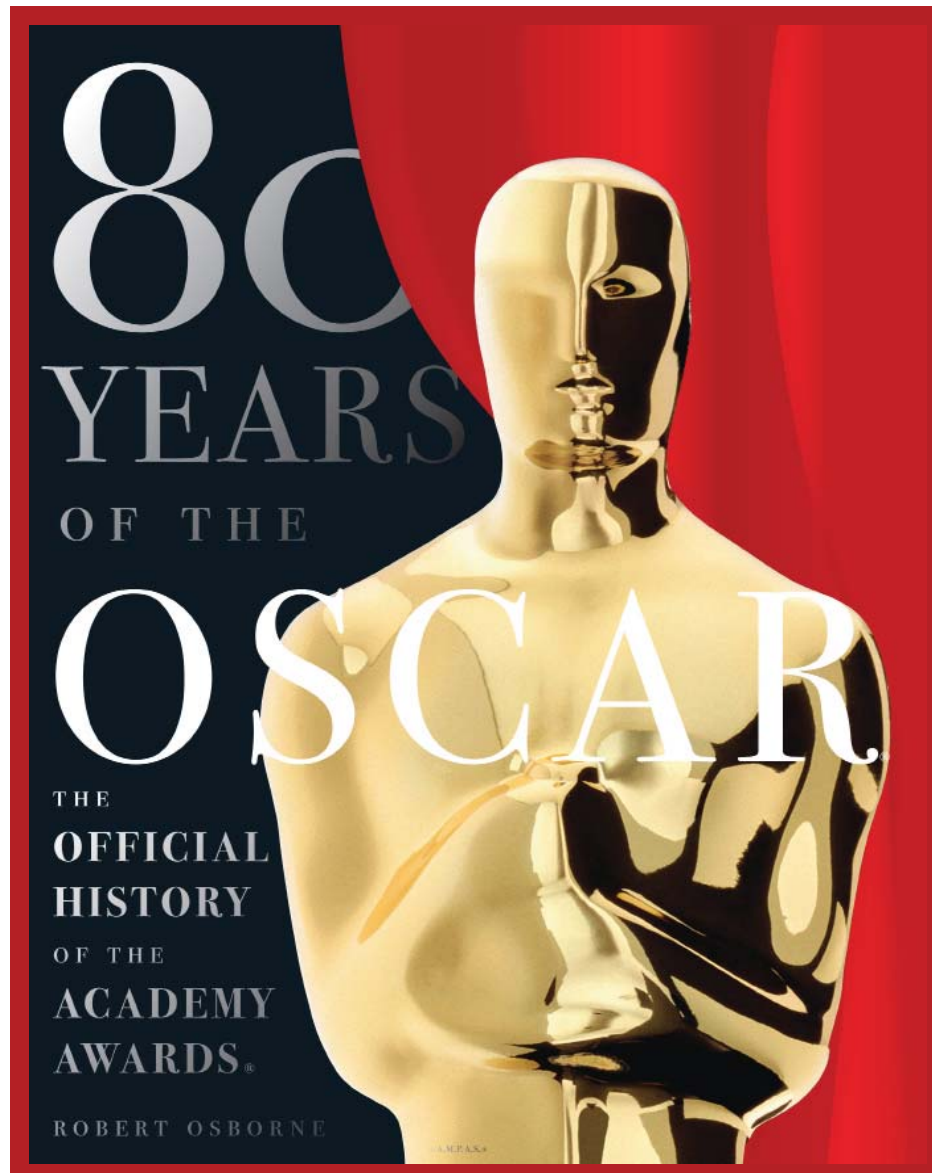
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## And The Winner Is...

By Robert Osborne  
Abbeville Press, \$75.00, 440 pages

The latest edition of Osborne's official history of the Academy Awards covers the eight decades they have been a part of the movie industry and cultural history. Organized by decade, each year's awards, nominees and winners are listed, along with a short explanation of just what was going on at that point, why certain movies, actors and actresses were picked or snubbed, and hundreds of pictures from the many movies in the year. Most of the pictures are in black and white, even well into the Eighties, and on the same pages as color photos. The presentation and production values of the

book are excellent, the text entertaining and fun to read (and well organized—the index is almost 40 pages itself). Osborne has collected great stories, quotes, and anecdotes from hundreds of the people who have participated in the Oscars, and organized them well. It's easy to see why, after 20 years, he's still updating this book and why people are still purchasing it.

Recommended for movie fans looking for a great coffee table book and an authoritative reference on the best Hollywood has produced.

NEW AND  
OF INTEREST

**Futureproof**  
Page 5

**Delicate Edible  
Birds and Other  
Stories**  
Page 7

**This is the Dream**  
Page 12

**The Sweeter Side of  
Amy's Bread**  
Page 16

**Looking for Lincoln**  
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**Raising  
Bookworms**  
Page 23

**David Falkyn: Star  
Trader**  
Page 29

180 Reviews  
INSIDE!



# Movies & Music

## Ken Adam Designs the Movies

By Christopher Frayling; Ken Adam  
Thames & Hudson, \$65.00, 232 pages

Ken Adam was originally trained as an architect in London, but that didn't stop him from shifting course and beginning to create sets for the burgeoning movie scene in England. His first credited work as an Art Director was on *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and he's worked on films as varied as *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *The Last Emperor*, and the first seven *Bond* movies. He won Oscars for Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* and Nicholas Hayner's *The Madness of King George*.

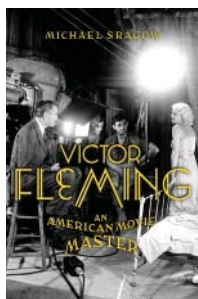
Included in the book are many unpublished works, concept and production sketches, technical layouts, and set stills. Often, the entire cycle is presented, from the first concept put to paper to the finished sets. Many of these production pieces are from Adam's personal collection, and haven't been seen before. The two page sketch of the Big Board from Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* is one of those rare pieces that not only survived time, but also the secretive Kubrick, who often purged much of the production work so it couldn't be copied.

Sir Frayling provides some very good commentary on Adam's work and how it fits into the evolution of the Art Director to Production Designer as movies developed and changed over the last 50 years. The production value of the book is extremely high, and the content dazzling.

## Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master

By Michael Sragow  
Pantheon, \$40.00, 656 pages

Victor Fleming is the iconic (primary) director behind *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*. But, he has more than 40 other films to his credit, in a wide range of genres and with many of the most popular actors of the day. This biography is the first of Fleming, and is not only overdue, but very well done. Fleming worked in Hollywood through the change from silent to talking movies, and black-and-white to color, and made almost every genre—westerns, family movies, buddy pictures and romances. Sragow also makes the argument that Fleming helped create the strong male lead, through his work with Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy. His story is much the story of



early Hollywood, and through it you not only see that history, but just how much he influenced future Hollywood.

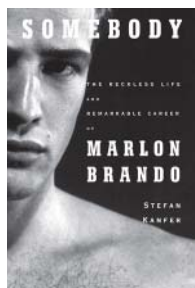
You know Fleming's work. Now get to know the man. An excellent biography, written by the film critic for the *Baltimore Sun* and a regular writer for *The New Yorker*.

## Somebody: The Reckless Life and Remarkable Career of Marlon Brando

By Stefan Kanfer  
Knopf, \$26.95, 368 pages

Marlon Brando is one of those figures that will continue to be the subject of new books every couple of years. The last major book was Peter Manso's *Brando: The Biography* in 1995. So, for a new generation of Brando readers comes *Somebody*. About the third the size of Manso's, Kanfer's book is a concise biography, and focuses on how Brando's life and view of himself was overshadowed by his abusive father, and alcoholic mother. Brando was a highly mercurial actor, difficult to work with, and went through hundreds of relationships, with both sexes, yet couldn't maintain one for any length of time.

He is also often considered one of the best actors of the 20th Century by most film critics. Kanfer does an excellent job giving perspective to Brando's life, career and relationships. Maybe the book is lighter in size, but its hard to say that it doesn't cover the same territory in fewer pages. *Somebody* is a readable addition to the Brando books, even if it doesn't cover any new ground.

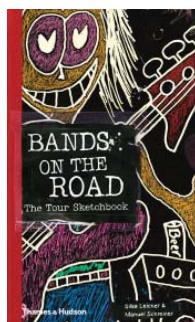


## Bands on the Road: The Tour Sketchbook

By Silke Leicher & Manuel Schreine  
Thames & Hudson, \$24.95, 360 pages

*Bands on the Road* is a collection of sketches from more than 100 indie musicians looking to illustrate a moment in their life or on tour that still means something to them. Many of the pictures are about their life (Tony Hajjar reminiscing about the missile that landed on his apartment building when he was in Lebanon) or on tour (Nick Hodgson describing his dream toilet when on tour). Each of the pictures has a short explanation in the back of the book, giving some description to the event (necessary in the case of The Features, whose picture of their drunk manager taking a picture of his butt requires some explanation).

For fans of indie rock, *Bands on the Road* will probably have a bunch of fun flipping through them pages. There isn't a whole lot

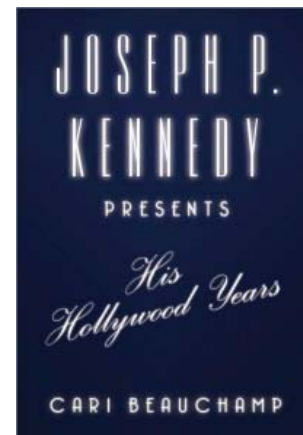


## Joseph P. Kennedy Presents His Hollywood Years

By Cari Beauchamp  
Knopf, \$35.00, 512 pages

There have been previous books on Joseph P. Kennedy, and much attention given to his financial dealings, but nothing so far has focused on his Hollywood years. Until now. Beauchamp ran into repeated references to Kennedy as she researched her book *Without Lying Down*, but it wasn't until she received access to the John F. Kennedy Library for a *Vanity Fair* article, that she realized that there was way more material on JPK's time in Hollywood, than she could fit into a 5,000 word article. Years of research later, Beauchamp presents her findings; a tale of ruthlessness, greed and excess that could have served as its own movie.

JPK entered Hollywood by buying western film studio FBO, and after a couple of years of collecting other studios and theaters, combined them all into RKO. *Joseph P. Kennedy Presents His Hollywood Years* is more than just book about his business dealings, but documents his affair with Gloria Swanson, his many personal rivalries (especially with William Randolph Hearst) and the rise and fall of his influence over the studio system. It is an intriguing story, and Beauchamp tells it well, with plenty of notes to document her conclusions. The book is dense, but not overly scholarly, and easy to read. The late 1920s and early 1930s were an exciting period of time in Hollywood. JPK is no longer an under-appreciated player in its history.



of content for casual readers, nor is the art all that good (I suppose that's why they are rockers and not artists).

## Art of the Modern Movie Poster

By Judith Salavetz; Spencer Drate; Same Sarowitz; Dave Kehr  
Chronicle Books, \$75.00, 516 pages

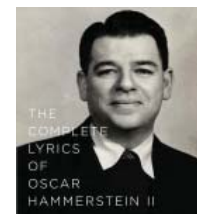
This is a huge collection of post-war international movie posters, with an emphasis on the international. Movie posters have moved from just advertising a movie, to being an art form themselves. There are more than 1500 posters, from 15 different countries in this large coffee-table book. The American movie posters done in other countries are often quite different than the original, reflecting local taste and style. There are hundreds of posters for many movies you probably haven't ever seen, and will probably want to add to your Netflix queue. The book is organized by county, and, while there probably could have been more coverage of American movies, the many that were chosen for inclusion have a depth of style and subject. The word spectacular doesn't begin to describe the contents. This is not only a book for movie fans (especially foreign and independent movie fans), but also for graphic designers.



## The Complete Lyrics of Oscar Hammerstein II

By Oscar Hammerstein II;  
Edited By Amy Asch  
Knopf, \$65.00, 448 pages

For fans of Broadway musicals, there is probably no better combination of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Starting their collaboration with *Oklahoma* in 1943, they went on to produce eight more musicals, most still fan-favorites today. But Hammerstein had an active career writing lyrics before he joined with Rodgers, and this book is a compilation of all the lyrics he ever wrote, from the earliest musicals in 1916 to the perennial favorite *The Sound of Music*. And, these are not just the songs that made the final production, but cut, unused, and unpublished. Asch has provided excellent notes on many of the songs, the productions and the other persons involved. Organized by year, you can see the development of Hammerstein's skill and voice, song after song, more than 800 in all. More than 200 of the songs have never been published before, making this not only a complete collection, but a treasure trove for fans to discover new gems. There are numerous pictures from the musicals, and a timeline of his life and career. The only potential complaint may be the lack of color for many of the movies from



# Sacramento Book Review

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February Sacramento print run - 10,000 copies. February San Francisco Bay Area print run - 2,000. Printed by Herburger Publications, Inc. Distributed by Sacramento Distribution Services and Reliable Distribution Services.

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# EDITOR’S NOTES

Wow! This was just the issue we wanted to get over with. My slogan for a couple of days was “You go to press with the issue you have, not the issue you want.” Heidi didn’t want to send something out that she wasn’t proud of it, so after a couple more late nights (very late nights), we finished it up, and it came together pretty well. (Though I’m sure there are more than a few typos we didn’t catch. Luckily, we have a few editorially minded readers who will let us know what they are.)

This issue saw a day off for a field trip at the Kaiser Emergency room. The editorial assistant is fine, and I got to catch up on some pleasure reading. All’s well that doesn’t end with an admission.

This is our Romance and Movies theme issue. We’re finding that having a hook for the month, helps us find editorial material in many categories that we wouldn’t normally think of (two books about pleasure in the Science & Nature section for example.) We hope you enjoy finding some of the theme books hidden in categories you wouldn’t normally associate with them.

Lastly, I’d like to thank the many new reviewers that have been approaching us. We’re looking forward to having new voices and opinions in these pages. Many of them are quite good, and we think you’ll like them as well.

As always, we hope you enjoy the issue.

--Ross

## Letters & Submissions

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Sacramento, CA 95814

If you wish a return of your manuscript, include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

## Contact Us

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# Science & Nature

## Why Beautiful People Have More Daughters

By Alan S. Miller and Satoshi Kanazawa  
Perigee Trade, \$14.95, 272 pages

This is a very interesting book for one who is interested in the proof and causes of evolution. The authors are “Evolutionary Psychologists.” This is a scientific discipline that believes that human nature is mostly genetic and very little is due to environmental effects.

Miller and Kanazawa begin with a simple and clear explanation of what evolution is and how it interacts with sociology. Their theory of evolutionary psychology is not mainstream, but they clearly refute the main tenets of mainstream sociology, that state that most of “Human Nature” is learned from our environment. It is a very clear and cogent description of evolution, classical sociology, and their theory of evolutionary psychology.

After they have explained what evolutionary psychology is, they go on to describe how evolution is the reason behind what we do. About two thirds of the book is explanations of different human behaviors and why these behaviors are desirable to the benefit of the individual trying to get his or her genes passed on to posterity.

We learn why men prefer women with blonde hair and large breasts. Some of the arguments (like why large breasts are a desirable trait in a mate) are weak, but most of them make real sense. The authors discuss such diverse subjects as why men are more violent than women (as a general statement) and why women are more nurturing than men. It all boils down to reproduction.

Men do what they do because it made them more likely to be able to pass their genes on to the next generation. Likewise, female behavior is molded to help women pass their genetic material on to the next generation. The differences in male versus female behavior arise from the way we produce our eggs and sperm. Women have a limited number of eggs and, because their reproductive life is shorter than a man's, they will invest much in each of their offspring. Men, on the other hand, have a virtual unlimited supply of sperm. This, along with the fact that a man can never be sure he is the father of his mate's offspring (at least before the advent of DNA testing), makes him less likely to invest his time in raising the offspring, if an adversity should arise.

In summary, this is a well-written book defending the theory of evolution in another arena. I think that anyone who critically reads this book will be hard-pressed to deny

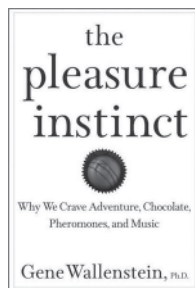
the truth of evolution in general and evolutionary psychology in particular.

Reviewed by Michael H.

## The Pleasure Instinct

By Gene Wallenstein  
Wiley, \$24.95, 256 pages

Why is it that some people faint at the sight of Michelangelo's *David*? What part of the brain is so hard-wired for visual pleasure that, at the sight of one of the highest regarded pieces of art, it just shuts down? What possible reason exists for music to give so much joy in people's lives? The answers may lie in our evolutionary history, when pleasure drove more than just sexual reproduction and was involved in social, linguistic, and aesthetic development. *The Pleasure Instinct* looks at our evolutionary history and how pleasure from each of the five senses helps brain development at different stages and cultural commonalities prove the universality of many forms of pleasure. This is less a “why we should use pleasure” (as *The Pleasure Center* is—see below), and more an evolutionary explanation, and one that still drives us today in our daily lives.



## The Pleasure Center

By Morten L. Kringelbach  
Oxford University Press, \$24.95, 291 pages

Pleasure is such an important part of human existence that entire religious rituals and sects have arisen based on the concept of denying it. Kringelbach says that not only are these ascetics denying themselves a moment of elation, but that desires—sex, food, whatever—are a part of our mental health and that a lack of pleasure increases depression and mental illnesses. But, this goes further than just the religious aspects of denial. Pleasure keeps us interested in what is going on around us, the people we interact with, and how we learn and remember things. Kringelbach explains how the reward system in the brain works, and how it can be tricked into “wanting without liking,” the unpleasant part of addiction. And, far from being a dry medical overview, Kringelbach takes these neurological systems behind our desire, and makes them understandable and interesting, and provides a framework to understand your own motivations in wanting that second piece of cake. And plenty of reasons to take it.



## The Pluto Files

By Neil DeGrasse Tyson  
Norton, W. W. & Company, Inc. \$23.95, 224 pages

The *Pluto Files* is a quirky little look into a planet/moon. Neil DeGrasse Tyson presents us with a history of the planet in a way that is just interesting for young and old alike. Tyson's account of Pluto's history from it being found by a farm boy in Illinois, to songs about Pluto getting the boot. Tyson does a great job dragging our attention to a normally dry subject and then make it more fun than you would get from picking up a text book. The *Pluto Files* is a riveting book that makes you really care about Pluto and honestly want to know more about it. I still think that Pluto should be a planet, because who doesn't want a planet named after the Roman god of the Underworld?



## Dogs: History, Myth, Art

By Catherine Johns  
Harvard University Press, \$35.00, 208 pages

Drawing from the immense art collection from the British Museum, Catherine Johns has assembled a wide selection of statues, paintings, mosaics, busts, jewelry, and more, to illustrate man's love and need of the dog. Johns provides a great history of the dog, and its near relatives, but the true beauty of this book is just the variety of ways dogs have been portrayed through the ages and how they have become such a part of our cultural history, regardless of the culture. Chapters include Hunting Dogs, Working Dogs, Dogs and Gods, Myths and Monsters and Types and Breeds. There are smaller sections on Wolves, Foxes, and Jackals. There is something about the care that was taken so many centuries ago to portray a dog in stone or tile, that makes you feel that the artist was using his own dog as the model. The dog lover will find much to enjoy in this book, both informational, and artistic. And, the final image, that of a gravestone for a family dog, seems like it might have been something from a modern pet cemetery; but it is from the first or second century AD—a couple morning the death of their white hound Pearl. Even then, dogs were family.

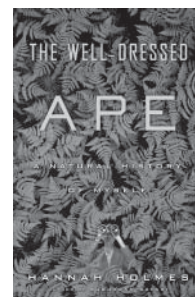


## The Well Dressed Ape

By Hannah Holmes  
Random House, \$25.00 368 pages

Hannah Holmes' book *The Well Dressed Ape* is about human beings as a whole, not as sentient being, but as a creature, defining what makes us better (or worse) than other animals in the wild. Using the keen eye that produced *Suburban Safari* Holmes goes over our physical prowess, such as the fact that humans are one of seven species made to be able to run long distances and the only species to have language (but not the only to communicate, plenty of other species can do that). This book made me forget that I was reading about humans, but more as what we are, just an intelligent animal that got lucky with evolution. This is a great book, and anyone interested in what makes you look and act the way you do, should pick up this book. Holmes has given me a great perspective on what it is to be human.

Reviewed by Tom Rojek



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# Modern Literature & Fiction

## Feather Man

By Rhyll McMaster

Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, \$15.95, 320 pages

Sooky, a clever as all-get-out smart-alec, had distant parents when she was young, and soon became attached to an older neighbor man in more than one way. His frequent molestations of her made her dependent on his sexual attention, which he stopped giving after she started to mature. Starved by attention by now all of the adults who had previously given it to her, she is plagued by emotional problems that she is ironically very aware of, and channels them into her highly original art.

Written with a prose that is often highly lyrical and poetic, which is no surprise from poet McMaster, *Feather Man* is one of the newest ideas to come into the world of novels, with a fresh vibe and an insane story, it takes you into the 40's and 50's London Art Scene through the eyes of a demented genius, though it is not at all overdone.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan



## Enchantress of Florence

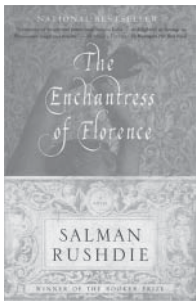
By Salman Rushdie

Random House Trade Paperbacks, \$14.00, 368 pages

Sir Salman Rushdie, best known for *The Satanic Verses*, which earned him multiple death threats, forcing him to leave his native land and live in Britain, returns with what he calls his "most researched book," which took "years and years of reading," in *The Enchantress of Florence*. A remarkable novel told in a way that mixes story with history and fable, making it seem like an enchanting tale à la *1001 Nights* that leaves one wondering which parts of it are true and which are from the imaginative mind of Rushdie. An enigmatic character from distant Florence pays a visit to the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great. Through Rushdie's eyes, we see two very different worlds: the high renaissance of Italy juxtaposed with that of India.

The magic in this story is indirect and subtle, lending it a romantic and fantastic air that simply adds to the setting and plot. It is Salman Rushdie at his best, telling wonderful, moving, magical stories within stories.

Reviewed by Alex C. Telander



## The Way Through Doors

By Jesse Ball

Vintage Books, \$13.95, 240 pages

One day, a young man named Selah Morse, municipal inspector, witnesses a young woman get hit by a taxicab. He takes her to the hospital and tells the doctors that he is her boyfriend; the young woman has lost her memory and remembers nothing about herself, and Selah is charged with taking care of her and trying to help her regain her past. So, he tells her a story. Not just one story though, but a bunch—all wound together and interconnected. We hear about Loren Darius, a lucky gambler who has everything, until he bets away his wife for a skin of water. We hear about an empress of Russia, who is so burned when a man rejects her love that she takes every possible step to ruin his life utterly. We hear about Morris the tree climber and far walker, and his family at the bottom of the tallest building in the city, of which no one has ever known, due to its location in a very deep hole. We meet the guest artist who can tell you what you're thinking in three guesses or less. In between, we hear of Sif, girlfriend of the pamphleteer working on his lifelong project WF 7 J 1978. And, strung between all of these stories, we follow Selah's travels in search of the woman Mora Klein, the name he has given to the young woman who got hit by the taxicab.

If this all sounds a bit confusing, don't fret. *The Way Through Doors* is Jesse Ball's second novel, at turns, perplexing, insightful, and uplifting, and sometimes all of the above at once. Throughout, it remains consistently engaging. These stories overlap and trail into each other seamlessly, often in the guise of dreams, stories within the story, or speeches. Characters are introduced, then later reappear—either in retellings of the original story or in a seemingly-unrelated story, tying plotlines together.

I'll admit that, more than once, I had to go back a few pages to determine when the story changed and why I hadn't fully noticed. It may have been hard to follow, but the exquisiteness of Ball's writing helps you let go of conventional writing and just go with the flow. I thoroughly enjoyed *The Way Through Doors*, and I know it won't be long before I'm drawn back to give this complex story another go.

Reviewed by Holly Scudero



## What We All Long For

By Dionne Brand

Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Griffin, \$14.95, 336 pages

Four twenty-somethings in Toronto have an agreement to not talk about family. Yet, each is so strangled tied by perceptions about their own upbringing and family, and so haunted by what they long for, that they

## Futureproof

By N. Frank Daniels

Harper Perennial, \$13.95, 352 pages

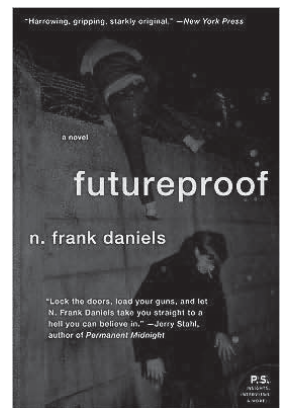
It's rare to find a self-publishing success story in this highly competitive day and age, and rarer still for that book to actually impress with its witty brilliance, but N. Frank Daniels' debut novel, *Futureproof*, accomplishes both tasks handily. Originally posted on the authors' Myspace page, Daniels may be poised for mainstream success with this gritty, no holds barred modern and hip masterpiece that will appeal to the disaffected youth of America, as well as anybody who has ever been curious about the dark and seedy underbelly of the urban core, but afraid to venture there.

*Futureproof* is the loosely autobiographical tale of Luke, a dreadlocked dropout from Atlanta, and the ragtag band of losers and castoffs that enter (and, often, just as rapidly exit) his life. Set in the 1990s, when Kurt Cobain was a god for the disenfranchised, the novel churns along at a fast clip, as Luke's penchant for experimentation evolves into addiction. He understands early that he is nothing more than a shadow on the fringes of society, and turns to drugs for escape.

"We are the misunderstood," Daniels writes, in prose that crackles and pops, electrically vibrant and, at times, undeniably poetic, his descriptive narrative so vivid it often feels like the needle is dangling from your own arm. "We are the unclassified the oversimplified the target market the failing demographic. We are already dead, the untalented, the ugly, the wasted, the underused, making way for the new...We are the holes. The empty. The vacant. Carved out and hollow. Blankly staring. Echoes. Not ourselves. Not anyone."

It is this sense of hopelessness, this lack of belonging, that drives Luke deeper and deeper into the lifestyle of hardcore drugs, until seemingly overnight he has transformed into a full-blown junkie willing to pull off increasingly brazen acts of desperation all for his next fix. Yet, Luke is an antihero, a 21st-century, rougher around the edges version of Holden Caulfield, and we never lose faith – or hope – in his desire for eventual redemption, because buried not so deeply beneath the surface we see Luke's humanity, his intelligence and love. We want him to rid himself of his demons, and when the story ends, it is without the neat and tidy resolution we'd hoped for, which is not to say it is without hope. The very act of Luke's survival is happy testament to the fact that he is not, after all, future-proof himself.

Reviewed by Mark Petruska



barely function on a day-to-day basis. Tuyen, a lesbian and artist, and her brother, Binh, is haunted by the older brother (Quy) lost when the family fled Vietnam. Carla's biracial and burdened by responsibility for her jailed brother Jamal. Their father was forced to take them in after their mother, his mistress, committed suicide, but responsibility and love can't be forced. Oku lives at home under the disdainful glare of his Jamaican father. Having dropped out of college, Oku's days are filled with hiding it from his father, and his nights spent hiding from a life where he can't find purpose. He's sure if only Jackie will love him, he will find all he's looking for. But Jackie, a black woman from Halifax, is busy running her clothing store and mourning for her parents' lost way of life. Interspersed with Quy's story about survival, when Quy and Jamal return home, the families meet and tragedy occurs. And that's where the story ends.



After wading through pages of back-story, the novel ends right when it could get interesting—exploring the fallout of the tragic meeting.

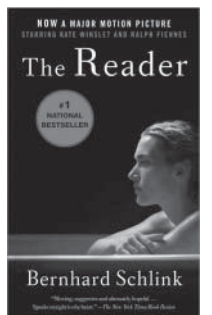
Reviewed by Jamie Engle

## The Reader

By Bernhard Schlink

Vintage Books, \$13.95, 224 pages

If you haven't had time or interest to read *The Reader* yet, you may want to reconsider. A *New York Times* Bestseller, winner of the *Boston Book Review's* Fisk Fiction Prize, and probably more importantly for millions of Americans, an Oprah Book Club Selection; *The Reader* is now a major motion picture starring Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes. Set in postwar Ger-



See **READER**, page x



# Mystery, Crime & Thrillers

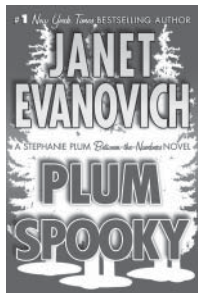
## Plum Spooky

By Janet Evanovich

St. Martin's Press, \$27.95, 320 pages

Evanovich's *Stephanie Plum* books have always had a high degree of humor to them. Sure there was some mystery and enough potential violence to keep you interested (and enough actual violence keep you wondering if it would happen again). Then she did a couple of non-numbered stories (or between-the-numbers) that just got sillier. This one may almost be the silliest yet. It involves the Jersey Devil, the Easter Bunny, Sasquatch, a bad guy named Wulf Gri-moire, and his side-kick Martin Munch, boy genius, and lots of monkeys. Lots and lots of monkeys. Including Carl the Monkey from previous books. Stephanie is supposed to bring Martin in for a missed court appearance, and so has to go into the Pine Barrens to find him. Silliness ensues. Lots and lots. Fart jokes, monkey jokes and then the usual random oddities that seem to follow Stephanie through her life. And on Stephanie's love life, this novel is more about her relationship with Diesel, and not Ranger or Morelli.

It's hard to recommend this on an anonymous basis. If you like Carl Hiaasen, you'd probably like this. If you've liked other non-numbered Plum novels, you'll probably like this. If you've like the numbered Plum books, and the interpersonal relationships between Stephanie, Ranger and Morelli, you probably won't like this. However, if you like monkeys, you will probably like *Plum Spooky*.



## Darwin's Nightmare

By Mike Knowles

ECW Press, \$24.95, 288 pages

The mean streets of Hamilton, Ontario are about to get a whole lot grittier. Wilson does odd jobs for a crime boss, and by odd, read illegal. His latest seems pretty easy, steal a bag from the airport, and deliver it to his boss. However, it seems the bag contained computer disks with accounting information about the Russian mob. Wilson has spent most of his life under everyone's radar, so when a couple of so-called "amateurs" track him down and encourage him to retrieve the bag, now from his boss, Wilson finds himself between a rock and a dangerous place. The violence is fairly graphic, the dialog keenly written. The ending, doesn't



quite spoil the book, but it could have used more work. This is Knowles' first novel, and shows a lot of promise. Fans of Charlie Huston and Chuck Palahniuk will probably enjoy *Darwin's Nightmare*.

## Contagious

By Scott Sigler

Crown, \$24.95, 448 pages

A man whose only claim to fame is that he was once a football star has become humanity's only hope in being able to stop an intelligent epidemic that is spreading like wildfire in *Contagious*. Sigler comes up with quite the idea for a virus, one that actively adapts and evolves seemingly at will, and causes those afflicted with it to become violent and murderous in the extreme. The infection spreads rampantly, ultimately to the point where humanity is on the brink of hopelessness.

Written with an urgentness that fits completely in with the speedy plot lines, *Contagious* has the perfect pace, and though twists are to be expected in mystery thrillers, the ones contained within Sigler's book are not foreseeable, something that is uncommon in the genre today. Though not the most pristine example amazing writing, it definitely fulfills its purpose, and is very entertaining.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan



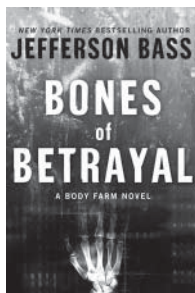
## Bones of Betrayal

By Jefferson Bass

William Morrow, \$24.99, 368 pages

Book four in the ongoing *Body Farm* forensic mystery series, *Bone of Betrayal* takes place in Oakridge, Tennessee, one of places used during WWII to develop uranium for the Manhattan Project. The victim is the elderly Dr. Leonard Novak, one of the physicists from the project, and found dead in a frozen swimming pool. After he's removed and thawed, it's discovered that he died from ingesting highly radioactive material, and that not only is he still radioactive, but he's also exposed Body Farm founder Bill Brockton, his assistant and the local medical examiner. Brockton has to track down the current killer, by discovering the secrets of old Oakridge, and how what happened sixty years earlier are still causing murder today.

There is a lot of history about Oakridge, the Manhattan Project and the history of the area. And, as is normal with this and other forensic books, plenty of forensic science and anthropology. Brockton is a humorous character, and his interactions with Novak's widow and the attractive local librarian who



helps him with his research come across realistic. Over all, a good story, a decent history lesson and a good mystery.

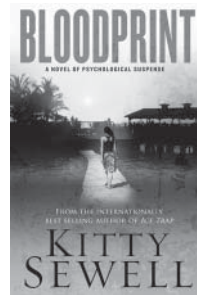
## Bloodprint

By Kitty Sewell

Touchstone Books, \$24.99, 368 pages

Madeleine Frank was raised by a Cuban-born mother (and priestess of Santeria) and a British artist in Key West. She continues to live there as an adult, until her husband is killed during a hurricane. Seeking relief from her memories, she moves to the her father's hometown of Bath, and continues her therapy trade. One of her clients is Rachel Locklear, a frightened woman trying to escape her abusive relationship with her boyfriend, and father of her son, who is involved in human trafficking. He's also forced Rachel into prostitution, but Rachel has continued to find reasons to stay in the relationship, or return to it, until now. Her father has died, leaving Rachel with money that she'd like to use to flee with her son, but is using therapy to find the courage.

Madeleine is drawn into the drama between Rachel and Anton, and finds her own abandonment issues of her father leaving when she was young and the child she gave up for adoption, beginning to overwhelm her. Her mother, still practicing Santeria in the local mental hospital where she is housed, also is causing stress in Madeleine's life. As is the imprisoned assassin she regularly visits as one of her acts of charity. And, Sewell ties it all together, in a pretty complete package. Her writing is tight, the characterization is well-done, the action fairly believable. Entertaining as a thriller should be, and set outside the normal setting (who does thrillers in Bath?).



## Beat the Reaper

By Josh Bazell

Little, Brown, \$24.99, 320 pages

What happens when you take a former mob hit man, enter him into Witness Protection, and then send him to medical school? Most likely, an accidental meeting with an old mob associate that could turn ugly. In Bazell's debut novel, this is what happens to new doctor Peter Brown. Formerly Pietro "Bearclaw" Brnwa, Brown was taken in by a mob lawyer as a teenager, after his grandparents were killed during a home invasion. The lawyer was impressed by the revenge he took on the thugs and guided him into full-time killing for the local mob boss. Eventually, he becomes sickened by the violence and



death, and turns to the Feds to get him out. In order to find redemption for his past, he goes to medical school, and now works at a downtown hospital trying to save lives. And, one of those lives is Nicholas LoBrutto, aka Eddy Squillante, who recognized the new Dr. Brown as the former hit man Bearclaw.

The book flashes back often from present through Brown's past. The actual action of the story takes place over about eight hours, and is pretty much nonstop. Brown's mental musings (and occasional footnote) are intelligent and humorous, providing interesting commentary on hospital procedures (Bazell being a doctor, and having written this book during his internship. After the advance he was paid for the book (reportedly in the seven figures), one may wonder if he'll pursue the writing career or the medical one. If he's as good a doctor as he is a writer, he may end up finding a cure for cancer.

## An Incomplete Revenge: A Maisie Dobbs Novel

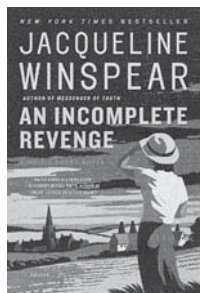
By Jacqueline Winspear

Picador, \$14.00, 352 pages

The fifth in Jacqueline Winspear's series of the post-World War I British psychologist and investigator Maisie Dobbs, *An Incomplete Revenge* is a bit broody and a bit dark, but is spared from the sappy melodrama that infects so many other modern British mysteries by Ms. Winspear's quietly confident writing.

Maisie is asked by the son of her former employer to investigate a recurring series of petty crimes that is plaguing the estate and village that he and his company are in negotiations to purchase. When Maisie visits the village, Heronsdene, located in rural Kent, she is struck by the overwhelming sense that the villagers know who the perpetrator of the crimes is but have agreed, whether by instinct or design, to keep the knowledge to themselves. When Maisie succeeds in discovering the root of the villagers' silence and the reason behind the crimes, the truth is simultaneously shocking and heartrending.

Fans of the more light-hearted mysteries written by British authors of the period (Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham) may find themselves dismayed by the pervasive gloom underlying *An Incomplete Revenge*: every character is laboring under some personal weight of sorrow, from Maisie, who is struggling to overcome her memories from her time as a nurse in the Great War and the deterioration of the health of her lover from a war wound, to Maisie's assistant, Billy Beale, whose wife is still grieving after the loss of the couple's young daughter to diphtheria.



See **REVENGE**, page 18



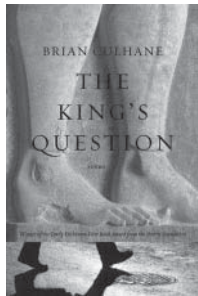
# Poetry & Short Stories

## The King's Question

By Brian Culhane

Graywolf Press, \$15.00, 80 pages

In this collection of poetry, Culhane mixes current life with flashes from the past, from Viking torches during a raid, to the Library of Alexandria. The often random insights of ancient connection work much like modern memory, except, instead of flashing back to the similarity of the voice you are now hearing to your fourth grade teacher's, Culhane, hears the Oracle of Delphi. The 24 poems contain so many mythological references, dropped in so appropriately; finding them is often like stumbling upon exquisitely decorated Easter eggs in your own backyard you didn't hide. And the more obscure references will probably have an observant reader headed for Wikipedia for further research.



Culhane won the Emily Dickinson First Book Award, for an American poet over the age of 50, who has not yet published a book of poetry. With the strength of this first outing, it is likely that Culhane will have a second collection, though it is hopeful it won't take as long to gestate as this one seems to have.

## Sophocles: Selected Poems

By Reginald Gibbons

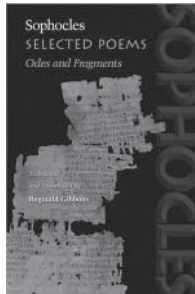
Princeton University Press, \$18.95, 144 pages

Re-igniting the spark of Sophocles poetry in English, for the first time giving us a complete, or at least near-complete idea of the

types of images and emotions that are lit within us by the rhythm and poetics of Sophocles' writing, as opposed to merely its blandly translated meaning, which essentially provides "the facts of the story," Gibbons gives us a literary necessity in *Sophocles: Selected Poems*.

Showing how timeless and enduring his poetry can be, truly the epitome of classic, this new translation leaves little lost. The meter and language has been restored to a comparable level of the original work, and gives off an air of nostalgia though it deals with universal themes that are still very applicable to this day.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan

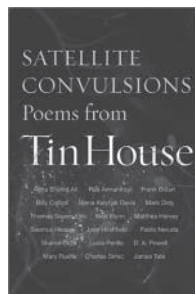


## Satellite Convulsions: Poems from Tin House

By Various Authors (Edited by Brenda Shaughnessy and CJ Evans)

Tin House Books, \$16.95, 250 pages

Shaughnessy and Evans have, together, scoured through volumes of the respectable literary magazine "Tin House," and have found some of the most touching, raw, hilarious, and best poetry that has graced the publication and compiled it into one overpowering book, *Satellite Convulsions*. With a variety of writers, from heavy hitting names like Collins and Neruda, to relatively fresh ones, the range of style is a



mouthful and the breadth of subject matter is equally impressive.

Though, at times, the book can be a bit overwhelming and the amount of heavy literary devices and the depth that they achieve can be a tad over the top, this presents absolutely no problem if you take in the contents of the book little by little. In addition, scattered throughout are some poems that are the equivalent of an "amuse busche," that cleanse your "palette" as you read. A very well-put-together collection of exceptional poetry, *Satellite Convulsions* shows what Tin House is all about.

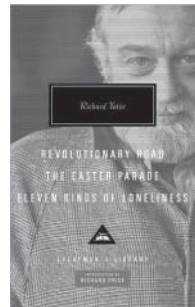
## Revolutionary Road, The Easter Parade, Eleven Kinds of Loneliness

By Richard Yates

Everyman's Library, \$26.00, 696 pages

A collection of three of Yates' masterpieces, *Revolutionary Road*, *The Easter Parade*, and *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness*, this book is by far one of the single most concentrated pieces of literary rawness and skill within recent memory. *Revolutionary Road* follows a doomed marriage in which the two spouses are trying to put their lives back together, *The Easter Parade* deals with the narcissism of divorce, and *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness* is just flat out amazing, whatever it is.

Written with a style that portrays the malaise and agony in everyday life, and the realistically (though we might not like to admit that part) screwed up things people do to themselves and each other, each story still manages to be not overly-depressing. Yates, in these particular selections, shows why he was a master at crafting words into sheer and utter, unrestrained reality. (This title also available as a trade paperback from Vintage Books.)



## Noise: Fiction Inspired by Sonic Youth

By Various Authors (Edited by Peter Wild)

Harper Perennial, \$13.99, 240 pages

While the collection of short stories contained within *Noise* is, overall, quite good, its downfall is that the majority of the writing does not live up to or surpass the songwriting of the band from which the stories are inspired. Sonic Youth, one of the most influential and important groups of the past few decades, easily shines beyond 90% of the book.

That is not to say that any of it is terrible, or even bad. In fact, it's all quality work, and a few are standout stories that make you say "Damn..." But, the Sonic Youth set such a high standard that



when basing fiction off of their work, simply doing well is not enough. In spite of that fact, *Noise* is still a worthwhile read, as a few of the stories give not only a new, but an interesting spin on some of the ideas and themes found within Sonic Youth's music.

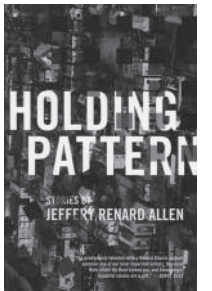
## Holding Pattern

By Jeffery Renard Allen

Graywolf Press, \$15.00, 256 pages

This short story collection from the award-winning writer, Jeffery Renard Allen (*Rails Under My Back*), continues his run of hard hitting stories that refuse to stay within their assigned genres. He adds magic, unexplained occurrences—in *It Shall Be Again* pennies fall from heaven, and in *Holding Pattern* a character grows useless wings—but the stories that are "normal" still have magic, but that of language and insight. The language is often that of the inner city, gritty and direct, but not used for shock value, only because this is how it is where these stories were born and raised.

Allen is a highly talented writer, and this collection has many stories that will sink into your conscience, returning at unexpected times when something prompts it.



## Word Comix

By Charlie Smith

W. W. Norton and Co., \$23.95, 96 pages

With subject matter reaching from the seemingly trivial, yet ever-so-enjoyable to the heavy, dark contemplations of an at times too honest, brutally honest poet, Charlie Smith takes you all over the spectrum of emotions, to every extreme, and even to some happy mediums within the short and at times quaintly entertaining volume *Word Comix*.

Delving headfirst into a veritable rainbow of feeling and observation, every tone and shade is hit, and hit well. While it may not seem that a work of such diversity, touching on subjects from comic books to unrequited love, could carry any continuity or flow of any type, but strangely enough it actually does. One of the better poetry books to grace us in recent years, *Word Comix* is quite an enjoyable read.



## Delicate Edible Birds and Other Stories

By Lauren Groff

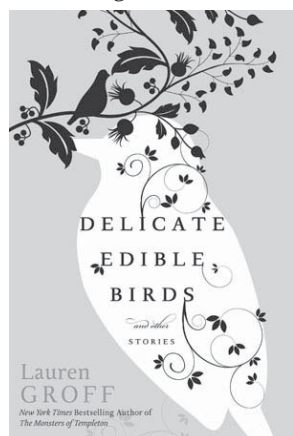
Voice, \$23.95, 320 pages

Following last year's debut novel, *The Monsters of Templeton*, Groff has a short story collection that continues to show her writing ability, and, here, the range of her abilities. The stories mostly follow girls and women, making changes, learning and growing. There are also themes of parent/child relationships that may mean more for Groff as she recently a mother. One of the stories, *Lucky Chow Fun* goes back to town of Templeton from her debut novel (a fictionalized version of Cooperstown, Groff's hometown), and is the story of a high-school swimmer faced with the sexual secrets of the townspeople.

The eponymous story in the collection is a WWII story set in Nazi occupied France, as a female reporter has to agree to an unpleasant deal to save herself and her male colleagues.

Six of the stories haven't been published before, making this collection a treat.

Reviewed by Ross Rojek





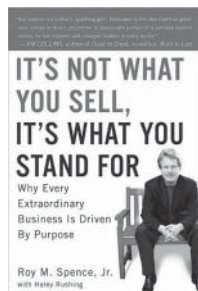
# Business & Investing

## It's Not What You Sell, It's What You Stand For

By Roy M. Spence, Jr.; Haley Rushing  
Portfolio, \$25.95, 256 pages

There are lots of business books on making money, finding your niche, competing against the big companies, having a purpose. No, wait. That last one. Doesn't every business have a purpose? Well, according to Spence, companies not only need to have a purpose beyond just making money, but they have to have it simple enough for it to permeate every level of the company; leaders, employees, vendors and customers. Now, this is pretty much like the mission statement trend of a few years back, that spawned hundreds of books and probably millions of consulting hours. Spence has taken mission statements, and added in the new trend of corporate responsibility, and made it more casual. And, it works.

His core thesis is that a company's road to success is to have a purpose beyond just making money. It needs to make a difference in some way that can create passion for all the stakeholders. Wal-Mart's is "Save people money so they can live better," Google's, "Help people find what they are looking for." There are plenty of examples from companies about what their purpose (or unofficial mission statement) is, and how to find one for your company. There are good steps to forming a purpose (in the event you don't actually have one beyond making a profit) and plenty of sidebar information on articulating it within your organization (and non-profits will find useful information as well.)



## The Moneymakers

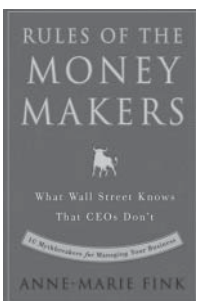
### How Extraordinary Managers Win in a World Turned Upside Down

By Anne-Marie Fink

Crown Books/Crown Publishing, \$27.50, 300 pages

As a very "general" business strategy book on the good and bad ways to run a business, the pitfalls to avoid, and strengths to enhance, *The Money Makers* is a only starting point. It could also be placed in the category of all the "how-to" books one can find and purchase at Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble. It would be good as a Business 101, freshman/sophomore-level book to be used in a college-level Economics or Finance class.

Not to discount the author's accomplishments, both scholastically and profession-



ally, but, for more detail and real-world case-studies of what went wrong in running a business, the Harvard Business Review would be your better choice. It has more detail and specifics, as well as real root-cause and corrective action(s).

Also lacking is any kind of footnoting or bibliography, leading the reader/reviewer to wonder if all of the anecdotal evidence and pronouncements put forth are first-hand, or taken from the popular-press in newspaper and magazine articles, or just a mélange of second and third-hand hearsay quotes taken from within the business world.

By Phil LeBrun

## Career Renegade

By Jonathan Fields

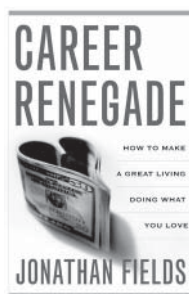
Broadway Books, \$14.00, 288 pages

Do you hate your job? Worried about being laid off during the current economic crisis? Been laid off? Interested in doing something different with your life? *Career Renegade* may be the book for you. Fields was a large-firm Manhattan lawyer that had to be rushed to the hospital after having worked 72 hours straight. Realizing that his job might just literally kill him, he used that experience to change careers, developing a series of health and fitness companies. Fields took his experiences and turned them into a very helpful and practical guide to finding yourself a new career doing something that you not only enjoy, but that can support yourself.

Now, Fields was a high-powered lawyer, and had some money and connections to use when changing careers, but his book isn't just for the independently wealthy. The chapters on finding ways to make your passion your job, apply to anyone, and the many resources that Fields includes for researching opportunities are practical for almost any sized business.

Now, this book is going to be (has been) compared to Timothy Ferriss' *4 Hour Work Week* and having read both, I find *Career Renegade* to be the more useful. *Career Renegade* deals more with the practicalities of running a business, and not simply finding a good idea and trying to outsource all the labor. Fields also discusses how to deal with the emotions involved with starting a business, the fear or worry that can set in, and how to get your friends and family to support your decision.

Anyone that's been interested in starting something new—a career, business, or charity—should find this book not only useful but critical. Plan on flagging a lot of pages for future reference.



## The 100 Best Business Books of All Time: What They Say, Why They Matter, and How They Can Help You

By Jack Covert and Todd Sattersten

Portfolio Hardcover, \$25.95, 304 pages

Throw a rock in any of your local, large bookstores and you're certain to hit at least a dozen business books that promise to help you do everything from organizing your business completely in seven days to quadrupling your sales in ten minutes. How can a business person hope to find their way through the maze to a book that will address their specific needs in the best possible way? Jack Covert and Todd Sattersten's *100 Best Business Books of All Time* does just that, distilling the jumbled mass of business tomes down to focus on the books that really are worth your time and money.

As the founder and president, respectively, of 800-CEO-Read, a specialty business book retailer, Mr. Covert and Mr. Sattersten have read and reviewed hundreds of business books through the years. The two used a three point criteria for choosing books to include in the 100 best list: 1. The quality of the book's idea, 2. The applicability of the idea to businesses today, and 3. The accessibility of the book's writing. The result? Twelve specific categories of informative and life-changing books, including books focusing on sales and marketing, management, leadership, entrepreneurship, and business strategies.

Mr. Covert and Mr. Sattersten don't waste time with useless generalizations and platitudes; in each book's description, they get straight to the point and deliver precisely enough information to tell the reader the salient arguments and themes of each book, why they are important for business people to read, and how they can specifically help the reader.

*100 Best Business Books of All Time* includes business golden-oldies (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*; *How to Win Friends and Influence People*), modern classics (*The Tipping Point*; *Purple Cow*), biographies of such luminaries as David Packard and Sam Walton, and even some off-beat, but life-changing selections such as Dr. Seuss' *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* and Eugene O'Kelly's thought-provoking *Chasing Daylight*. Interspersed throughout the reviews are sidebars with recommendations for movies that display characters with outstanding leadership characteristics, books that focus on global business etiquette, and more creative business-flavored information.

Before you buy another business book, take a look at Mr. Covert and Mr. Sattersten's recommendations; you won't be sorry.

Reviewed by Michelle Kerns

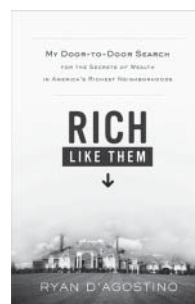


## Rich Like Them

By Ryan D'Agostino

Little, Brown, \$25.99, 256 pages

*Rich Like Them* is an interesting idea. D'Agostino went to the twenty most affluent ZIP codes in the United States and walked from door-to-door looking for residents that would talk to him about how they became rich enough to live in those neighborhoods. And, far from having the police called, many people invited him for tea or soda, and told D'Agostino the story of their lives, businesses, and wealth. Those stories have been distilled into five chapters, and forty-one truisms. The chapters are: Open Your Eyes (look for things other people don't see), Luck Doesn't Exist, The



Economics of Obsession (do what you love), The Myth of Risk (if you plan well and work hard, those risks are reduced), and Humility (recognize what you cannot do, and focus on what you can).

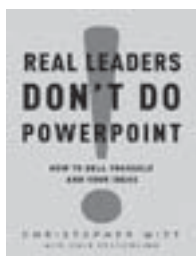
Many of the truisms are just that. But, they've become truism because they work. And many of the stories from the people interviewed don't have many surprises, but are interesting, and often inspirational, just due to their ordinariness. Now, those that inherited their money may not be as inspirational as those who earned it, but they still have to work to maintain that money, and there are lessons to be learned from as well. Overall, there aren't any new business ideas, but that really isn't the point here. Here are stories from semi-random, wealthy, people (who happened to be home, and willing to talk to a stranger asking personal questions), willing to share their insights into success. Entertaining and interesting.

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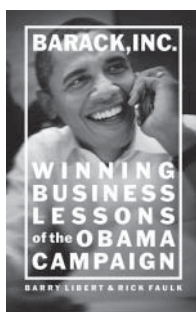
**Real Leaders Don't Do Powerpoint**  
By Christopher Witt; Dale Fetherling  
Crown Business, 21.95, 256 pages

As much as you might think that *Real Leaders Don't Do Powerpoint* might be a screed against the obsequiousness of the Microsoft tool, based on frustration from sitting through too many presentations. It isn't. It is a book on how people at all levels of business need to present themselves and their ideas better. In a very easy-to-read, well-written and organized book, Witt provides simple chapters organized in four main areas: A Great Person, A Noteworthy Event, A Compelling Message, and A Masterful Delivery. A Great Person is about how you are the message, how who you are influences the messages your audience hears. A Noteworthy Event is about how the event that you are speaking at needs to be successful; if it isn't, no one is going to remember your part of it. A Compelling Message is about having one great idea per presentation, and A Masterful Delivery is about how to project yourself in the most efficient way possible. *Real Leaders* is a very effective book for anyone who has to present ideas to an audience, whether you are an experienced speaker or not.



**Barack, Inc**  
By Barry Libert; Rick Faulk  
FT Press, \$19.99, 192 pages

Of all the potential ways to exploit the success of Barack Obama's election win, a business book might be at the bottom of the list. And, when most books have a couple of months (if not years) lead time, you'd probably figure that a book cranked out just two-and-a-half months after his win was probably mostly fluff. *Barack, Inc* doesn't feel that way. Now, maybe Libert and Faulk had a book in the works, and slapped the Barack connection into it, but it doesn't feel that way either. What it does feel like, is a good case study of the Barack campaign treated as a



business marketing plan, and a wrap-up the how's and why's it succeeded.

The three pillars of the campaign, as outlined by the authors, are Be Social, Be Cool, and Be the Change. Be Social obviously refers to all the ways that the Obama campaign used online social networking tools to find, inform and motivate their target audience. In addition to the Obama strategies, Toyota, Coca-Cola, and Comcast forays into social networking are also covered. Be Cool is skills on maintaining your equilibrium, focusing on what matters, and keeping an open mind on until you need to make a final decision. Be the Change is just that. Embody the changes you want to in your organization. The stakeholders you want to influence, want to see you not only take the first step, but also reflect those changes all the time.

The Barack campaign didn't need to be used as an example. But it was the most unusual, underdog presidential win in many years. The many interviews with Barack staffers that helped put this book together, show that it wasn't just luck that got him the win. The entire campaign used every tool they could, were laser focused on the job at hand, and have a vision of what success looked like. And, that is the basis of almost any good business plan. *Barack, Inc* has good lessons for anyone, Republican or Democrat. And, maybe some of the Republican strategists will be picking this up on the sly. Just in case.

**The Big Switch**  
By Nicholas Carr  
Norton, \$16.95, 224 pages

In the best selling book, *The Big Switch*, Carr (*Does IT Matter?, Is Google Making Us Stupid?*) shows the parallels between the early development of the electrical grid system and today's transition in the computer industry. When electricity began its development, many businesses used local sources for power, including as local as a waterwheel or windmill on their own property. As the electrical grid developed, businesses were able to get power delivered, from where they didn't know, or really care, as long as it came. In the computer industry, much of the same transition is going on; instead of using programs on your PC, more and



more businesses are using Web 2.0 technology to host their mission critical software somewhere else, and they don't really know where, or care. No one knows where the YouTube servers are, you just have your link to the videos you need or want, and put that on your web site.

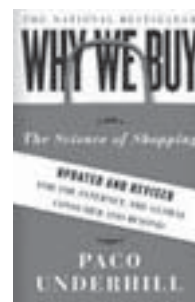
The universality of electricity drove so many revolutions in the years that followed; transportation, the middle class and a mass culture to name a few. Carr makes the argument that this switch from local computing to cloud computing will also bring seismic shifts in business, technology and culture, and that those shifts have already begun. Some of his conclusions aren't all that hopeful—a consolidation of wealth, further decline in print publishing, a reduction in the middle class, and a continuing erosion of privacy. As Carr points out, we can't begin to imagine the changes coming, it will be our children's adulthood that will really begin to see what the big switch will bring. (This is a paperback release of last year's hardcover. It includes a new list of the 20 companies that Carr feels best reflects the potential of cloud computing.)

**Why We Buy: Updated and Revised for the Internet, the Global Consumer, and Beyond**

By Paco Underhill  
Simon & Schuster, \$16.00, 320 pages

It has been said that one should not mess with perfection, and the original *Why We Buy* was the epitome of market psychology perfection. While the touching ups in this latest version do make the book not quite as superb in writing quality as the original, they were necessary in order for the book to remain relevant in the super-evolving market culture of today.

Taking and in-depth look into the mind-set of the producers and consumers, and the actual reality of market situations interact in any type of transaction or mass trend, Underhill analyzes years worth of statistics and figures, interpreting them with wit and precision, and creating an essential market guidebook. This new iteration of *Why We Buy* will ensure that it remains relevant for quite some time to come, and, in exchange,



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**MODERN LITERATURE  
Reader, cont'd from page 5**

many, it tracks the relationship between Michael, a 15-year-old schoolboy, and Hanna, the 30-year-old who rescues him one day when he fell ill coming home from school. After he recovers from a bout of Hepatitis, he takes Hanna flowers to thank her, and she seduces him. Their relationship develops beyond the sexual attraction, as Hanna strongly encourages him in his studies, and he begins to read out loud to her. Without warning, Hanna disappears, and Michael doesn't see her again for many years.

It is when Michael is in law school, and assigned to take notes during some of the Nazi war crimes trials that continued for years after the end of the war, that he sees Hanna again. Michael, like many of his generation of Germans, condemns those adults during the Nazi years that stood by and did nothing, including his parents. These trials not only were to prosecute the guilty, but to purge the collective guilt many Germans still felt. It is here that Michael finds Hanna, on trial for being a concentration camp guard, and for being in charge when a group of prisoners were locked inside of a burning church. However, the one piece of evidence that could prove her innocence (or at least lower her complicity) she is unable to share, out of shame. And Michael, who could also stand up and testify for her, keeps silent, allowing her to be convicted.

From here, Hanna and Michael's lives intersect again, and, while maybe not resolving the story to any strong conclusion, not everything does. The larger story of how the postwar generation of Germans came to terms with how they felt about the Nazi years, and their parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and neighbors who didn't stand up against the regime, underlies *The Reader*, and Schlink expertly includes those themes. If you have, or plan to see, the movie and haven't read the book, then you owe it to yourself to settle in for a couple of quiet hours and enjoy the original.



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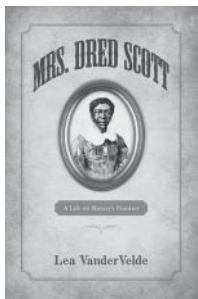
# Black History

## Mrs. Dred Scott

By Lea VanderVelde

Oxford University Press, \$34.95, 496 pages

Most of the history about the Dred Scott US Supreme Court decision focuses on Dred himself; his wife, Harriott, is often just mentioned as just that, “Dred Scott’s wife.” In this new book, *Mrs. Dred Scott*, VanderVelde explores the story of Dred’s wife, and her part in suing for their freedom as a result of having been moved multiple times into free states by Dr. John Emerson, their owner. It wasn’t until after his death that the Dred’s filed suit for their freedom and, at one point, had a jury decide in their favor. Emerson’s widow, Irene Sandford Emerson, appealed, and in the now infamous United States Supreme Court decision (ruled seven to two against Scott), found that neither Scott, nor any person of African ancestry, could claim citizenship in the United States. In this highly detailed, researched, and scholarly book, VanderVelde traces Harriott’s life, marriage to Scott, and the troubles and tribulations they faced in trying to use the courts to prove their right to be free. This is not only the story of Harriott and Dred Scott, but also a look at a slave’s life just prior to Emancipation, pieced together from hundreds of sources (the notes themselves are 120 pages), and crafted into a excellent new look at the background behind *Dred Scott v. Sandford*.

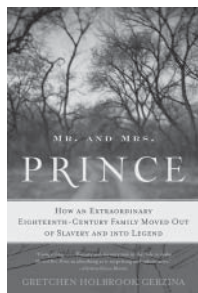


## Mr. and Mrs. Prince

By Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina

Amistad, \$13.99, 272 pages

*Mr. and Mrs. Prince* is the story of early American slavery, race relations, and tenacity. Yet, unlike many other stories, this one takes place not only in the “free” north, but in the years prior to the Revolutionary War. Tradition asserts that the culture toward slavery was different in the north, but the Prince’s story belies that thought. Both began as slaves, in rural areas that had as many black slaves as free whites. Abijah Prince was a veteran of the French and Indian Wars, Lucy Terry Prince was one of the survivors of a devastating Indian raid, and the poem she wrote about it survived, making her the earliest known African American poet. Together, they owned land in Vermont and Massachusetts, and when their white neighbors tried to destroy their crops and steal their land, far from just



moving way from the trouble, Lucy went to court to assert their right to that land, arguing her way up to the Supreme Court. The Princes prospered in the early American history, through hard work, persistence, and a refusal to be treated any different than anyone else. (Lucy argued before the admissions board at Williams College that her sons should be allowed to enroll. They weren’t allowed, but, here again, the demand for equal treatment was paramount.)

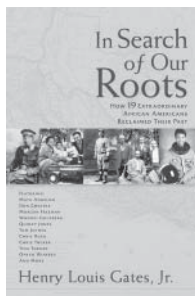
Gerzina weaves the story of her research in and out of the Prince’s story, showing how she and her husband Anthony pieced together the facts they could find, the discussions they had on interpreting the areas that weren’t so clear, and even their eventual connection to the Princes. There are some liberties taken with the history, where motivations or emotions are guessed at, but overall the story is the more important focus. Fun and interesting to read.

## In Search of Our Roots

By Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Crown, \$27.50, 448 pages

A follow-up to the PBS documentary *African American Lives*, Gates goes further into historical, genealogical, and genetic research with nineteen famous African Americans, finding new and interesting details of their ancestors, going past the Civil War and using DNA, their African roots. Many of his subjects are high-profile media figures—Morgan Freeman, Whoopi Goldberg, Chris Rock, Tina Turner, Oprah Winfrey—others are exception members of their chosen careers - Mae Jemison, the first black astronaut, Benjamin Carson, head of pediatric neurosurgery at John Hopkins University—and high-profile pastors—Peter Gomes and TD Jakes. There is a short biography of each, but the bulk of each chapter is on what Gates’ research found regarding their families. Again and again, the point is made that how much slavery removed people’s heritage, keeping them from knowing those ancestors that provide the “family history” you hand down to each new generation.



## Death or Liberty

By Douglas R. Egerton

Oxford University Press, \$29.95, 342 pages

*Death or Liberty* explores the history of black Americans in the Revolutionary period, before, during, and after. The Declaration of Independence made the claim of equality of all men, but the reality of it was for the white male land owners and not their black slaves, indentured servants, or even the free blacks living in the colonies. Egerton covers the role of these “not equal” people in the rise to revolution, their participation in it (on both the American and British

sides) and how they reacted after the war when their status remained unchanged. The profiles of these men (and they are almost all men) range from William Lee, George Washington’s bondsman and Quok Walker, a runaway slave that, through suing his master, helped end slavery in Massachusetts. There are also those that wanted to use violence to get their freedom and rights, most notably Gabriel (no last name known), who organized and lead a slave revolt near Richmond in 1800, and was hanged for it. Egerton has found telling stories, and researched them extensively. The primary lesson that comes across is that the Founding Fathers missed their chance to follow through on their stated beliefs that “All men are created equal,” leaving those men (and women) with black skin to wait another 100 years for it to become legally true.

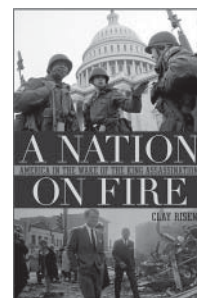


## A Nation on Fire

By Clay Risen

Wiley, \$25.95, 304 pages

The riots in the wake of Martin Luther King’s assassination have been an integral part of most Civil Rights history books, but it hasn’t ever been given full focus in a stand alone book. Risen takes those riots in hundreds of cities and brings them into perspective from the participants, the politicians, and the lingering results that affected the cities for years after. *A Nation on Fire* is a day-by-day description of the violence, the reactions from the Johnson White House, and the eventual occupation of American cities by the US Army and National Guard. The swift passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 less than 7 days after King’s death, shows the seriousness that not only the Johnson administration took the riots, but what the Representatives and Senators saw happening in their own states and cities. Risen not only presents the events as they happened, but the actions and reactions of the people involved, and how the damage from the riots lingered for decades after. An intriguing look at one of the turning points in American history.



## Traveling the Freedom Road

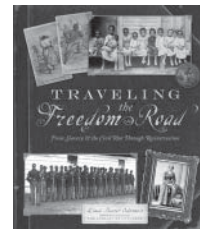
By Linda Barrett Osborne

Amulet Books, \$24.95, 128 pages

Drawing from the extensive Library of Congress collection of American documents, photographs, and drawings, Osborne, a senior writer and editor at the Library, has written an excellent account of slavery, told for children, and with a focus

on cost of slavery to children. Explaining the concept of slavery to tweens isn’t an easy task, but *Traveling the Freedom Road* covers the many difficult issues, in an easy-to-read and follow fashion. There are many illustrations of the people and places discussed, helping explain the times and situations faced by the slaves, starting in the early 1800’s and continuing through Reconstruction.

The many personal stories she has documented and told, bring a personal touch to history, and help explain what life was like for those living under slavery. Not really aimed at young children, *Traveling the Freedom Road* is good for middle-schoolers looking to learn more about slavery and early American history.



## Color-Blind Justice

By Mark Elliott

Oxford University Press, \$17.95, 400 pages

Albion W. Tourgée is one of the unsung heroes of the early civil rights movement. Raised by abolitionists in Ohio, served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and even though injured early in the war, returned after he recovered. A lawyer, he was one of the Northern Carpetbaggers that moved to the South after the war, becoming one of the leaders during Reconstruction, serving as a judge in Greensboro, North Carolina. His active stance for equal political and civil rights earned him the enmity of the Ku Klux Klan (and a mention in the Klan propaganda movie *Birth of a Nation*).

His championship of civil rights, and active writing on the subject, brought him his greatest role, and greatest failure, that as lawyer for Homer Plessy. Several prominent black leaders in New Orleans wanted to challenge Louisiana’s law requiring that railway companies had “to provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races, by providing separate coaches or compartments.” Plessy was chosen as a plaintiff, and in Tourgée’s brief, used the term “color blindness” as the standard that the court should use when making decisions regarding “separate but equal” treatment. He lost Plessy, and that loss was particularly devastating to him. He had cautioned the group that an adverse decision could set the civil rights movement back, and he was correct. Following that case, he was appointed U.S. consul to France, where he lived out his remaining days. What he didn’t live to see was that the concept of “color blindness” would be the successful basis for overturning Jim





# Local Calendar

**6** David Vann, *Legend of a Suicide*  
-- 7:30PM

The Avid Reader, 617 Second Street,  
Davis, CA 95616, 530-758-4040  
Author Event

**Mortgage Loan Modification – 2PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Follow Your Heart to Find Your Purpose**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Free Class

**7** Authors Brad McClure and Bob Kahn – 11AM

Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Author Event

**Mortgage Modification – 12PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Enhancing Intimate Relationships in Stressful Times – 2PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Julyah Rowan-Bennett, *Living, Loving, & Losing: A Family Reflection* -- 1PM**  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

**Be My Valentine Kids Party – 2PM**  
All Borders Locations - Kids Event

**Tom Blees, *Prescription for the Planet* -- 7:30PM**  
The Avid Reader, 617 Second Street,  
Davis, CA 95616, 530-758-4040  
Author Event

**Create a Spending Plan – 6PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661, 916-784-1088  
Free Class

**8** Marty Straus, *Tale of the Golden Whale* -- 2PM  
The Avid Reader at the Tower, 1600  
Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95818  
916-441-4400  
Author Event

**Meet the Authors: Dee Brice, Janina Henderson, Cindy Munoz, Karen Sandler – 1PM**  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

**Citrus Heights Area Poets – 2PM**  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

**Self-Employed with H&R Block – 12PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Choice Theory – 2PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Identity Theft – 4PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Beating Depression Naturally – 6PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**9** Smarter Way to Manage Your Taxes – 7PM  
Borders, 2339 Fair Oaks Boulevard,  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
916-984-5900  
Free Class

**12** Author John A. McKinsey will be discussing *The Lincoln Secret* and raising some of the controversies of *Abraham Lincoln’s life*--6:30PM  
Borders, 2765 E Bidwell St  
Folsom, CA, 916-984-5900  
Author Event

**13** Author John A. McKinsey will be discussing *The Lincoln Secret* and raising some of the controversies of *Abraham Lincoln’s life*--6:30PM  
Borders, 500 1st St # 1  
Davis, CA, 530-750-3723  
Author Event

**Mortgage Loan Modification – 2PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**The Mastery of Love – 7PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Open Mic Night – 7PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Music Event

**14** But it Hurts – 2PM  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Citrus Heights Area Poets – 2PM**  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

**A Natural Way to Pain Relief – 4PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Sing Like an Idol – 6PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**KENALclub – 7PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Music Event

**15** But Today’s Housing Market – 2PM  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Don’t Pay More Pay Smarter – 4PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**19** Stephen J Cannell, *On the Grind*-- 7PM  
Barnes & Noble, 1725 Arden Way,  
Sacramento, CA 95815  
916-565-0644  
Author Event

**20** Mortgage Loan Modification – 2PM  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**Follow Your Heart to Find Your Purpose – 7PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Free Class

**West Coast Songwriters – 8PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Music Event

**21** Stephanie Trelogon & Katharine Armstrong, *Mask Parade* -- 11AM  
The Avid Reader, 617 Second Street,  
Davis, CA 95616  
530-758-4040  
Kids Event

**Author John A. McKinsey will be discussing *The Lincoln Secret* and raising some of the controversies of *Abraham Lincoln’s life*--6:30PM**  
Borders, 2030 Douglas Blvd. Suite 9,  
Roseville, CA 95661  
916-784-1088  
Author Event

**Jack Parker, *Patagonian Adventure* -- 1PM**  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

**28** Robyn Carr, *Second Chance Pass* -- 1PM  
Barnes & Noble, 6111 Sunrise Blvd.,  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610  
916-853-1511  
Author Event

# Children's Books

## The One and Only Marigold

By Florence Parry Heide; Jill McElmurry  
Schwartz & Wade Books, \$16.99, 40 pages

*The One and Only Marigold* is a series of connected stories about, of course, Marigold. In the first, Marigold's mother takes her shopping for a new coat that Marigold just doesn't want or need (since her old purple one is her best friend and she very loyal). Her solution to the new coat doesn't make her mother happy, but Marigold gets what she wants. In the next three stories, Marigold and her second best friend (after her purple coat) Maxine, stop being friends, run competing stands—Maxine a lemonade stand, Marigold a Special Surprise Treasure Stand—and make up in a touching way. The illustrations are bright and colorful, the stories well-written and entertaining. There is a high re-readability factor to the book, and the story is broken up for short reading sessions, or one long one.



## Chicken Cheeks

By Michael Ian Black, Illustrations by Kevin Hawkes  
Simon and Schuster, \$15.99, 39 pages

This is a great, funny, lighthearted read for children and parents. If bottoms offend you, don't pick this one up, but those who have a sense of humor, you will definitely enjoy this book. It is written by comedian Michael Ian Black who can often be seen on VH1's "I Love the..." series. It has simple vocabulary and is best for children between the ages of 3 and 5. Books with such easy words are great for in-



roducing your young child to early reading skills. Hawkes does a wonderful job with the illustrations, and even uses his pet guinea pig as a model for one of the rear ends.

Reviewed by Jennifer LeBrun

## Posy

By Linda Newbery; Catherine Rayner  
Atheneum, \$16.99, 32 pages

*Posy* is a book about a kitten. With big illustrations, and earth-toned colors, Posy goes through her day, getting into things and exploring her world. All of her explorations are described in two-word phrases—"Spider catcher" or "Mirror puzzler"—with an illustration to accompany it. The art is loose, and works for smaller children. There really isn't much of a story, reducing the re-readability of the book, and the artwork probably isn't bright enough, or clear enough to attract the eyes of the younger children that don't need a story to follow. This is almost a board book, but produced in a format for older children.



## Sneaky Weasel

By Hannah Shaw  
Alfred A. Knopf, \$15.99, 32 pages

Weasel is very powerful, rich, and sneaky. One day, he decides to throw a party to show off just how important he really is. On the day of the party, much to his surprise, no one shows up. He sets off to personally ask each person why they did not want to come to his party. All explain how he has hurt their feelings or done something really sneaky to them. He was mean to Rabbit at school



and even ruined Rat's science experiment. Weasel quickly realized that his doings were wrong and the words they were all waiting to hear were "I'm sorry." Together with his new friends, he learns it is better to be a friend than to be mean and have no friends. These days there are just too many bullies. It is important to teach our children to be nice to one another and to remember to apologize. Shaw's message is clear and the drawings are clever and imaginative.

Reviewed by Jennifer LeBrun

## The Odd Egg

By Written and Illustrated by Emily Gravett  
Simon and Schuster, \$15.99, 32 pages

Each of the birds has an egg, except for Duck. He finds one of his very own. Even though the other birds make fun of it, he couldn't be more excited. Everyone, including Duck, is surprised to see what's inside that egg. I won't spoil the end of the story so you'll have to pick up this one to find out. The drawings are whimsical and classic and accompany interactive cut pages that are perfect for children. It teaches that no matter what you look like the real thing that makes a family is love.

Reviewed by Jennifer LeBrun

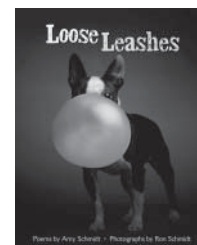


## Loose Leashes

By Amy Schmidt, Photographs by Ron Schmidt  
Random House, \$16.99, 40 pages

*Loose Leashes* is a wonderful book on many levels. Husband and wife team up with vibrant pictures and wonderful poems. I, personally, loved the poem about Splash the pug; being a pug owner myself I've wondered how well of a swimmer he'd really be. This is a timeless book that can be read over and over again. Oftentimes, children get bored midway through a book, but, because each page has its own poem, they can pick and chose which they'd rather read and pick their personal favorites. It would also be a wonderful addition to the classroom, because there are many types of poems included, such as haikus and limericks. It's easy to read and is great for children between the ages of 4 and 8. This is a must-have for dog lovers, parents, teachers, just about everyone!

Reviewed by Jennifer LeBrun



## Amiri & Odette: A Love Story

By Walter Dean Myers; Javaka Steptoe  
Scholastic, \$17.99, 40 pages

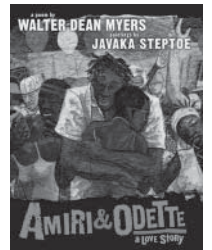
Walter Dean Myers writes urban fiction for young adults, dealing with difficult topics, like drugs, school shootings, gangs, and crime. So, when he writes a children's book dealing with some of those same subjects,

it becomes a challenge to review. *Amiri & Odette* is a retelling of the classic ballet *Swan Lake* set in the inner city projects, illustrated on asphalt, brick, and cinder blocks using paint, collage, and mixed media. Myers adapted the story into poetry, and brings it to an urban setting.

Amiri lives in the Swan Lake Projects, and his mother wants him to find the right girl to settle down with. She throws a party for him to meet several young women, but it is Odette who captures his heart when he sees her on the sidelines of his basketball game. However, Odette is promised to Big Red, the local crack dealer, who has cast a spell over Odette. The story plays out with Amiri being tricked into declaring his love for a woman who looks like Odette, leaving Odette feeling betrayed and abandoned. Amiri tries to rectify the situation, but Big Red forces a showdown.

The issues of drug addiction isn't directly addressed, but more implied. The violence at the end is also more implied than explicit, but both leave room for further discussion. The art is bright and lively, even with the roughness of the surfaces. It comes across more mural than graffiti, and fits the story very well. *Amiri & Odette* is not a book for all families, but taking the classic story behind *Swan Lake* and updating it into an urban setting works.

Reviewed by Ross Rojek



## Always in Trouble

By Corinne Demas; Noah Z. Jones  
Scholastic, \$16.99, 40 pages

Toby the dog is always getting into trouble. He gets into the garbage, he runs in the road, and eats Emma's father's newly baked bread. First Emma tries giving him more attention, but soon Toby is eating crayons and tracking mud across the kitchen floor. So Toby gets sent to obedience school where he behaved so well he got a diploma with a gold seal. And, while Toby could now sit, come and heel, quickly, he was back getting into trouble again. This time, when Emma took Toby back to Ms. Katz's dog training school, Ms. Katz kept him for a week of special training. When Toby came home, he was a mostly changed dog. He took out the garbage, he baked bread, he folded the laundry and washed the kitchen floor. But no dog can be perfect all the time, can they? Find out for yourself on the last page.

## Tommaso and the Missing Line

Con't on next page

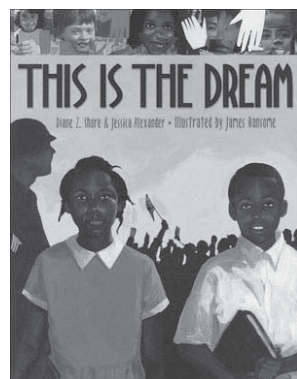


## This is the Dream

By Diane Z. Shore, Jessica Alexander, Illustrated by James Ransome  
Amistad, \$16.99, 40 pages

A wonderfully designed and written children's book to explain the civil rights movement and the issues behind it. That period isn't an easy time to explain, but *This is the Dream* pulls it off. The illustrations are a combination of historical photos collaged with Ransome's illustrations. The text is told in a sing-song way—"These are the buses—a dime buys a ride, but the people are sorted by color inside." The archival photos help provide a sense of the time, particularly the page where slices of angry white faces form a border above the illustration of three African-American children entering a White school under military guard.

*This is the Dream* creates a great starting point for parents and children to discuss the hard issues of racism, bigotry and what happened during the civil rights movement.





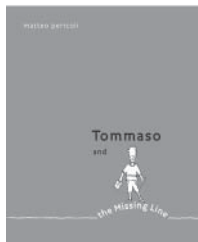
## CHILDREN'S

Con't from previous page

By Matteo Pericoli

Knopf Books for Young Readers, \$15.99, 40 pages

Tommaso had a special picture that he had drawn all by himself. It was a picture of a house on a hill, with a tall tree, some mountains and Tommaso and his Nonna (grandmother). Tommaso carried the drawing with him everywhere, and, one day, he discovered that one of the lines he drew had gone missing from the picture. So, Tommaso goes looking for the line in his Italian city. He finds many other lines, all in a brilliant orange, but none of them are HIS line. The dog's leash, the cat's tail and the car antennae are all lines, but they aren't the line he's looking for. So after getting his hair cut at Luigi's barbershop (and finding many more lines in the hair on the floor), Tommaso decides to take the train to his Nanna's house, and ask her to help him find the missing line. And she does, the line is still where Tommaso remembered it.



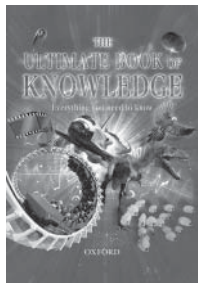
The black-and-white illustrations, combined with the bright orange lines make for a fun book to read, and the emphasis on looking for lines, will help children see that all the things around them can be drawn with simple lines. Expressive and fun.

## The Ultimate Book of Knowledge

By Oxford University Editors

Oxford University Press, \$17.95, 192 pages

Subtitled "Everything You Need to Know," Oxford University's *The Ultimate Book of Knowledge* probably doesn't contain *everything* you need to know as a kid, but it does have a wealth of facts, figures and interesting bits of history, organized in nine sections: Our Bodies, Plants and Animals, The Earth, Planets and Stars, Science and Technology, The Arts, Our Society, History, and Countries. None of the subjects are covered in much depth, but the facts are short, to the point, and the illustrations plentiful and colorful. Often, the subjects chosen for inclusion seem almost random, but they may have been chosen just to keep third or fourth graders interested. For a single volume, this book works as a starting encyclopedia for younger kids, and provides a launching point for further research into areas that they find interesting.



# Popular Fiction

## The Ladies' Lending Library

By Janice Kulyk Keefer

Harper, \$13.94, 368 pages

The year is 1963, and the Ukrainian Canadian women of Kaluna Beach are preparing for their end-of-summer party. The conservative women spend their days managing the summer cottages, watching the children, and sharing "racy" books, slipped from hand to hand, hidden in brown paper dust jackets, and enjoyed when children and husbands are asleep. The readers of this unofficial library share their thoughts about the books and characters Friday nights over gin and tonics, while waiting for their husbands to make the long drive up from the city. This is also the summer of the movie *Cleopatra*, and the headline making affair between stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Books like *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Fanny Hill* and *Valley of the Dolls* all add to the temptations that these first-generation conservative women face when adapting to their new home in Canada. When one of the other women in their summer community begins her own affair, the reality of those temptations comes home to all of them.

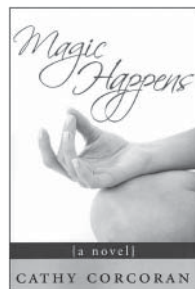
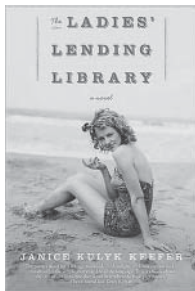
The multitude of different voices helps create the atmosphere, yet becomes distracting at times when it shifts too often. But, beyond that, Keefer has written a compelling tale of immigrant acculturation during a period when society as a whole was undergoing its own seismic shift.

## Magic Happens

By Cathy Corcoran

iUniverse, \$16.95, 227 pages

Kate Driscoll's life is slowly falling apart around her. A recovering alcoholic, she lives in Boston with her husband, Bob, and 5-year-old daughter, Meghan. Everything is going well, until Bob starts a business with a friend who dies before it even gets off the ground, but not before sucking up all of their life savings. Now, as the bills and debts pile up around them, Kate struggles to stay sane and find some simple joy in her life, while trying to raise her daughter and deal with a severely depressed husband. When a friend gives her a membership to the gym, Kate finds everything she was looking for and then some: she soon finds herself falling in love with a female aerobics instructor, whom she begins a long-term affair with. Things spiral out of control until Kate finally realizes that Lou is little more than an obsession of hers, another addiction really; her marriage nearly falls apart,



but she does manage to slowly put things right.

This was definitely a thought-provoking book. I had a hard time identifying with Kate on most levels; I understand stress, and I understand (to a certain degree) money problems, but I don't have an addictive personality and I can't comprehend why she makes some of the decisions she does. Like many books coming out during these difficult times, *Magic Happens* deals with many modern troubles: debt and bankruptcy, personal sexuality, alcoholism, marital problems. Cathy Corcoran deals with all of these issues thoroughly and with a good eye for detail, which made it possible for me to really get into Kate's story, even if I couldn't fully connect with the main character. Corcoran also does an admirable job of writing a first-person perspective; she conveys all the necessary information and you never really feel lost or confused about what's happening. There is a lot of jumping back in time; Kate reminisces about her past, sometimes in the middle of a paragraph, and then jumps right back into the current time without any sort of transition. There are also a lot of fantasies, but those are more easily recognized. Kate is a very well-developed character with a fully-fleshed history, and *Magic Happens* is a good way to spend an afternoon.

Reviewed by Holly Scudero

## College Girl: A Novel

By Patricia Weitz

Riverhead Hardcover, \$24.95, 336 pages

*College Girl* is the story of Natalie Bloom, 20-year-old college senior, recently transferred to University of Connecticut from a smaller, lower-class college. Both her working class background and her innate insecurities leave her feeling out of place, and her virginity makes her an object of mockery for other students in the dorm. Natalie retreats into what protected her in the past—her schoolwork—and apart from some unpleasant fraternity parties she's dragged along to, avoids confronting her problems. Until one night she meets Patrick, a handsome senior, who not only asks her name, but pursues her until Natalie agrees to go out on a date. The first time she and Patrick get too physical for comfort, Natalie breaks it off, but, soon, she and Patrick are back together, meeting at a cemetery during winter break for sex. None of this, nor Patrick's attitude toward Natalie, help her overcome her insecurity, which only reduces her self-esteem.

In many ways, this is probably a fine coming-of-age novel set during the difficult college years. This is when you are supposed to be an adult, able to manage your life, emotions, and relationships. But, it is also a time when you have to learn how to manage through trail and error, and, often, those er-

rors cause great emotional upset along the way. The problem with *College Girl* is both the forced angstiness of Natalie, her self-absorption, and some of the erratic-ness of her depiction. Much of the banter between Natalie and Patrick at the beginning doesn't feel true, when considering Natalie's self-confessed uncomfortableness with men. Many of the characters are two-dimensional at best, and while they are only extras in the life of Natalie, they could have had more development (or been less stereotyped.) All that said, your mileage may vary—*College Girl* may be one of those books that people either love or hate (or more likely just don't feel one way or the other). If you've lived those events and emotions, Weitz may be a voice that works for you.

## What Doesn't Kill You

By Virginia DeBerry; Donna Grant

Touchstone, \$24.95, 304 pages

Tee Hodges has been a successful single mother and the right-hand woman for Olivia Markson at Markson & Daughter, a creams and lotions manufacturer, for 25 years. When Olivia dies, Tee mourns her as a friend, not a boss, but as soon as Tee is preparing for her daughter, Amber's wedding, the "Daughter" of Markson & Daughter, comes back from an extending stay in Europe living the high-life on Olivia's support. Hillary Markson has decided to run the company herself, and doesn't see the need to keep Tee on. So, Tee, unemployed, soldiers on, not telling anyone her situation, as things go from bad to worse (her long-time boyfriend has been deceiving her, money and credit running out, and a highly unfamiliar job market). Tee finds that her best situation is to try and do it again, though this time instead of helping someone else create their dream, she's going to create her own.

Witty commentary from Tee keeps the humor flowing, and the dialog rings true throughout.



## The Letters

By Luanne Rice & Joseph Monninger

Bantam, \$22.00, 208 pages

Drawing a parallel to Nicholas Sparks' *Dear John*, *The Letters* once again takes on the experiment of telling a story through exchanged letters, and, in this particular instance, the correspondence is between the separated parties of a failing marriage. The two go from discussing the finalization of divorce to their innermost feelings about the death of their son and the state of their relationship. Sam, the husband, is trekking through Alaska in search of the crash site-

See **LETTERS**, page 23



# Biographies & Memoirs

## It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time

By Moira Hodgson

Nan A. Talese, \$24.95, 336 pages

*It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time* may seem like the title to a food adventure that went all wrong and ended in being on your knees in front of the porcelain God, and, in some cases, within Hodgson's memoirs, that may very well be true. Telling her story through the lens of taste buds first, everything else second, she still does not neglect the human side of her adventures.

Her ever-intriguing story criss-crosses the globe, and, as such, mixes in plenty of exotic cuisine, which is often ironically first tried by her in regions that it is not native to. Often using food as a starting point for relationships, she quickly bonds with people as they teach her their most intimate recipes. Her style remaining interesting throughout, *It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time* serves up a fresh dish with both new and time-tested flavors.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan



## Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now

By Andre Jordan

Harper Perennial, \$10.00, 224 pages

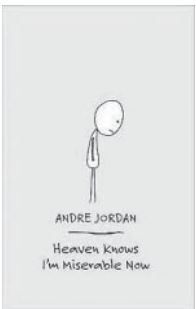
If you are a person who believes the glass to always be half full then *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* is NOT the book for you to read. Andrea Jordan has composed a book of very few negative (but in a funny sort of way) words, witty drawings, and some rather grim thoughts. The book also contains several curse words, so it would not be the book to buy for your child or pastor.

*Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* is a black and white book that, if uninterrupted, an avid reader could read in less than an hour. I did find most

of the book very entertaining, but it takes a certain personality to find the humor in *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now*.

Jordan is an artist, daydreamer, and a writer. He has a regular column on the BBC disability website, Ouch!, and his own blog. Many of his writings and drawings deal with his struggle with depression.

Reviewed by Terri Boggs



## Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea

By Chelsea Handler

Simon Spotlight Entertainment, \$24.95, 264 pages

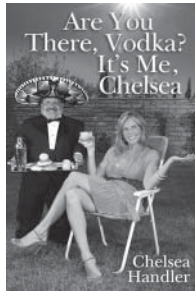
In *Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea*, Chelsea Handler is nothing if not edgy: she uses language that would make a Marine drill sergeant blush; she describes in too-much-information-detail her strip search at the county prison when she is arrested for driving quite a bit under the influence; and she relates her reaction to her first look at the male portion of a porn movie at the tender age of twelve. However, under Ms. Handler's deft comedic touch, subjects that are completely out of bounds in polite conversation become funny enough to make even a Mother Superior snort with laughter into her afternoon Earl Grey.

The book features a series of personal essays about various episodes from Ms. Handler's life, not necessarily in chronological order. One details a brief fling with a red-headed guy whom Ms. Handler mentally christens Big Red. Another relates her misadventures dog-sitting for a friend, while several focus on her colorful family, particularly the enthusiastic Papa Handler. All include more casual sex, bars, midget jokes, and glasses of Ketel One with lemon juice than you can shake a vodka martini at.

Part of the book's charm (if charm is the correct way to describe a tome in which the author's father is affectionately described as "Bitch Tits"), lies in Ms. Handler's ability to constantly startle the reader: one moment, she is describing her love for her sister, Sloane, while lying sobbing in a prison bunk.; the next, she is commenting how her aunt drank through all of her pregnancies. Compared to some of her friends and family members, Ms. Handler seems almost sane; sane, that is, until she spends a chapter going on at length about her obsession with the cuteness of midgets.

Although Ms. Handler's book is undeniably a hoot, readers will inevitably experience a few moments of disillusionment and doubt while reading it: "Is this what humor in the civilized world has sunk to?" they will ask themselves. Jokes about promiscuous sex, drunken midgets, and hanging with Dad in Costa Rica while smoking reefers? Whether *Are You There, Vodka? It's Me, Chelsea* is a masterpiece of modern comedy or just another nail in the coffin of Western Civilization, it certainly is one funny piece of work.

Reviewed by Michelle Kerns



## The Amazing Adventures of Dietgirl

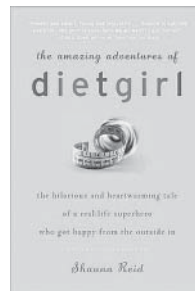
By Shauna Reid

HarperCollins, \$13.99, 416 pages

By the time she was 23 years old, Shauna Reid was a size 26 and miserable. While outside hanging her laundry one day, the size of her undergarments gave her the wakeup call she had been waiting for. Thus began her weight loss adventure, which she chronicled in an online blog. This story is truly heartwarming, with a healthy mixture of honesty, wittiness, and humor. Along the way, you learn how she grew up, found love and learned to accept and love herself, just the way she is—and half the size she used to be.

This is one of the rare weight loss books I would recommend for anyone, whether they are facing their own weight loss challenge or not. The story is as much about personal growth and recovery as it is about losing those unwanted pounds.

Reviewed by Kim Shults



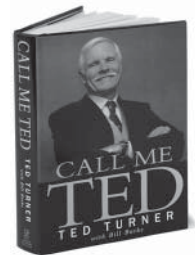
## Call Me Ted

By Ted Turner; Bill Burke

Grand Central Publishing, \$30.00, 448 pages

Ted Turner has been a colorful and decisive figure in American business and pop-culture for many years. He went from a billboard operator after his father's suicide, to global media mogul with TBS, CNN, and, eventually, Time Warner. Under his ownership, the Atlanta Braves won five division championships and one World Series championship, and, as captain, won the America's Cup for yachting. His high-profile marriage to Jane Fonda, and as high-profile eventual divorce also kept him in the public eye. *Call Me Ted* is an interesting mix of personal history, business dealings, triumphs, and disasters. Written mostly first person, *Call Me Ted* is interspersed with "Ted Stories" from many of his intimates (including Fonda, who has some interesting things to say about Ted's inability to have actual emotional intimacy). Ted's (since we can call him that) early life wasn't easy, not making his story so much a rags-to-riches one, but having to overcome an alcoholic and, eventually, suicidal father, the early death of his younger sister, and being sent to a boarding school at the age of four.

There is little sugar coating here, but, then, what billionaire needs to sugar-coat much? No huge secrets, no major personal or business insights, just the story of a defining personality from the last several de-



acades. And, I'm sure he may have a few more things left in his life that we'll be reading about eventually.

## The Black Girl Next Door

By Jennifer Baszile

Touchstone Books, \$25.00, 320 pages

Jennifer Baszile grew up in the Palos Verdes suburb of California in the mid-seventies. Baszile, the first female black history professor at Yale, recounts her and her family's ups and downs during the post-Civil Rights era. They were the first black family to live in their neighborhood, and she and her sister were only black children in her school. There was both overt racism (vandalism done to their house) and subtle (when her teacher agreed with a student that black people had something special in their feet that made them run faster). Baszile's parents wanted her and her sister to excel at life, school, and in the new integrated society they had been promised during the Sixties and Seventies, but also didn't want their girls to integrate "too much." This balance that had to be struck is elegantly told, in and out of school, the neighborhood, and in visits back to family in Detroit and back country Louisiana.

Baszile shares her emotions and reactions in a deeply personal way, and, as a is suitable for a book from a history professor, also documents the changes in society that she lived, taking her from "them" to "us" in 30 years.

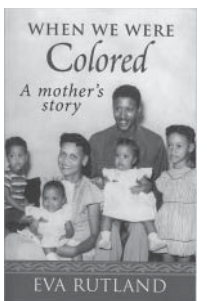
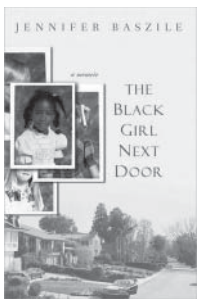
## When We Were Colored

By Eva Rutland

IWP, \$12.95, 168 pages

Local Author - Eva Rutland and her husband Bill, were pioneers in the path to integration. They didn't march on Washington or brave fire houses. What they did do was much harder, and they did it at a time when segregation was both explicit, and unspoken. Depending on where you lived, you knew the role you were to play. Eva and Bill Rutland moved from Atlanta to Tuskegee, and, eventually, to Sacramento, where they raised their children in a middle-class fashion, and challenged those unspoken roles doing so. Eva joined the PTA, became a den mother, and found common ground where ever she could, bridging the racial divide, and, in her life, created part of the atmosphere that would help bring the Civil Rights movement along. She also documented it, not just writing these essays

See **COLORED**, page 20





# R♥mance

## In Love With A Younger Man

By Cheryl Robinson

New American Library, \$14.00, 384 pages

Olena Day is a successful business woman, but finds herself lonely and isolated, with no friends or non-workplace relationships. Deciding to change that, she takes a sabbatical to write a book, meets Matthew Harper, the young finance manager of the BMW dealership where she's buying a new car. Between Matthew (18 years Olena's junior) and Jason Nix, a pro football player she meet on a business trip, Olena finds herself competed over for the first time in many years. But, Olena learned in college the hard way that men leave, so just how far into a relationship will she allow herself to go?

While part of the Romance sub-genre of African American characters, *In Love with A Younger Man* is highly accessible to women of all ethnic backgrounds. Robinson writes with passion and insight, and doesn't take any shortcuts with the story. Readers of contemporary romances should enjoy the book, and probably find a new author to follow.



## Shattered

By JoAnn Ross

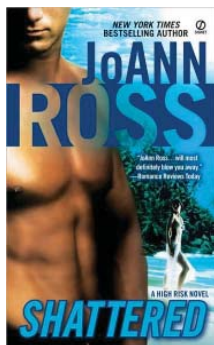
Signet, \$7.99, 385 pages

JoAnn Ross brings us a very fast-paced novel set primarily in Iraq and other war-torn parts of the world. *Shattered* brings to light some of the less-known aspects of war and how it affects our soldiers and their families.

*Shattered* is a novel full of military words and terminology. There are many acronyms in *Shattered*. Ross tells of the adventures that happen to a military doctor while she is in the service and after she has become a civilian and a relief doctor for the refugees of Iraq. Dr. Kirby met the love of her life with "flyboy" Shane Garret enters her hospital to have shrapnel removed from his bottom side. There are many sexual references in the book and there are more than a few curse words.

The story happens within a very short time period and I had to double-check a few times to make sure I was correctly following the plotline.

Reviewed by Terri Boggs

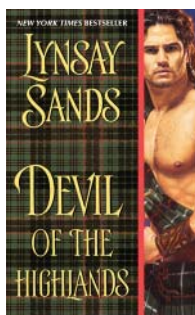


## Devil of the Highlands

By Lynsay Sands

Avon, \$7.99, 384 pages

Sands goes from her recent *Argeneau Vampire* back to the thirteenth century, with a straight historical romance set in Scotland. Evelinde d' Aumesbery is finally going to escape her controlling stepmother, by getting married. But as in all things involving her stepmother, it's going to be complicated. She's been promised to Cullen, Laird of Donnachaidh, known to all as the Devil of



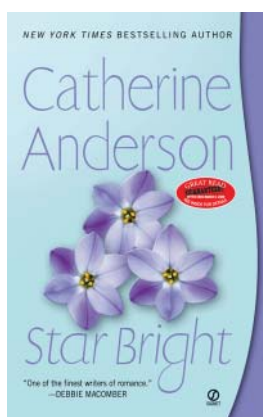
## Star Bright

By Cathrine Anderson

Signet, \$7.99, 432 pages

When Rainie Hall decides to leave her abusive husband, she takes heed that his two previous wives died under mysterious circumstances, and decides to fake her own death, hoping he'll believe she's dead, and settle for her money. She changes her name and moves to Crystal Falls, Oregon, and finds a job working as a bookkeeper for Parker Harrigan on his horse ranch. Rainie and Parker feel an attraction to each other, but when Parker finds that her job application has been falsified, Rainie prepares to run again. Parker convinces her to stay, and eventually Rainie's husband Peter, discovers she's still alive and comes for her. Parker and Rainie have to find a way to keep her safe, and prove that Peter is the murderer they suspect.

Overall, a fairly trite story. The romance is lacking, the tension so-so, but the story really falls down in the realism. Neither Parker, nor the FBI, act like they actually are worried about Rainie, or respond in a natural manner. The storyline has also been mined pretty heavily, (abused woman finds safety and love in handsome rescuer, abuser gets his comeuppance), and Anderson doesn't add much to it. If you are simply willing to suspend disbelief, then maybe you could enjoy the story, but it just doesn't ring true.



Donnachaidh, one of the most deadly and dangerous men in Scotland. Cullen doesn't care who he marries, just as long as she can bear him sons for the future of his clan, and obey his commands without question.

When Evelinde discovers that the stranger she had a brief tete-a-tete with in the forest was Cullen and that he doesn't seem to be the Devil everyone else sees. So as Evelinde begins to dig into Cullen's past and becomes attracted to him, Cullen starts to find that just maybe a wife could be more than just a mother to his sons. Sands does a great job with the interactions between not only Evelinde and Cullen, but the many other characters around them. Cullen and Evelinde's relationship develops in a natural way, and keeps the story flowing around it. Recommended, not only to her *Argeneau Vampire* fans, but those of historical romance with no supernatural beasts whatsoever.

## So Enchanting

By Connie Brockway

Onyx, \$7.99, 432 pages

Francesca Walcott is the guardian to Amelie Chase, a young woman accused of witchcraft and banished from her town. Francesca, herself, knows banishment, having left London High Society years earlier under a cloud of suspicion of her own skills as a medium. When Fanny's accuser, Lord Grayson Sheffield, arrives at the little Scottish hamlet of Little Firkin to investigate the witchcraft claims of Amelie, he is surprised to find Fanny, now all grown up and ready to challenge his old assumptions about her. Add in anonymous threatening notes to Amelie, and Amelie's desire to be anywhere but Little Firkin, and things begin to really heat up. This is not a paranormal romance, but a historical one, with some trappings of the supernatural. The period setting is well handled, and the romance interesting to watch develop. Definitely one for romance fans of English/Scots historical settings.

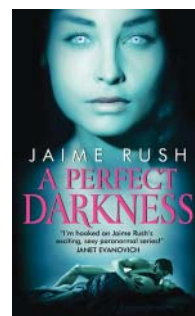


## A Perfect Darkness

By Jaime Rush

Avon, \$6.99, 384 pages

When a stranger breaks into Amy Shane's apartment, with a story about how she is part of a special group called the Outsiders, and that her father's suicide many years earlier, was part of a pattern that all the Outsiders had experienced, she doesn't quite know what to do. When government agents also break in, shoot Lucas



and remove the body, Amy finds that her world has changed irrevocably. She and the other Outsiders have to use their powers to protect themselves and each other, as they try and discover the source of the power and its connection to Fort Meade where they all were born and lost a parent to "suicide." Through it all, Amy and Lucas find their relationship growing closer, and his ability to enter dreams make the passion grow stronger. Paranormal fantasy that doesn't involve vampires, werewolves or magic. It does however include a lot of government conspiracy, psychic powers and a lot of tension. Book one in an ongoing series.

## The Magic Knot

By Helen Scott Taylor

Love Spell, \$6.99, 320 pages

An enchanting romance set in modern Cornwall and Ireland, but with the Irish mythology live and well. Rosenwyn Tremain has always had the Sight, used through her tarot cards, and when Irishman Niall O'Connor comes up as both Justice and Betrayal, she knows something must be wrong. But she's not about to let him interfere with her search for her missing father, especially now that she doesn't know what to make of the reading. Niall knows she could be dangerous, but if her power was properly channeled, she could save not only her family but Niall's family as well. And, when Rose touches the three linked stones of Niall's Magic Knot, she binds them together, against her evil father and a fairy queen out for revenge.

The winner of the American Title romance contest ran with *Romantic Times Magazine* and *Dorchester Publishing*. This is Taylor's first book, she blends romance with the English and Irish countryside and the many legends that surround them. Cullen's past and becomes attracted to him, Cullen starts to find that just maybe a wife could be more than just a mother to his sons. Sands does a great job with the interactions between not only Evelinde and Cullen, but the many other characters around them.



## The Courtesan's Wager

By Claudia Dain

Berkley Sensation, \$15.00, 358 pages

Lady Amelia is the daughter of a duke, and, when her brother inherits, the sister of a duke. She'd decided at an early age, that she would marry a duke, but time was starting to run out. And none of the dukes that she'd met so far seemed interested in her. And that just wasn't to be. So Amelia finds

See **WAGER**, page 22



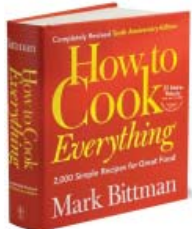
# Cooking, Food & Wine

## How to Cook Everything: 2,000 Simple Recipes for Great Food (Completely Revised 10th Anniversary Edition)

By Mark Bittman

Wiley, \$35.00, 1,056 pages

Often times, “completely revised” and “anniversary editions” don’t live up to the billing. The original *How to Cook Everything*, is my “go-to” cookbook whenever I need to learn about a technique or food I’m cooking with for the first time. It was with trepidation that I opened the completely revised 10th anniversary edition. Would it live up to the hype? Could it possibly be better than the original? Happily, the answer was yes and yes! Reflecting the changing food and cooking industries, many of the recipes are new, yet stick to Bittman’s principles of simple, fresh food. Icons label the recipes as fast, make-ahead, and vegetarian; charts and lists enhance each section. The organization is superior, making it easy to find everything. With essential recipes and variations on just about everything, plus an encyclopedia of techniques and information, in addition to accessible, easy-to-use organization, this is the one cookbook that should be on everyone’s shelf.



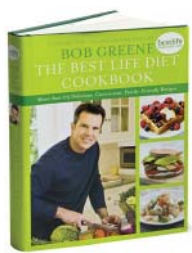
Reviewed by Jamie Engle

## The Best Life Diet Cookbook: More Than 175 Delicious, Convenient, Family-Friendly Recipes

By Bob Greene

Simon & Schuster, \$25.00, 368 pages

Buffalo with Blackberries, anyone? Quinoa Granola? How about Salad of Riesling-Poached Tokyo Turnips with Brussels Sprouts, Pickled French Laundry Garden Onion, and Toasted Mustard Seed Emulsion? Bob Greene’s *The Best Life Diet Cookbook*, designed to be used in tandem with his wildly popular *The Best Life Diet* has the best and healthiest of intentions, but isn’t a terribly great resource for anyone short on time or money or with a family of potentially picky little ones—in other words, a good portion of the population.



Greene’s philosophy of cooking and eating is a solid one; he firmly believes that “eating is meant to be one of life’s great pleasures,” and that “many of us have lost that special connection with the experience of eating...” The purpose of *The Best Life Diet Cookbook* is to help readers “reclaim the experience of eating as a celebration by sitting down to enjoy these high-quality, delicious dishes without overdoing it.” So far, so good.

The recipes, however, split into ten different categories that include Breakfast, Entrees, Side Dishes, and Desserts, overwhelmingly seem geared towards the young, the hip, and the unencumbered, not the average workaday American with 2.5 kids. While there may be a silent majority of working families who are beside themselves with joy to come home from a hard day at work to partake of Tofu Mushroom Scramble on a Whole Wheat Tortilla or Baked Eggplant with Ground Beef, they certainly keep themselves well hidden. And, even if Duck with Plums or Broiled Mahimahi with Grapes and Leeks seems like a winner, the price of the ingredients can often prove prohibitive in these days of the not-so-great economy.

Greene does acknowledge that different Best Life Dieters have different needs, and two of the three two-week full meal plans he includes in the back of the book, the Quick and Easy Meal Plan and the Family-Friendly Plan (the third is the Kitchen Connoisseur plan), are geared for the busy and the child-overwhelmed. The Family-Friendly Plan incorporates favorites like Sloppy Joes and Shepherd’s Pie, but leaves the reader wondering why a person would purchase a book containing chiefly recipes of the Cauliflower Curry with Red Lentils variety if they are planning on cooking the Chicken Noodle soup.

That said, there is no doubt that Greene’s recipes are nutritious, low-calorie, palate-expanding, and a real find for devoted food enthusiasts looking to expand their kitchen repertoire.

Reviewed by Michelle Kerns

## Rachael Ray’s Big Orange Book: Her Biggest Ever Collection of All-New 30-Minute Meals Plus Kosher Meals, Meals for One, Veggie Dinners, Holiday Favorites, and Much More!

By Rachael Ray

Clarkson Potter, \$24.95, 360 pages

For many cooks, Rachael Ray’s books are the best thing since sliced polenta, and no wonder—each addition to her ever-burgeoning collection of cooking tomes is packed with creative recipes that are famously easy on preparation and cooking time, as well as being not too bad on the tongue either. *The Big Orange Book* is no exception.

While it may seem that Ms. Ray has already explored every possible food combination in every possible configuration, the fresh offerings in this full-color, glossy-paged enthusiastic book (her largest recipe collection yet), show she’s only just hitting her stride.

Divided into nine specific categories, from the ubiquitous 30-Minute Meals to new additions to the Ray canon, such as Kosher Meals and Meals for One, each offers a plethora of ways to turn everything from



chickpeas to bratwurst to Asiago cheese into a quick and tasty meal.

Ms. Ray’s willingness to use ordinarily taboo fun foods (Bacon! Hamburgers!) alongside more exotic ingredients (hummus, couscous) make the combinations as refreshing as her chatty writing. While the book includes familiar sections for burgers, sandwiches (“sammies” in Rachael-speak), and soups, don’t expect to find familiar recipes here: in fact, if you’re looking for a basic, traditional cookbook, this is not the collection for you. However, if the thought of Eggplant Stew with Honey and Golden Raisin Polenta or Spanish Chorizo & Chicken Chili inspires you to reach for a frying pan and the E.V.O.O., *The Big Orange Book* will be a delicious revelation. For the adventurous cook, it achieves the greatest heights a recipe collection can aspire to – it makes eating out seem positively second-rate by comparison. Yum-o, indeed.

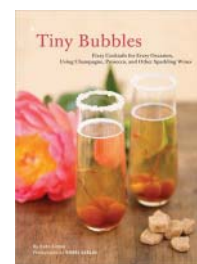
Reviewed by Michelle Kerns

## Tiny Bubbles

By Kate Simon

Chronicle Books, \$14.95, 103 pages

You can almost hear the bubbles popping as you turn the pages of *Tiny Bubbles*. This book is a must-have for those who like fizzy cocktails using Champagne, Prosecco, and other sparkling wines. You’ll find recipes for classic drinks, such as Bellini (a lovely blend of white peaches and Prosecco) and Mimosa (the perennial favorite served at Sunday brunch everywhere—champagne and orange juice). The New Classics section has recipes for previously unheard of drinks, such as South



Side Fizz and Dining Car, and many others—all made with interesting ingredients and a bit of the bubbly. There is even a section on bubbly bites—appetizers especially suited to sparkling drinks, such as Champagne Wild Mushrooms on Mini Crepes and Easy Champagne Chocolate Truffles. You will want to use these recipes when you are celebrating anything or nothing or any time you want to serve something a little different from the standard cocktail or glass of wine. Cheers!

Reviewed by Sharon LeBrun

## Fresh from the Farmers’ Market: Year-round Recipes for the Pick of the Crop

By Janet Fletcher, Photographs by Victoria Pearson

Chronicle Books, \$19.95, 208 pages

When *Fresh from the Farmers’ Market* was first issued, it was a 1998 IACP Award nominee. Now, with a renewed interest (and viable trend) in eating locally grown foods and eating fresh, unprocessed foods, this is timely 2008 reissue. Organized by season, Fletcher offers a bit of background and tips on how to choose quality pieces and how to store popular vegetables and fruits, followed by recipes. Recipes aren’t limited to sides; appetizers, soups, salads, pasta dishes—main courses and desserts are all covered. With a slight nod to Italian and Mediterranean regions, Fletcher doesn’t limit herself to lean choices or quick-to-fix dishes. Instead, she focuses on bringing out the full flavors of farmers’ market shopping treasures: fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs. Pearson’s mouth-watering



See **FRESH**, page18

## The Sweeter Side of Amy’s Bread

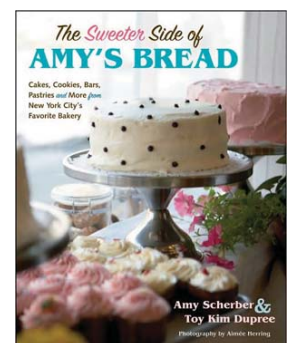
By Amy Scherber & Toy Kim Dupree

Wiley, \$34.95, 272 pages

One of the most important things that attracts me to a cookbook is actually seeing what the food should look like once I’ve made the recipe. *The Sweeter Side of Amy’s Bread* certainly delivers that, with some gorgeous and uniquely shot photographs of yummy breads, muffins, quiches, scones, and cakes. While the recipes are not extraordinary, but, rather, more like what mom would make, it’s nice to have them all at your fingertips. The beginning of each chapter offers a story on where those recipes originated and how they came to find a home in this famous bakery in New York City, with Tips & Techniques throughout the book—not only for the collective recipes in that section, but also for the individual recipes.

Running this newspaper publication leaves me very little time to cook. I also see countless cookbooks cross my desk—a good number of which I pass on for keeping in my personal collection. It’s not often that I’ll grab a cookbook as it’s being checked into our database and immediately flag recipes I want to try. This was one of those rare books that kept for myself and have enjoyed sampling what it has to offer. A must-have for basic breads and cakes.

Reviewed by Heidi Komlofske





# I can **FEEL** your heart- **BEAT ...**

By Jamie Engle

**I**t's February and love is all around us. You can barely walk into a store or hear a commercial that isn't somehow tying into Valentine's Day. Or, if it's not about Valentine's Day, it's all doom and gloom about how tough the economy is and how much tougher things are going to get.

You can think of only one word: escape.

History shows people escape stress and strife by escaping to another world, if for only a couple of hours. Movies and books are the otherworlds of choice. With \$1.375 billion in sales in 2007 and more than 60 million readers, romance novels have the largest share of the consumer-book market. It's no surprise to area romance authors that people take a break from their worries with a good romance novel.

"Romance novels remind us that, with love, commitment, and family, we can and will survive



*New York Times bestselling romance novelist, Susan Mallery*



*Sacramento-area resident and New York Times bestselling author, Brenda Novak*

anything life has to throw at us," said Sacramento-area resident and *New York Times* bestselling author Allison Brennan. "Love is timeless, and believing in love and being in love make the difficulties that come our way bearable. Sharing pain, as well as happiness with someone who loves us unconditionally, is satisfying and uplifting."

"There's no better escape than a romance novel because they're not only fun, they're uplifting," adds Brenda Novak, also a Sacramento resident and *New York Times* bestselling author. "You're always guaranteed a happy ending."

Compared to 18 years or so ago, when they were known as "bodice rippers," romance novels have undergone a tremendous makeover.

"The heroes and heroines in romance novels reflect the change in sensibilities and expectations we've undergone as a society," Novak said. "Gone is the weak heroine who felt she needed a man to take care of her. Today's heroine is strong, smart, and independent. She doesn't need a man—but she might want one. More than ever, these novels portray two people coming together as equals. In many 'old school' romances, there were scenes where the hero made love in a very forceful way—too close to rape for the modern reader. You don't see scenes like that these days."

"Today's romance heroine is empowered," said Susan Mallery, *New York Times* bestselling romance novelist. "The women are smart, funny and articu-



*Sacramento-area resident and New York Times bestselling author, Allison Brennan*

late as friends and as heroines. They stand up for themselves. Another goal, besides a man, is driving the story. Women have become a lot stronger mentally and physically."

Sacramento romance novelist Eileen Rendahl (also writing as Eileen Carr) said changes in romance novels reflect the changes in society.

"Romance novelists are constantly reinventing themselves and their books," Rendahl said. "I think we reflect the society around us and for our books to maintain relevance, we have to change with the times."

Today's romance novel is much more diverse, both in character types and types of stories.

"When some people think of romance, they only look at the most tantalizing and scandalous covers - the so-called 'bodice rippers,' where the hero and heroine are put into a provocative pose. They don't realize—because they don't read them—that romance is truly a broad and diverse genre with smart heroines, often to romance that most people don't realize: romantic suspense, urban fantasy, historical romance, paranormal romance, inspirational, and erotic are just a few. There are so many options and there is something for every reader who believes

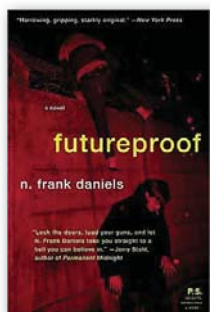


*Romance novelist and president of the Romance Writers of America, Diane Pershing*

See **Heartbeat**, page 22

## February Staff Favorites

Recommendations from our book reviewers.

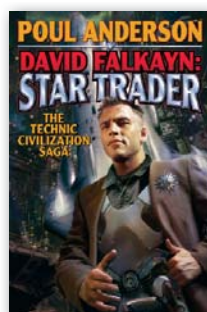


**Futureproof**  
*N. Frank Daniels*

"Gritty, modern, and hip masterpiece that will appeal to the disaffected youth of America, as well as those curious about the dark and seedy underbelly of the urban core, but afraid to venture there."

Harper Perennial

Reviewed on pg 5

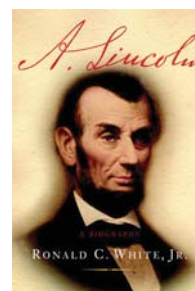


**David Falkayn: Star Trader**  
*Poul Anderson*

"The stories are full of witty characters and exciting adventure that makes the reader nostalgic for the so called 'Golden Age' of SF."

Baen

Reviewed on pg 29

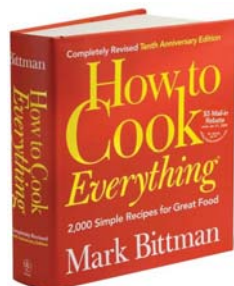


**A. Lincoln: A Biography**  
*Ronald C. White Jr.*

"...should be on the short-list for anyone interested in spending some quality time reading the latest, and probably best new biography in the last decade or so."

Random House

Reviewed on pg 19



**How to Cook Everything**  
*Mark Bittman*

"With essential recipes and variations on just about everything, plus an encyclopedia of techniques and information, accessible, easy-to-use organization, this is the one cookbook that should be on everyone's shelf."

Wiley

Reviewed on pg 16



**The Ingmar Bergman Archives**  
*Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius*

"There have been plenty of books on Bergman, but none that have had this scope. And, most likely none that will ever come close."

Taschen

Reviewed on pg 22



**The 100 Best Business Books of All Time**  
*Jack Covert and Todd Sattersten*

"Before you buy another business book, take a look at Mr. Covert and Mr. Sattersten's recommendations; you won't be sorry."

Portfolio Hardcover

Reviewed on pg 8

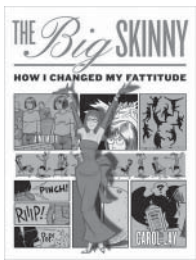
# Sequential Art

## The Big Skinny

By Carol Lay

Villard, \$18.00, 208 pages

Lay has been a cartoonist for almost 30 years, doing work for such varied outlets as *DC Comics*, *Mad Magazine*, *Weirdo*, *The New Yorker*, her own self-published comics (*Good Girls*), and her ongoing weekly strip, *Way Lay*. So it is probably only natural that she would document her successful weight-loss journey in comic form. *The Big Skinny* is both an autobiographical account of her weight-loss and a pictorial guide to eating right, portion sizes, exercise, and even plenty of recipes and food tips. Lay is in the “eat fewer calories, better choices, get exercise” dieting camp, and none of her suggestions fall into the realm of fad diets or unhealthy short-term changes in food intake. While *The Big Skinny* straddles the odd line between autobiographical comics and dieting advice, it does both well, and in highly entertaining ways. And, by sharing her experiences on a deeply personal level, and using illustration to do that works better in many ways than just prose, Lay not only gives good advice on losing weight, but



also on how to change bad habits that bring it back, deal with poor self image, unhelpful friends and co-workers and more.

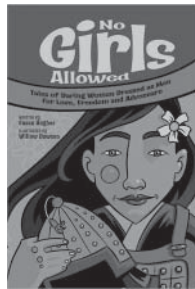
## No Girls Allowed

By Susan Hughes; Illustrated by Willow Dawson

Kids Can Press

\$16.95/\$8.95, 80 pages

Women have often been restricted in the roles their society or culture allowed them. But some women have challenged those restrictions, even at the risk of their lives or reputations. *No Girls Allowed* is the stories of seven such women, collected from legends, poems, and in some cases, first-hand accounts. Told in sequential art format, these stories include Hatshepsut, the first female pharaoh, Mu Lan, the Chinese daughter that took her father's place in the army, and Alfchild, a Scandinavian princess that became a Viking raider. Each of the stories shows that girls and women could follow their dreams and do those things that were “men only,” and be successful at them.

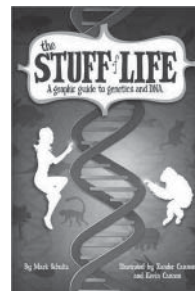


## The Stuff of Life

By Mark Schultz; Illustrated by Zander Cannon; Kevin Cannon

Hill and Wang, \$30.00/\$14.95, 160 pages

Explaining the basics of genetics isn't an easy task. But, when you add clear illustrations and an interesting story, it becomes easier. And, when those illustrations are sequential art, moving from one concept to the next, not only does it become easier, but it also becomes more popular. Using comics to explain tasks or subjects isn't new, and *The Stuff of Life* should probably be less celebrated for being a non-fiction graphic novel, and more for being an easy to read and understand explanation of just how genetics and DNA work that happens to use comics to do it. The premise is an alien named Bloort sort of an intelligent sea cucumber is having to explain to his ruler just how Earthly genetics works, and how by including it in their makeup, it could help save their race from a genetic catastrophe. From just how cells work, the discovery of DNA (including credit to Rosalind Franklin who was instrumental in the discovery, but uncredited for



many years) and the Human Genome Project to the social controversies of cloning, politicization of science, and how genetics explain human origins and migration, *The Stuff of Life* is an informationally dense, mostly easily digested guide to everything that makes up life on earth.

The two caveats on this book are that younger readers may need some supplemental assistance understanding some concepts (comics aren't always for kids) and that there seems to be a potential misprinting with one page being printed twice (thus, one page is missing.) Regardless, *Stuff* is an excellent book on genetics that should be in classrooms and on the shelves of interested readers.

## Rasl Volume 1: The Drift

By Jeff Smith

Cartoon Books, \$13, 112 pages

Writer and artist Jeff Smith, of *Bone* fame, returns with an original concept in *Rasl*. In *The Drift*, *Rasl* is a classic young tough guy who's been messing around with magnets and magnetic fields and has in-



See **RASL**, page 24

## MYSTERY

*Revenge*, con't from page 6

However, *An Incomplete Revenge* manages to be emotional without being dramatic, moral without being preachy, and true to the minute details of its time period without being kitschy. Winspear's writing, which does not indulge in wordy, emotional flights of fancy despite her sober material, and her deft handling of symbolism—especially fire as a symbol of both death and rebirth—is excellent. The characters develop and the plot crescendos to a twisting and satisfying finish. For lovers of thought-provoking, ethically challenging mysteries, the Maisie Dobbs series is definitely one to watch.

Reviewed by Michelle Kerns

## The Mystic Arts of Erasing All Signs of Death

By Charlie Huston

Ballantine Books, \$25.00, 336 pages

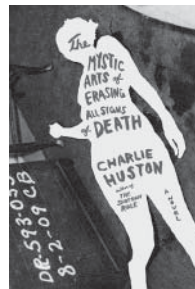
Webster Fillmore Goodhue, aka Web, is finally forced by his long suffering roommate to get a job. Web, still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, finds that crime scene clean up is a relaxing way to put his own problems in perspective. After cleaning up a suicide, Web is approached by the dead man's daughter about cleaning up a mess her brother made in a hotel room, on the QT. What sort of a mess? The kind Web knows how to clean up. From there, in typical Huston fashion, Web's life goes further to hell,

yet he manages through it. Even if he does piss his pants.

This may be the most over-the-top novel from Huston; foul language, graphic descriptions of violence and its after-effects. The dialog sparkles throughout the book, once again showing Huston has an ear for how people really talk. All that said, this in one of the most violent, graphic, and profane books from a major publisher in quite some time. The crime scene descriptions are so graphic and “realistic” that your stomach almost turns in sympathy with Web. One begins to wonder if Huston did ride-alongs with some crime scene clean-up crews just to get a feel for the business. Recommended, but with the proviso that this isn't for the weak of stomach or the easily offended.

Also recently released from Ballantine is Houston's *The Shotgun Rule* now in a trade paperback release.

The story of four friends who stumble into a meth lab, and take some for easy money. Mayhem ensues.



## COOKING

*Fresh*, con't from page 16

food photography makes you hungry just browsing through the book. *Fresh from the Farmer's Market* inspires cooks to grab their stack of reusable bags and hit the farmers' market—or, if the market is closed for the winter, at least the closet produce section.

Reviewed by Jamie Engle

## Cooking for Two

By Jessica Strand

Chronicle Books, \$19.95, 120 pages

Just in time for the Valentine's weekend, comes *Cooking for Two*, a recipe book designed for just two diners. When many cookbooks make the assumption that there are four adults eating, here you have recipes just for two. And, you don't need to have a romantic meal in order to benefit. There are almost 50 recipes, from One-Pot Dinners (Lasagna for Two with Spinach, Ricotta, and Wild Mushrooms), Simple, Fast, Easy Suppers (Pan-Seared, Herb-Rubbed Pork Chops), Romantic Meals (Cornish Game Hens) and Duo Desserts (Phyllo Nests).

Easy-to-follow instructions and tasty, healthy meals that can easily benefit any couple, pre-nest, empty nest, or romantic send-the-children-to-grandparents nest.



## Potluck Survival Guide: Care and Feeding of the Athletic Supporter

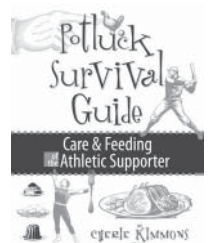
By Cherle Kimmons

Five Star Publications, Inc., \$24.95, 202 pages

*Potluck Survival Guide: Care and Feeding of the Athletic Supporter* is a good cookbook for beginning cooks, but most experienced cooks already have many of these recipes in their repertoire. You'll find potluck classics like Texas Sheet Cake, Hash Brown Casserole, and Layered Mexican Dip—and some interesting and not-so-classical dishes, like Easy Italian Spinach, King Ranch Casserole, and Mediterranean Couscous Salad. Like many books of this kind, this book is a collection of recipes from many different contributors. The author includes her own personal notes for most of the recipes, many of which include hot peppers or roasted nuts. The author includes several sections on feeding athletes, before and after the game, as well as decorating ideas for team events.

The best thing about this book is that it brings together, in one place, the classic potluck recipes for which most of us have to dig around in our cook books/recipes boxes. A nice book to have, but not one I would rush out to buy.

Reviewed by Sharon LeBrun





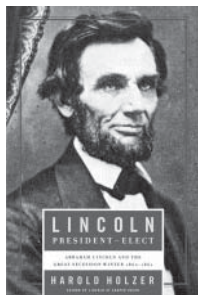
# Abraham Lincoln

## Lincoln President-Elect

By Harold Holzer

Simon & Schuster, \$30.00, 640 pages

As the ongoing comparisons between Barack Obama and Abraham Lincoln continue, and as we watched Obama prepare to take office after the election, along comes a book about that same time period for Lincoln. Holzer has already written or co-authored 30 books on Lincoln, so you might just wonder what possibly could be left to analyze. Here in *Lincoln President-Elect*, he goes through in painstaking detail, the four months between Lincoln's election, and his taking of office. It is during this time that seven states seceded from the Union, in part to Lincoln's hard stance on slavery and state's rights.



The book is broken into two major parts, first "The Promise of Something Better" (another odd parallel), dealing with the multitude of social and political problems Lincoln was facing, both problems left to him from the Buchanan administration and upcoming ones due to his election. It was during this time that Lincoln began to select his cabinet and deal with the multitudes of people clamoring for a job in the new administration (the patronage system was still in full swing) who made the visit to his home in Springfield. He also began working on his inauguration speech (at one point the original was lost by his son Robert) and preparing for the trip to Washington DC.

The second part is "The Momentous Issue of Civil War." Some scholars have described Lincoln as ill-prepared for the position and focused on his apparent inactivity. Holzer upends that depiction, and, using hundreds of references, show that Lincoln put his efforts into private letters and conversations with key players, instead of addressing the issues in public speeches. However, during Lincoln's railway trip from Illinois to Washington DC, he made about 100 speeches, reintroducing himself to the public. This trip is recounted in exquisite detail, sometimes perhaps too much. But Holzer has writing style that doesn't bore, and *Lincoln President-Elect* flows along almost conversationally.

The book itself, for only being about four months, is pretty massive. There are almost four pages of text for each day during that period, and the notes are just over 100 pages themselves (not counting a 30-page index.) This is not said to dissuade anyone for picking it up, but to emphasize the amount of detail, research, and commitment that went into this volume. The winter of 1860 to 1861 was one of the most crucial periods in American history, and the transition of power that took place may be the most well-planned and under-appreciated transition thus far. Until now. Holzer casts that winter

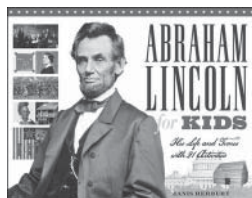
in new light, showing Lincoln as a masterful planner, excellent politician, and soon-to-be great president.

## Abraham Lincoln for Kids

By Janis Herbert

Chicago Review Press, \$16.95, 160 pages

*Abraham Lincoln for Kids* provides a great overview of Lincoln's life and times in an accessible format for younger readers. With the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth this year, and all of the comparisons between Lincoln and Obama, this may be a good book to have around to explain some of the questions your children may have. In addition to the history, the book also has 21 activities, from making a top hat to holding a debate. The book deals with many of the difficult and adult issues surrounding Lincoln and his times, from the Civil War to his suspension of habeas corpus in a clear explainable fashion. There are plenty of illustrations, though they are all in black-and-white, and Herbert's writing is well suited for explaining history through a modern lens. She has written a number of other books in this activity series, including ones on the American Revolution, Leonardo da Vinci and Marco Polo.



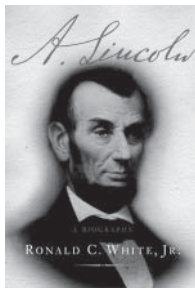
## A. Lincoln: A Biography

By Ronald C. White Jr.

Random House, \$35.00, 816 pages

Lincoln the President continues to fascinate people, and 2009 being the bicentennial of his birth, will just increase the number of books and TV shows about him, his life and his presidency. The trick will be picking and choosing which book to read, and which to skip. For avid readers of Lincolnia, it will be finding books with new information, insights and conclusions. *A. Lincoln: A Biography* should be on the short-list for anyone interested in spending some quality time, (and, at 800 pages, a commitment of a long weekend), reading the latest, and probably best new biography in the last decade or so. White has used the recently completed Lincoln Legal Papers, along with newly discovered letters and photographs, to give a comprehensive overview of a country lawyer who made connections throughout his career that eventually made him a pivotal player in the newly reformed Republican Party (and almost made him the Vice-Presidential in 1856.)

Lincoln often wrote down ideas and thoughts on scraps of paper and filed them in his top hat, or in the bottom drawer of his desk. The surviving notes work almost as a



## Looking for Lincoln

By Philip B. Kunhardt III; Peter W.

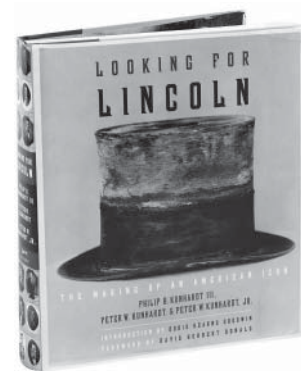
Kunhardt; Peter W. Kunhardt Jr.

Knopf, \$50.00, 512 pages

The Kunhardt's are a family of Lincoln scholars and collectors for five generations so far. Two of them collaborated on the previous *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography* published in 1999. That book, and this one, *Looking for Lincoln* access the Meserve-Kunhardt clan's vast collection of Lincoln photographs, and some truly excellent research, to provide pictures of the 16th President that have rarely, if ever, been seen by anyone other than scholars. *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography* was as it says, a biography of Lincoln, ending with his death in 1865. *Looking for Lincoln* starts at his death, and goes forward, documenting the ways that people came to terms with his death, the many ways his image and aura were used to sell products, ideas and bonds over the next 60 years until the dedication of his memorial in Washington DC (including both sides of the Prohibition movement, trying to use Lincoln as a standard bearer for their view).

*Looking* is organized year by year, and, at times, day by day, using newspaper articles, letters, personal reminiscences from Lincoln's friends (and even his enemies), to illustrate how people saw Lincoln in the short times after his death, and then, as time past, through the backward view of history. The shift in thinking brought Lincoln as the great leader that saved the Union, and the Emancipation Proclamation was downplayed. At his memorial dedication in 1922, even though they did allow African-Americans to join in, they were isolated into a "colored" section apart from the white participants. Which makes the re-dedication of the Lincoln Memorial this year all the more poignant with President Obama in office.

*Looking* is a companion book to the PBS show of the same name broadcasting February 11, 2009. With more than 900 photographs, 500 pages, and an amazing amount of original material, *Looking* provides a different aspect to Lincoln's legend. You can watch it develop, evolve and be fought over. Recommended not as a biography, but as a supplement to any major Lincoln biography you may happen to have.



journal (an argument that White makes) and give another view into Lincoln's thoughts, apart from the public speeches and private letters. White also delves into Lincoln's family, particularly Lincoln's complex relationship with his father, and his step-mother Sarah Bush Lincoln, who encouraged him to continue his education however he could. The book is broken up into the years leading up to the Presidency, and Lincoln's time in office. There are a number of pictures, maps and editorial cartoon reprinted among the pages, and not in a series of plates, that adds to the layout and narrative. White's writing style is approachable and easy to read, particularly helpful when the book itself is as long as this one. While there will be other Lincoln biographies released this year, *A. Lincoln* is likely to be a standard for the next several years.

## The Lincoln Secret

By John A. McKinsey

Martin Pearl Publishing, \$13.99, 469 pages

*The Lincoln Secret* "ancient secret being unearthed today" style of thriller, and wraps it around the question of Abraham Lincoln's paternity and a civil war secret that still has repercussions today. Kim Poole discovers that one of her ancestors changed their name over some sort of threat from the Civil War era. At the same time, Sean Johnson is researching a theory that Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, had become pregnant with him from Abraham Enloe, the master of the house where she worked as a serving girl.

Local  
Author

Their two stories soon collide, and the tension rises as they begin to uncover the secret from General Sherman's occupation of Atlanta that is still being protected.

McKinsey's writing style shows promise here in his first novel. He has a good grasp of plot and pacing, and a firm grasp of the subject and period he chose for the book. He delves into the many conspiracy theories surrounding Lincoln's life and death, from the question of Lincoln's actual parentage, to just who was involved in this assassination. There are elements that could use more editing, and the ending felt rushed, but for a first book McKinsey has done a better than average job. He is doing a number of signings and appearances in the Northern California. You can find information regarding them at the author's web site thelincolnsecret.com and look for the link at the bottom of the Local Calendar page.



## BIOGRAPHIES

Colored, con't from page 14

for herself, but getting them published in the early 50's. Eva Rutland writes with skill, humor, and an eye for details that will help illustrate that period of time and how many families like the Rutland's slowly moved from being the "others" in the neighborhood, to being neighbors.

### William Hazlitt

By Duncan Wu

Oxford University Press, \$45.00, 400 pages

William Hazlitt was a colorful figure in English literary circles in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries. An essayist and journalist, he expressed strong opinions, even against works done by his friends (among them Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth). He had tried being a painter and had done portraits of both the aforementioned, but never really succeeded at that calling, in part due to his inability to flatter his subjects. He had difficulty with is relationships, eventually being divorced by his wife, and mostly staying to prostitutes and "loose women." However, his literary works were, at times, both exalted and decried, and have in the most part fallen out of favor (and print). Wu's *William Hazlitt* doesn't attempt to take an objective position, but, instead, presents Hazlitt as one of the great essayists of the English language and the voice of the Romantic Period. By not maintaining a neutral position with Hazlett's place in literary history, Wu loses some credibility, but gains it back in the absolute wealth of research and detail to which he includes in the book.

Pieced together from hundreds of sources, *William Hazlitt* is a readable, intriguing biography of a passionate man, during a turbulent time.



# Historical Fiction

### Dreamers of the Day

By Mary Doria Russell

Ballantine Books, \$14.00, 288 pages

When the character-driven science fiction epics *The Sparrow* and *Children of God* were published, Mary Doria Russell had attained what was ostensibly overnight cult status. Her latest release, *Dreamers of the Day*, recounts the adventuresome life of a mid-western school teacher named Agnes Shanklin.

Told in the first person as a beyond-the-grave narration, the self-deprecating, but sympathetic, voice of the protagonist leads us through her unglamorous upbringing during the Great War and the Great Influenza. As she finally achieves some sense of self-liberation in her forties, Agnes embarks upon a dream journey to Egypt and the Holy Land. There, she falls in with the company of such notable personages as Winston Churchill, T. E. Lawrence, and Lady Gertrude Bell. While history is being altered in her very presence, Agnes undergoes a life-changing transformation.

Russell is particularly adept at conjuring the novel's period settings of both exotic and familiar locales and at placing her characters firmly into them. The instability of each of their lives coincides beautifully with the volatility of world affairs.

Overall, the romantic tone of the narrative, as well as the substantial characterizations, would even survive an adaptation into the medium of film. One can't help but be charmed by Agnes' personality, endeared by her encounters, and amused by her afterlife. *Dreamers of the Day* is the type of book that gives you a greater respect for historical politics and a better understanding of the turbulence of those transitional times.

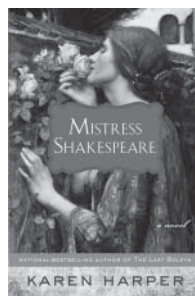
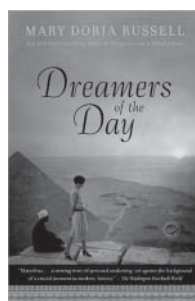
Reviewed by Richard Mandrachio

### Mistress Shakespeare

By Karen Harper

Putnam, \$24.95, 384 pages

In a fact that most scholars excuse away, or ignore, there are two contradictory documents in William Shakespeare's life; one, the entry noting that he wed Anne Hathaway, and one from the previous day, that he was issued a marriage bond to to wed Anne Whateley. From this apparent discrepancy, Karen Harper creates an entire history of William, and his "other wife" Anne Whateley. Presented as Will's first love, and his strongest supported, Anne Whateley is the main character in this highly entertaining story of Elizabethan era novel. Harper



includes many key players of the time, including Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's personal spymaster who suspects Will of being a secret Catholic, and using his plays to foment rebellion. Christopher Marlowe takes a large part, and not just as a writing competitor for Will, but also for the Mistress Shakespeare.

Harper is an excellent writer and specializes in the Tutor period. Her love of the Elizabethan era shows through, but it is her characters that really give life to *Mistress Shakespeare*.

### Galway Bay

By Mary Pat Kelly

Grand Central Publishing, \$26.99, 576 pages

Often, historical books about the Irish in America are set in Boston or New York, two major ports of entry into the US for them. In *Galway Bay*, Kelly follows the historical record of her own family, starting with her great-great grandmother Honora Kelly, who along with her sister Maire, came to Chicago when fleeing the Potato Famine that killed almost 25% of the Irish population that depended on the potato as a staple. Arriving in Chicago, Horora, Maire and their sons find hardship and hope, triumph and tragedy as Chicago becomes their new home, and America their adopted country. Millions of Irish

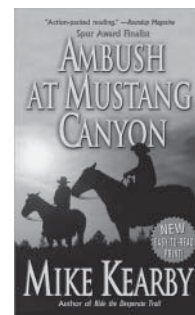
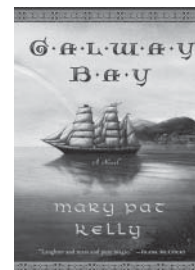
came to America during that time. They were unwanted by many of the "established" Americans, but found they could be both American and Irish, and in doing so, became an integral part of American culture. Kelly sometimes pulls at the heartstrings a little too hard, but she has a lyrical tone to her writing, and obviously takes a great deal of pride in her family, heritage and story (as would any proud mother).

### Ambush at Mustang Canyon

By Mike Kearby

Leisure Western, \$5.99, 209 pages

The final part of Kearby's western trilogy, *Ambush at Mustang Canyon* is the continuing adventures of Free Anderson, a freed slave, and Parks Scott, a white ex-soldier, as they find themselves caught between the US Army that they supply mustangs from their S&A Mustang Works, and the Indian tribes that the Army is preparing to force onto reservations. Free and Parks take an opportunity to warn the Indians that an attack is imminent, but, eventually, the Army and the settlers prevail, and the Indian's winter grounds are destroyed. While this could easily be a story of heroes and villains, Kearby goes into the



motivations behind the history, not using cardboard cut out figures, but give great thought to what was going on, and why. His use of historical figures, Indian languages, and the period all feel true, going beyond the western genre, and into historical fiction, with the emphasis on historical.

### A Dangerous Affair

By Caro Peacock

Avon, \$13.95, 320 pages

Peacock returns to 19th Century England with Liberty Lane, the young protagonist from her previous book, *A Foreign Affair*. Here, Liberty is drawn into spying on Columbine, a prima ballerina, by a young Benjamin Disraeli. When Columbine is found poisoned, suspicion falls on Jenny Jarvis, another dancer that had just a very public fight with Columbine. One of Liberty's friends was beginning to court Jenny, and with her arrest and probably conviction for murder, needs Liberty to solve the crime before Jenny has one last dance with the hangman's noose.

*A Dangerous Affair* is not only a good mystery, but also a very good Victorian novel. Peacock has a wonderful grasp of Victorian society, and helps bring it to life through her well written and entertaining young Liberty.



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## BLACK HISTORY

Justice, can't from page 10

Crow laws in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education.

*Color-Blind Justice* goes beyond the biography of Albion Tourgée and provides insights into the development of the pre and post Civil War Civil Rights movement. Without the commitment of men like Tourgée pushing for equal treatment under the law, and not accepting the "separate but equal" standard, we still could be fighting these same issues.



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# Religion

## Taking Back God

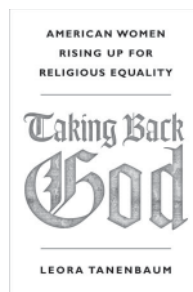
By Leora Tanenbaum

Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, \$27.00, 368 pages

*Taking Back God* is a well-written and insightful look at a woman's place within the four major religions in the United States. Broken into chapters that address historical and present context for women's involvement in Christian, Catholic, Muslim, and Jewish traditions, Tanenbaum provides more than just dry, regurgitated research - she delves deeply into personal stories from almost one hundred women while sharing her own observances and experiences.

Tanenbaum works to represent those women who are religious and struggling to find a place for themselves within the teachings of their traditions. She bridges the gap between different faiths and shows how men and women can, and should be treated equally according to the laws of the Bible. This is not a book about women besting men, it is a book that examines how women can best be accorded the respect and place of honor that men have long held; not seeking sameness, but equality. Tanenbaum provides riveting narratives of women who are strong in their faith and seek to reshape rather than renounce.

Review by Michelle Stulberger

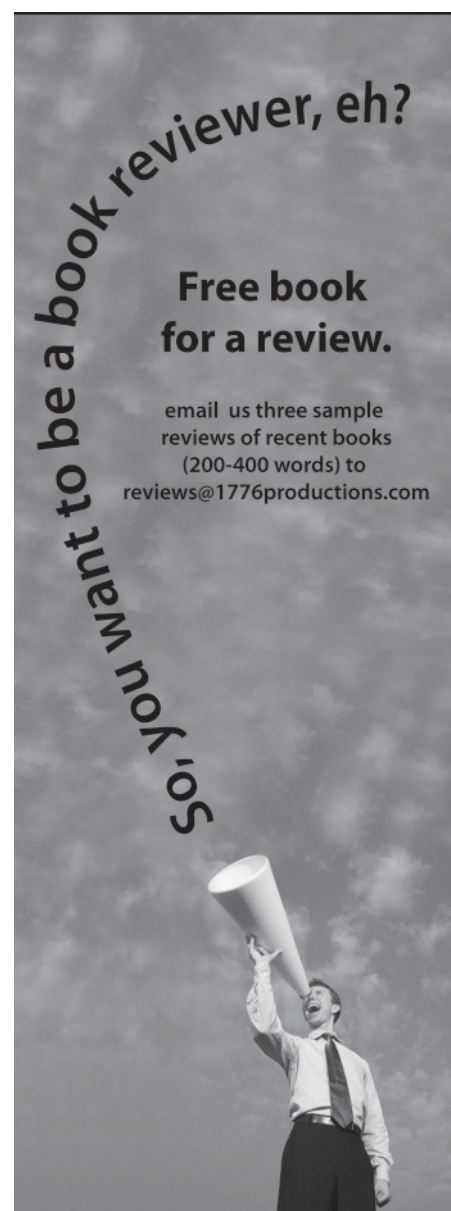


## 7 Deadly Sins

By Aviad Kleinberg

Harvard University Press, \$22.95, 208 pages

In this collection of essays about sin, and its relativity, Kleinberg focuses on the big seven: Sloth, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Anger and Pride. With each, he provides his historical perspective, going back to Greek and Roman, Jewish, and Christian traditions, showing how they have changed over the centuries. He has interesting insights, a keen sense of humor, and his research skills found plenty of fodder for both. The bonus chapter on Self-Righteousness (the sin of pride and sloth), in many ways, ties them all together, as we notice the sin in others, and feel the need to point it out, yet somehow do not notice the beam in our own eye. Probably should be a reference book on many a pastor's shelf.



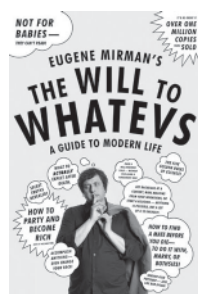
# Humor - NonFiction

## The Will to Whatevs

By Eugene Mirman

Harper Perennial, \$13.95, 206 pages

Do you ever worry that you're living your life wrong? Have you ever wondered how to make the night your own? Have you ever committed a faux pas at a party and wished that someone would just lay out the rules for partying? Are you having a hard time choosing a political party? Do you need advice on raising children? Are you trying to break into the entertainment industry? Have you ever wondered what happens after death? If you answered yes to any of those questions, then *The Will to Whatevs* is for you. Actually, it's probably for you even if you answered "no" to every one of them. In this short guide to life, Eugene Mirman has taken it upon himself to help everyone live the life they want to live, based on his own experiences, things he has made up, and things



he has overheard other people talking about.

This book was pretty darn funny. The chapters in *The Will to Whatevs* are pseudo-chronologically organized around the progression of life, helping you through school, the nightlife, family, and love, amongst other topics. The pages are peppered with thoughtful and partially-relevant quotes to the topic at hand, all but one of which come from the mouth or mind of our author. Mirman has also assisted with illustrations, many of which feature his head superimposed into them (for realism, presumably). I also loved how the timelines extended into dates that haven't yet occurred, with Mirman's best guess about what the future may hold. If you want a book to laugh about, snicker over, or even just gently smile over, then this is one for you.

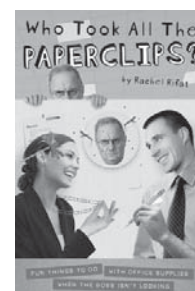
Reviewed by Holly Scudero

## Who Took All the Paperclips?

By Rachel Rifat

Running Press, \$12.95, 136 pages

Rifat, apparently, has spent too much time staring at office supplies, wondering what to do next. *Who Took All The Paperclips* is a collection of craft projects using many of the items floating around the average office, (Except for the boxes of matches. I don't think I've ever seen them on a supply list anywhere.) Some them are just randomly silly—the voodoo boss doll made from a mousepad—others are kinda dumb—the cardboard chandelier (unless you find a way to attach LED lights and make it actually work), and, then, there is the Andy Warhol-esque Marilyn Monroe mural made of Post-It notes. I'm pretty sure that one might attract the wrong kind of attention, especially during the current job market. But, it does look pretty cool. Most com-



panies have the cube clown. This is the book he probably gets his inspiration from and that eventually either gets him promoted for fostering team spirit or fired for wasting office supplies. Hours of fun for everyone. Except the guy that has to restock the supply room.

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## MOVIES & MUSIC

### Lyrics, con't from page 2

the Technicolor era, but that is only a minor quibble.

An excellent book, and a monumental work.

### The Ingmar Bergman Archives

By Paul Duncan, Bengt Wanselius  
Taschen, \$200.00, 592 pages

This is the Ingmar Bergman book. No really, THE book. Done in the same XL format that Taschen is known for, this volume is the definitive Bergman book that all others will be judged against. And, not just because of the size (a foot tall, almost a foot and a half wide, and fifteen pounds), but because of the exhaustive

contents. Many new and unpublished (outside of Sweden) interviews with Bergman, hundreds of pictures, both from his productions (movie, theater and TV) and behind the scenes, and complete filmography, and bibliography for his work. The essays in each chapter tie all Bergman's give a view to his genius and determination. There is an included DVD with rare documentary footage, and a film strip from his movie *Fanny and Alexander* that had been played on his personal film projector. There have been plenty of books on Bergman, but none that have had this scope. And, most likely none that will ever come close. If you are a Bergman fan, this is the book to get. Really.

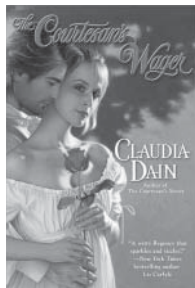


## ROMANCE

### Con't from page 15

herself turning to Lady Sophia Dalby, the former courtesan who married an earl, and has become a matchmaker in her retirement. Lady Sophia takes Amelia under her wing and between the two of them, some duke is bound to succumb.

This is the third book in the *Courtesan* series, and Lady Sophia is as entertaining as before. Amelia is headstrong, opinionated and very determined about her desires. Or is she? Just maybe she has someone else in mind for marriage. A fine Regency romance, with a great premise and Lady Sophia makes a wonderful hook for continuing stories.



### Rescue Me

By Farrah Rochon  
Leisure Books, \$6.99, 324 pages

Alex Holmes is back, and, this time, he's been grounded by an accident at the construction site. His daughter, Jasmine, is misbehaving in class, so he uses his time waiting to recover to volunteer at her school and get her back into line. Renee Moore is the Special Projects coordinator at Jasmine's school, and, when she meets Alex, she finds him to be a special project of her own. Only Alex has given up on the relationship game and only focused on work and his daughter. The usual back and forth between Alex and Renee plays out well, and neither comes across as forced for the sake of the story.

Anyone who has read the previous two books in the series will be pleased with the resolution to storyline, even with the unexpected turn that happens at the end.

## HEARTBEAT

### Con't from page 17

that society is better when the values of love, honor, duty, and commitment are supported and promoted."

"Cross-genres, or the blending of genres, is not new," Brennan said. "Romantic suspense became popular in the late 1980s and went out of favor in the late 90s. In the last few years, they're gaining popularity again, becoming darker and grittier. The 'women-in-jeopardy' books have turned into 'women-in-law-enforcement' stories. Many mysteries have romantic subplots the supernatural has really taken genre-blending to its limits with world building, fantasy, and fun or fantastical elements. Truly, there is nothing you can't do—if you tell the story well."

"There's been a huge diversification in what's available as well," added Rendahl. "There are romances with heroines and heroes of all skin colors and religious persuasions. There are wildly varying levels of eroticism. There's much more variety than I remember there being 20 years ago or so, when I started reading romance novels."

On opposite ends of the erotic scale, some of the largest gains in sales have been reported for the Inspirational and Erotic romance sub-genres.

"We've recently seen the rise and success of inspirational romances, erotic romances, paranormal romances and romantic suspense," said Diane Pershing, romance novelist and president of the Romance Writers of America. "Our younger readers are worldlier than they used to be—either the good news or bad news, depending on your viewpoint."

The Twilight series by Stephenie Meyers could be considered young adult contemporary vampire romance.

"It's pretty fabulous when you see growth at both ends of the spectrum," said Mallery. "Ten years ago you couldn't sell a vampire story. Now, paranormal is one of the hottest genres—kind of like 'Gray's Anatomy' with demons. Everything cycles through."

"Readers are demanding fresh, new ideas and some of the best of these come from crossing genres," Novak added.

One thing romances have in common is that it's all about relationships and making connections.

"We explore everything, issues of all kinds," Mallery said. "Our themes are more about connection: love heals, there's no place like home, and importantly, keeping the community safe, building a community. Our nature is to want to connect. You'll find the same in most genre fiction and in television. For example, the series '24' is all about saving the community, or in this case, the country."

"They are all about relationships," said Pershing. "The search for that someone special, the hard work that goes into growing intimacy, both emotional and physical, the natural tendency of the human spirit to find his/her mate. It's always been about relationships and it always will."

No matter what style of story or type of character a reader likes, the romance novel, like love itself, is timeless.

"Everyone falls in love sometime in their life," Brennan said. "Love is timeless. Family is timeless, which begins with love. Honor, duty, loyalty, commitment, monogamy, all these are values that women hold as not only the ideal in love and marriage, but attainable. Frankly, we shouldn't settle for less."

"What's timeless about the romance novel is it's the dream of finding one's soulmate," Rendahl said. "The idea is immensely satisfying. I think that's why most books in any genre have a love interest somewhere along the line. For the ending to truly be happy (or tragic) there has to be some kind of romantic involvement."

"Some of my favorite themes in romance novels are redemption, trust, the power of identity, freedom, love, happiness and family," Novak added. "Romance novels are a snapshot of love at its finest. These books allow readers to enjoy that first blush of love, when love is like the best drug in the world, over and over again while still living a normal life."

"It's no wonder romance novels are successful in hard times," Mallery said. "People want happy endings. In mysteries, you want the killer caught. In romance, love and family connection are confirmed. Romance hits a lot of what we like, and with all the different blending of genres, you can always find what you like."

Statistics courtesy of the Romance Writers of America.

Read more about the novels written by these romance authors at their websites:

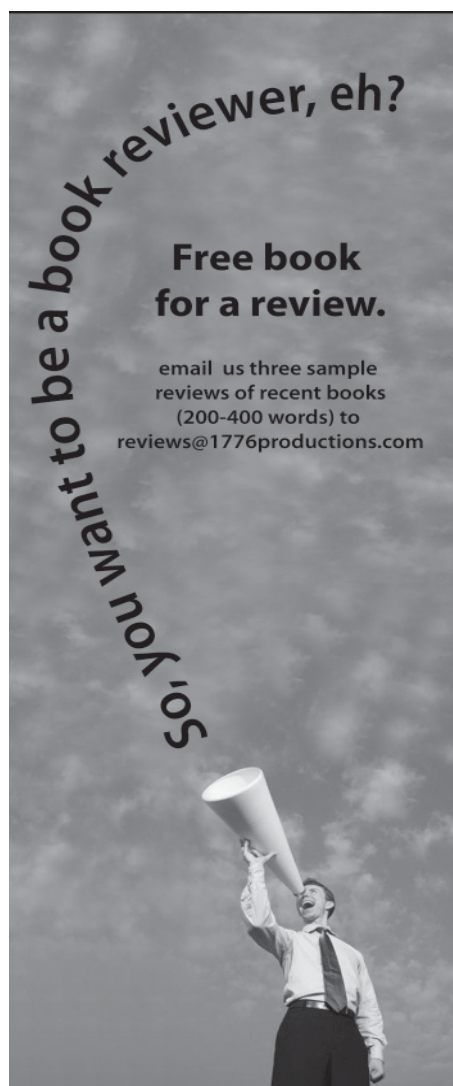
Allison Brennan writes romantic thrillers ([www.AllisonBrennan.com](http://www.AllisonBrennan.com))

Susan Mallery has written over 100 romances and counting ([www.SusanMallery.com](http://www.SusanMallery.com))

Brenda Novak writes romance and romantic suspense ([www.BrendaNovak.com](http://www.BrendaNovak.com))

Diane Pershing writes romantic suspense ([www.DianePershing.com](http://www.DianePershing.com))

Eileen Rendahl writes romance ([www.EileenRendahl.com](http://www.EileenRendahl.com)), and her alter ego, Eileen Carr, writes romantic suspense ([www.EileenCarr.com](http://www.EileenCarr.com))





# Parenting & Families

## Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering

By Sarah J. Buckley, MD

Ten Speed Press, \$16.95, 352 pages

*Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering* was inspired by Dr. Sarah Buckley's home birth of her third child. In an era where pregnancy and birth are considered to be a medical condition, rather than a natural process that women's bodies were designed for, this book challenges such topics as testing for gestational diabetes, antibiotics for group B strep, and induction for being "overdue." Buckley discusses the cycle of intervention during labor—induction, epidurals, and hurrying along the third stage of birth. The book continues with topics on long-term breastfeeding, bed-sharing, and discusses cultural disapproval. *Gentle Birth* includes the stories of Buckley's four births at home.

Being a proponent of natural childbirth and allowing one's body to labor sans intervention, I was excited to find this wonderfully written book on all the topics I've come to believe in and embrace. While this book won't send someone who looks at birth as "something is about to go wrong," running to set up the kiddie pool for a home birth, for those who already lean towards the natural side of birth, it'll be a wonderful addition to your pregnancy, birth, and baby-rearing collection.

Reviewed by Heidi Komlofske

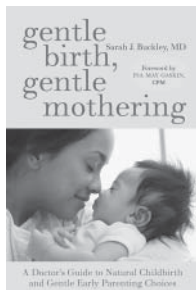
## The New Grandparents Name Book

By Lin Wellford; Sky Pifer

ArtStone Press, \$9.99, 64 pages

Picking names for children to call their grandparents seems to be turning into a more treacherous task than it used to be. Being called "grandma" or "grandpa" might make you feel older than you think you are. Maybe you don't have ethnic tradition to draw from as I did with a Polish grandfather—jaja, and Italian grandmother—nana. So, in the tradition of the ever-popular baby name books comes *The New Grandparents Name Book*. There are traditional names, fun names (though I'm not sure what grandmother would want to be called Granzilla), personality, or interested-based names (Coach or Sunny), and a chapter on name pairs (for those grandparents that come in pairs)—Go-Ma and Slo-Pa.

More of a novelty item to give to first-time grandparents, but, for people who agonize over just the right name for their child, might find inspiration for just the right name for the grandparents.



## The Joy of Family Traditions

By Jennifer Trainer Thompson

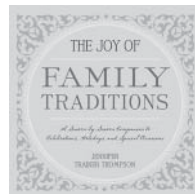
Ten Speed Press, \$16.95, 256 pages

Family traditions are often passed down each generation. What do you do when your parents didn't really have any, or you are trying to blend two families together, and want everyone to feel that they haven't been overlooked? You create your own. Sometimes that is as easy as doing something twice ("Hey, its tradition that we go out for breakfast the morning after Thanksgiving, we did it last year"), or adding new meaning to events as they happen.

*The Joy of Family Traditions* is a collection of holidays, events, religious days and milestones that any family can add into their annual traditions. There

are the big ones—Yom Kippur, Easter, Thanksgiving—odd ones—Day Light Savings, Oktoberfest—American ones—start of baseball season—and made up ones—February Hibernation Day. Each has an interesting explanation for the history of the event, traditional methods of celebrating, and suggestions for including it into your family.

Not only a good book for your own family, but a great one for gifting.



## giggle Guide to Baby Gear

By Ali Wing

Chronicle Books, \$19.95, 176 pages

giggle is a eight-store baby boutique chain on the East and West Coast, with local-ish stores in San Francisco and Walnut Creek. The *giggle Guide to Baby Gear* doesn't advocate for any particular product lines or manufacturers, but, instead, is a guide to the products needed by parents for each development stage of their babies life. The first half of the book is checklists for Expecting Parents, The First Six Months, Toddlerhood, and Getting Out and About. The second half is product descriptions, in major categories: Baby on the Go (car seats, strollers, carriers, and diaper bags), The Nursery, Feeding, and Bath Time. The book is colorful, and the various options are discussed fairly (cloth vs. disposable in the diaper category), and there are no product placements in the book at all. A very nice touch in this logo-filled age.

Probably a very helpful book to give to new parents at an early baby shower; though once you've had your first, you'll probably be running on reflex and favorite products (or hand-me-downs).



## Raising Bookworms/Getting Kids Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment

By Emma Walton Hamilton

Beech Tree Books, \$14.95, 164 pages

Emma Walton Hamilton is the co-author of 16 children's books with her mother, the legendary actress/author Julie Andrews. Hamilton clearly shows her love of children and children's literature in this book.

In a society of overcrowded classrooms and underpaid teachers, it is often easy for slow readers to get overlooked and slide through our educational system.

In *Raising Bookworms* Hamilton offers advice on ways to unglue our children's eyes from television, video games, and iPods and get their noses stuck in a book. Most parents know that is sometimes not an easy task to accomplish.

Hamilton encourages parents to read with their children. She reminds us that it is never too early to read to your child and that teaching children how to read is not the sole responsibility of our teachers. *Raising Bookworms* is full of fun and entertaining ways to get your children involved in reading. Hamilton has included "Emma's Family Favorites" for all ages of children and the different levels of education.

As an avid reader and a mother of 5 children ranging from elementary school to college, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading *Raising Bookworms* and finding exciting ways to share my love of reading with my children; who are more apt to win a war played on a video game than pick up a book and visit a whole new world in their mind. I will use *Raising Bookworms* as a reference book for many years to come...one day I will be a grandmother.

Reviewed by Terri Boggs

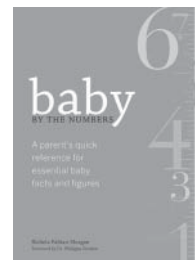


## Baby By The Numbers

By Richela Fabian Morgan

Chronicle Books, \$14.95, 128 pages

This is one of those handy books on what your child should be doing at different stages of development, based on averages. Something that either gives you great pride when your child beats those averages, or causes stress when they don't. But, beyond just telling you when your child should say "mama", *Baby By The Numbers* includes many helpful sections: Sample schedules for transitioning to solid foods, common food allergies and what common foods cause them, and a really good section on common childhood illnesses and how to manage them (or when to take your child to the doctor.) There is even a short, but well-explained and illustrated, section on baby first aid. A well-designed, organized, and researched guide for new parents.



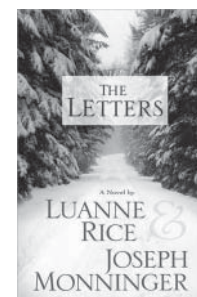
## POP FICTION

*Letters*, don't from page 13

where their son died, and Hadley, the wife, is in Maine trying to find something of her own-her ability to paint.

If it were a film, *The Letters* would be a chick-flick. As such, for those who love a good tearjerker, Rice and Monninger's work will most surely open the flood gates; it contains all of the earmarks of a story that will give you a good cry. For those not into sop-stories, it will, of course, be droll, predictable, and not entertaining. Overall, it is fairly solid in what it attempts to do and be, and, for the majority of readers, will not be a bad read.

Reviewed by Jordan Dacayanan



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# Relationships & Sex

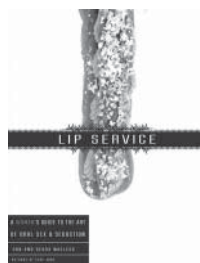
## Lip Service

By Don and Debra MacLeod

Tarcher/Penguin, \$15.95, 368 pages

Husband and wife sex experts, Don and Debra MacLeod offer a his and her guide to spicing up an already-established sex life, starting with our most important sex organ...our MOUTH. The book provides chapters on talking dirty to your partner—whether that's in a candle-lit bedroom, over the phone, or utilizing the Internet. Other chapters cover the head-to-toe road map to your partner's body, techniques with catchy names for performing oral sex, and the low-down on various play toys. Specifically for her, the male side of the book goes over the oft-forgotten art of seduction and "setting the mood."

As I was reading this book, I thought that everything the authors wrote about was pretty basic for someone who's been playing the game for more than half her life, but I have to admit, that these "basic" things outlined really DO make you pay attention to the blueprint of your partner's body. For as silly as the Whole Body Kiss sounds, performing it slowly on your partner is highly erotic and sets the mood for what is yet to come. My partner really DID notice the different oral techniques I learned from the book. He'd get a silly grin on his face when he'd walk into the bedroom to find me wading through the book...knowing I was making mental notes in the margins...excited to have what I'd just learned actually performed on him. I have to admit that he hasn't flipped this cleverly arranged book over to read HIS side of the book for me.... but I'm eagerly awaiting what's in store for ME.



## Stupid About Men

By Deborah Dunn

Howard Books, \$25.00, 224 pages

This book attempts to help the reader identify what bog they have become mired in when it comes to a relationship. The writer identifies the pitfalls in an analogous fashion by associating the pitfall with fantasy characters, such as Tinker Bell and Cinderella and other story book tales when relating a person's pertinent story.

The book suffers from a number of problems. Books on why women choose certain romantic types and their pitfalls have been written countless times. While I believe this book has relevancy for a woman to identify that she is not conscious of the



fact, for example, she picks "Bad Boys" to date, this book unfortunately will not alter that behavior upon discovering that fact. It is akin to handing a Dummies book to John Wayne Gacy titled "How Not To Be a Serial Killer."

Core psychological behaviors take an enormous amount of time and effort to modify or change, even with a concerted effort utilizing a professional in the psychological field. While the book may help identify the problem, it most assuredly will not dig into your past to figure out "Why" you always choose a "Bad Boy" to date or cohabitate with them. The reason depends upon core traits developed during life, generally early on, and to change the behavior, those reasons must be sought and become consciously made known to the self.

Self-help books that deal with subjects such as "Raising Weasels For Profit" or "How to Use Your Index Finger" can be very effective, due to the fact they we are augmenting our knowledge base by learning a specific task. A self-help book that deals with psychological anomalies is only effective if a person is willing to seek out their problem and identify it. As far as dealing with the problem or changing the behavior, they are useless. If psychological self-help books were even moderately effective, professional psychological personnel would not be needed. That's I why there are billions and billions" of them.

There is also additional statistical information given that could be of relevance to the reader, but, as with all statistics, one must remember a wise man once said "There are lies, damnable lies and statistics."

One side note I found disturbing. I am a fantasy and animation fan. The descriptions of some of the characters used will forever change my view of them—in particular, Tinker Bell, who I may never think the of same again in my life. I appreciate the reference to the book character but the author forgets that child animations have been made of these characters, and they are not portrayed in precisely the same way. Hence forth simple, loving child animated characters are utilized and denigrated to a degree to show inherent short-comings in relationships.

Reviewed by Lee Crawford

## Seductive Delusions

By Jill Grimes, MD

The John Hopkins University Press, \$16.95, 280 pages

Sexual transmitted diseases are an unfortunate potential part of relationships and sex. And, too often, people are unaware of the risks, the symptoms and the treatments of STDs. *Seductive Delusions* is a collection of stories from average people who found themselves with dealing with an STD they didn't think they could get. Grimes uses these examples to illustrate the ease of contracting 10 common STDs, the symptoms, and treatments for them. The stories are easily read, fictionalized tales, collectively

representing hundreds of examples that Grimes and her co-workers have had to deal with. While probably not recreational reading, the book is a good gift for the teen in your life that just might be contemplating getting into a relationship (sexual or not). Diseases covered include Herpes, HPV, Cervical Cancer, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Trichomoniasis, Pubic Lice, HIV Hepatitis C, and Syphilis. And, if you are thinking you, or those you know and love, don't need to understand just how easy it is to catch any of those, neither did any of the patients that Grimes has had to tell that they had and STD.

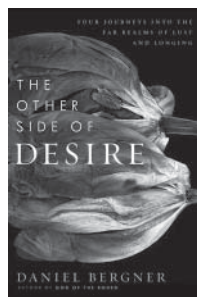


## The Other Side of Desire

By Daniel Bergner

Ecco, \$24.95, 224 pages

Bergner's first two books were on extremes: *God of the Rodeo* was about the rodeo champions of Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana, *In the Land of Magic Soldiers*, Bergner traveled though Sierra Leone, reporting the dichotomy of life there between black and white; citizens, soldiers, victims, and observers. In *The Other Side of Desire* he heads off the into the hinterlands of sexual longing, looking for patterns on what makes people desire things that aren't "normal" by many standards, using four varied and unusual cases. He has a foot fetishist, a dominatrix, an acrotomophiliac (Google it), and a pedophile. Each chapter tries to find not only the original source for that person's longings, but also continues Bergner's thoughts about desires, pleasure, and nature of ecstasy itself. Some of the descriptions are mildly graphic, but for those of a more prudish nature, *Desire* may not be to your liking. Some of the subjects (and not just the main ones, such as when Bergner includes other side stories as he goes along), fear or hate their proclivities, others embrace it. But, Bergner doesn't condemn, simply tries to find common themes between them.



## Face to Face

By Susan RoAne

Fireside Books, \$14.95, 288 pages

In the days of there being so many ways to communicate, one may become unfamiliar with the old standby—the in-person conversation. *Face to Face* is about that, how to talk to other people, lead a conversation, and maintain friendships or business relationships effectively through those impersonal means (email, phone, text, etc). While many of the tips are common sense ("refrain

from monopolizing the conversation"), you never know what you may be overlooking yourself. There is also a chapter on dealing with Sticky Situations, people who are being offensive or hurtful—intentionally or not, and ways to respond, and one on finding and being a mentor. Plenty of helpful advice on dealing with different social situations, personality types and conversational styles.

If you are comfortable with your ability to communicate with others, *Face to Face* probably won't do much for you. If you have a hard time being social, it may help you navigate group settings. Recommended for introverts wanting to be more extroverted.



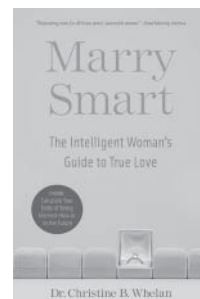
## Marry Smart

By Dr. Christine B. Whelan

Simon & Schuster, \$15.00, 288 pages

Whelan's 2006 book, *Why Smart Men Marry Smart Women* broke down the myth that smart, successful women were as likely to get married as they were to be hit by a bus. From that research, she has now put together a dating guide book for those smart, successful women who haven't yet found the smart man to marry. There are chapters on how to talk about yourself with out sounding full of yourself, how to decide who might be right for you (the pros and cons of younger and older men), choosing to have children later in life, and how to overcome men's fears about women that make more or are more accomplished than themselves (though, if you have to overcome those fears to get a guy, he may be too insecure anyway.)

An interesting guide book to SWANS (Smart Women Achievers, No Spouse) who want a spouse. Plenty of stories from women (and men) who have responded to Whelan's first book and her seminars since then.

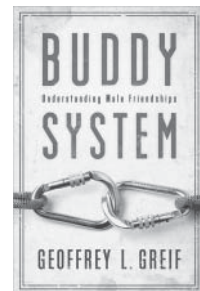


## The Necklace

By Cheryl Jarvis

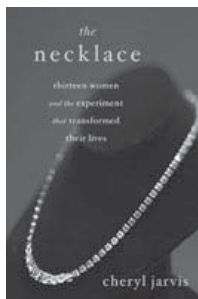
Ballantine Books, \$24.00, 240 pages

Four years ago, Jonell McLain saw an expensive diamond necklace in the window of a Ventura, California, store. Her musings on the nature of luxury items, and the nature of sharing, lead her to find eleven other women interested in collectively buying the necklace and sharing it through the year. As





they bought the necklace, the jeweler requested that they allow his wife to join, and the twelve became thirteen. What began as an experiment in sharing, became a transformative experience not only for the women, but spread into the community as the women began to organize fundraisers, support groups, and shared the necklace with women outside their group. Each of the women has their own chapter about how being part of the group, and sharing the necklace, changed them.



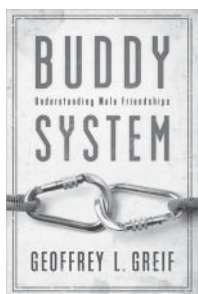
Jarvis keeps a good pace to the book and intersperses quotes from the thirteen, and many of the other women that were impacted by the sharing of the necklace. *The Necklace* is a story of relationships between women who had little in common until the necklace entered their lives.

### Buddy System

By Geoffrey L. Greif

Oxford University Press, \$29.95, 304 pages

Everyone “knows” there are differences between how women and men have friendships with the same sex. Guys have buddies, women have BFFs. Women have emotional attachments, guys have someone to go to the game with. Greif has taken interviews with 400 men about their friendships, and comes to the conclusion that while, yes, there are differences, a man’s friendships can be as deep and lasting as a woman’s, and those strong relationships help men have longer and happier lives. He breaks men’s relationships into four categories—Must, Trust, Just, and Rust—that range from the person you “must” share news with as it happens, to those relationships that come and go, being picked up where it left off the last time you caught up with each other (“rust”). As you go through the book, reading the examples from the many interviews (subjects ranged in age from their 20s to their 90s), you begin to catalog your own friendships into must, trust, just, and rust. Greif also interviewed more than 100 women, looking for similarities and differences, and has put together key elements that can help make relationships stronger, that in turn helps both men live longer, less stressful lives. Which, of course, keeps the friendship alive longer.



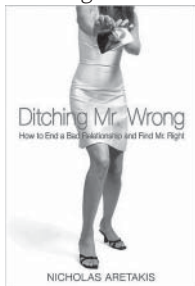
### Ditching Mr. Wrong

By Nicholas Aretakis

Next Stage Press, \$24.95, 200 pages

*Ditching Mr Wrong* is a dating book for women in relationships that don’t seem to be going anywhere, or having a hard time finding a relationship to be in. There are handy checklists of things to look for (or look out for), profiles of Mr. Wrong’s, and plenty of tips, suggestion, and, as expected, quizzes,

to see if you are in the right relationship or not. Aretakis is not a therapist, sociologist, or psychologist, but a mathematician and engineer, and, in part, used his experiences as a bachelor to put together this guide. Granted, parts of it are pretty funny and accurate—the 20 profiles of Mr. Wrong for example—but a lot of it is also condescending or annoying. His opening assumption is that women primarily want marriage and kids, and the pressure to find the “right” guy means avoiding anyone who might not fit that profile (under The Resume Date Checklist, he has “does he have “baggage?” including children, alimony and pets). This book doesn’t even rise to be in the same category of *The Rules*, which, at least, was overtly manipulative. The screening tests may or may not be helpful, but because they also include tips on staying in relationships with Mr. Wrong, there doesn’t seem to be much point to ditching him. If *The Rules* didn’t work for you, maybe this one will. At the very least, it may rub your nose into the fact that you are with the wrong person and give you incentive to find someone else. But, if you are unhappy enough with your current relationship to consider buying a book about getting out of it, that should be enough of a clue to just get out of it.



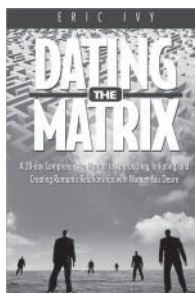
### The Dating Matrix

By Eric Ivy

Evercore Publishing, \$24.95, 232 pages

Dating isn’t rocket science. At least it shouldn’t be. But, apparently enough men have trouble getting, or finding, dates to create an entire business of coaching, books, and selling “systems” to them. Books like *The Mystery Method* and *The Game* focus on simply picking up and scoring with women. Ivy’s *The Dating Matrix* is more about how to organize your life, from overhauling your wardrobe to detailing out exactly what sort of woman you want to find and date. There are many (MANY) checklists, lists of do’s and don’ts, things to memorize, and sample conversations, emails and text messages to use. Some of the checklists (particularly Relationship Goals) read like forms from online dating sites (Political Views, Sense of Humor, etc.), and the chapter on Getting Your House In Order should hopefully be not needed by many (one weekly task suggested is “Remove all garbage and pornographic material”). For the fashion- and shopping-impaired, Ivy includes brand-name clothing and personal hygiene suggestions, and monthly budgets for personal grooming and dating.

Much of the book reads like consultant-speak (lots of action items), and the entire book is designed around getting everything done in 28 days (each day has its own list of things to do, memorize, and practice). If



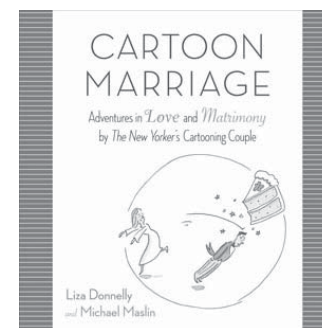
## Cartoon Marriage

By Liza Donnelly; Michael Maslin

Random House, \$24.00, 304 pages

What do two married cartoonists for *The New Yorker* do for fun? Write and draw stories about their life together and collect a number of their strips as evidence, apparently. Both Donnelly and Maslin are regular contributors to *The New Yorker*, and their many strips on life, marriage, children, and relationships have probably been cut out and posted on refrigerators, bulletin boards, and office and cube walls for years.

To make this a more fun collection than others, together, they have done introductory new strips, expressing the elements of their lives together (including a 4-page “how we met” sequence) that relates to the chapter at hand. From “I Do?” to “Ex-What-ers”, *Cartoon Marriage* should hit almost everyone’s funny bone somewhere.



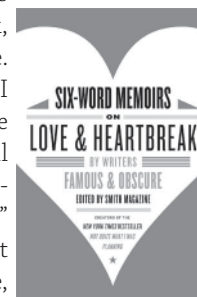
you need this level of help, this is probably the best book you’ll find. (BTW, the title design makes it look like the title is “Dating the Matrix,” potentially leading to some confusion for men interested only in virtual girlfriends.)

### Six-Word Memoirs on Love & Heartbreak

By the Editors of SMITH Magazine

Harper Perennial, \$10.00, 144 pages

SMITH Magazine used Ernest Hemingway’s famous six-word story (“For Sale: Baby shoes, never worn.”) as a rallying cry for people to submit six-word memoirs of their lives and, from those, came the NYT best-seller *Not Quite What I Was Expecting*. Now they’ve collected stories of love and heartbreak, told six words at a time. From the modern “If I get Chlamydia, blame MySpace,” the painful “Inevitably, his obituary didn’t mention me,” and the romantic “At twelve found soul mate, still together,” these brief flashes of other people’s relationships, good or bad, may raise more questions than answers. But, as with Hemingway’s, that’s the point. More than 200 quick, quotable stories. The kind you read out loud to your spouse while lying in bed or leave lying about the house for guests to browse.

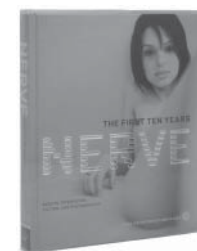


### Nerve: The First Ten Years

By the Nerve Editors

Chronicle Books, \$40.00, 272 pages

*Nerve: The First Ten Years* is a celebration of the best of Nerve.com. A long-term survivor of the Internet, Nerve has been THE place for intelligent sex, as opposed to porn (intelligent or otherwise). Great photography, essays, and fiction have been mainstays of the site, so good, that they were able to charge for access to the “premium content,” and have enough subscribers to keep the business afloat through the ups and downs of the last 10 years. Collected here is a sampling of the “best of” articles, year-by-year, illustrated by hundreds of the



photos Nerve has been know for. There is fiction, personal stories, essays, interviews, and Dear Em & Lo questions about sex and relationships. Contributors and subjects include David Cronenberg, Chuck Palahniuk, Jonathan Ames, Jonathan Lethem and M. Joycelyn Elders (discussing the “M” word back in 1997.) This is the sort of collection that would come from the editors at *Esquire* taking a turn over at *Playboy*.

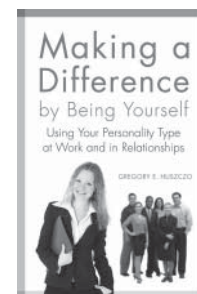
### Making a Difference by Being Yourself

By Gregory E. Huszczo

Davies-Black Publishing, \$26.95, 256 pages

*Making a Difference by Being Yourself* is based on the Myers-Briggs personality profiles. If you are unaware of what those are, they are tests designed to define your personality in four areas, and provide a framework for understanding your job, relationship, and personal issues in a Jungian perspective. Huszczo has taken part of the end result (two of the four areas) and created a system for discovering what sorts of activities each of the four would find satisfying when trying to find things that help them make a difference in the world around them. If you haven’t taken a Myers-Briggs test, he included several tests to help you determine your specific personality type, and exercises for examining how likely you are to use the themes or skills at your job and in your relationships. The four types Huszczo uses are Stabilizers (ST), Harmonizers (SF), Catalysts (NF), and Visionaries (NT), and each has their own styles in working with others, which Huszczo details out in an easy-to-use-and-follow format, and also provides suggestions on how to help increase your usefulness within your organization and personal relationships.

Not a book for everyone, but, for people are familiar with the Myers-Briggs typing will find it more useful than other guides.





# Reference

## How Not to Make a Short Film – Secrets From a Sundance Programmer

By Roberta Marie Munroe  
Hyperion, \$13.95, 249 pages

*How Not to Make a Short Film – Secrets from a Sundance Programmer* is to a wannabe short filmmaker what the Bible is to Christians.

Munroe delivers an in-depth checklist of invaluable advice and exhaustive resources to create your first, serious short film or hone your skills for your next to breakthrough and be seen in short film festivals around the world. She gives the readers a glimpse into the filmmaking world without apology and hard-core realism yet inspires those with strong aspirations to be true short film artists.

In Roberta Munroe's Introduction to the book she offers, "There are a few *How to Make a Short Film* books out there. However, I have chal-



lenged myself and enlisted the help of some truly great people to write a book that actually tells you not only how to increase the odds of making a great short but also How NOT to Make a Rotten, Unwatchable, Unprogrammable Short Film. I know you can make a short film – it's only a matter of having the resources to do so."

It is not for the faint-hearted or weekend film shooting buff. This author's labor of love gives semblance of controlled passion for her art with industry brutality as she wields the tough love of a veteran mother of seven. The vernacular is uncompromised, making you feel as though you are listening in on experts talking amongst themselves about their craft.

This book is a must-have reference manual for the true filmmaker.

Reviewed by Chris Johnson

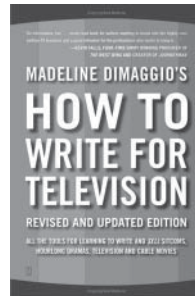
## How To Write For Television

By Madeline DiMaggio  
Fireside Books, \$16.00, 336 pages

After 20 years, Madeline DiMaggio has updated her guidebook to writing scripts

for television. Using examples from recent shows—*Six Feet Under*, *Cold Case* and *Grey's Anatomy*—*How to Write For Television* explains how to write scenes, dialog, and action for network or cable TV. The differences between writing for the half-hour sitcom versus the hour-long drama each have their own chapter, as does writing movies for television. There is a lengthy chapter on creating "hooks" for your stories, from Hooking the Fast, to Powerful End Acts. There are plenty of multi-page examples of real scripts, and references to many common shows and movies keep it fresh for new readers.

Newbie screenwriters wanting to get an overview of the basics of the business, will be well served by this new edition.



## SEQUENTIAL ART Rasl, con't from page 18

vented a way of traveling across dimensions into parallel universes. It takes a lot out of him each time he drifts, explaining his alcoholic ways. For his occupation, Rasl is an art thief, stealing art from other dimensions to sell in his own. But, in this first volume, something is terribly wrong. There's an assassin out to get him, following him somehow across the dimensions. It's nonstop action for Rasl, as he tries to save his skin, while continuing to research the powers of magnetism that make it possible to cross the dimensions of space.

*Rasl* is a great new story from Jeff Smith, who will be publishing two more volumes in the series.

Reviewed by Alex Telander

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# Young Adult

## A Mystery for Thoreau

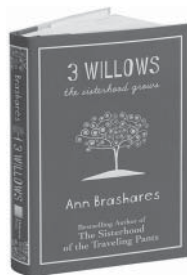
By Kin Platt  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$16.00, 162 pages

Sixteen-year-old Oliver Puckle makes it his business to gather the news, as an employee of his uncle's publication, the *Concord Freeman*. His life in the small Massachusetts town is running as usual until a mystery is dropped on the town. As Oliver leads the charge to unravel the mystery, he looks to its most reclusive citizen, Mr. Thoreau, for help in finding the solution.



vious stories, hidden like Easter Eggs. This new story is about three girls, friends since elementary school, during the summer between middle and high school. In fact, Ama, Polly and Jo will be attending South Bethesda High School, the same school from which Bridget, Carmen, Lena and Tibby graduated. The new three girls had bonded when none of their parents showed up to pick them up one day, and as a sign of unity, planted three willow saplings in a row. Each girl faces a summer adventure, helping them grow, and preparing them for high school.

Ama, the studious girl, finds herself at an outdoor camp in Wyoming, completely out of her element. Polly's mom is a sculpture and free spirit, complete with nose ring, and ever changing hair color, that leaves Polly feeling out of place among the "normal" kids. Polly just wants to be one of them, until she finds out that her grandmother may have been a famous model and goes to modeling camp to follow that new interest. Jo is still hurting over her brother's death and the drifting apart of her parent's lives. So she goes with her mother for a summer at a beach house, and after getting a job at a touristy restaurant, quickly becomes part of the waitresses' in-crowd. Throughout



## 3 Willows: The Sisterhood Grows

By Ann Brashares  
Delacorte Press Books for Young Readers,  
\$18.99, 336 pages

*3 Willows* is Brashares' (*Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*) new "Sisterhood" story. There are even inside references to her pre-

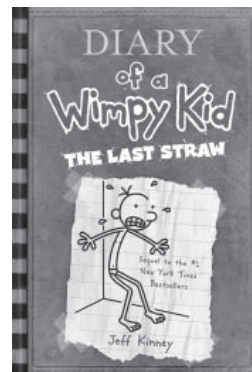
## Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw

By Jeff Kinney  
Amulet Books, \$12.95, 224 pages

Greg Heffley is back, and this time, his father has decided that to toughen him up, Greg needs to do "manly" things: sports, the Boy Scouts, and, if nothing else works, a military school. Greg responds in typical middle-school fashion—rotating from trying new ways to become athletic and ways to fail miserably. This third installment of the *Diary* series is as funny as the first, with plenty of the same illustrations and wit. Greg comes across as a very typical middle-schooler, with plenty of the same challenges and ways of dealing with them. His reactions to his life, as he records them in his journal, "boys don't write in diaries," are often laugh-out-loud funny for either boys who are living it now, men who remember how bad that age could be, or have their own children currently going through it now.

From Greg spending a whole day watching the same TV channel all day, because he was too lazy to get the remote control, to him digging a three-inch hole and jumping out of it 100 times a day to become a champion jumper, Greg records his misadventures for our enjoyment. And, when he gets chocolate on his pants on the way to Easter church service ("I must have sat on an ear or something") and has to wear his mother's pink sweater like a kilt to hide it, well, let's just say that's only the beginning.

Highly recommended for middle school boys, especially those who don't enjoy





the summer, as the girls face challenges and as the depend on each other to get through them, the three willows continue to grow together, their roots intertwining.

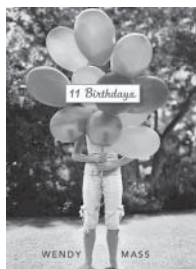
Maybe not as good as the *Sisterhood* books, but also maybe because *3 Willows* is overshadowed by them. The new girls are interesting, well-developed and unique. *Willows* will probably please much of the *Sisterhood* readers, and attract different readers who weren't already old enough to get into *Sisterhood* in 2001. *3 Willows* may become their series.

### 11 Birthdays

By Wendy Mass

Scholastic Press, \$16.99, 267 pages

*11 Birthdays* is a cute story reminiscent of *Ground Hog Day*. Amanda and Leo are best friends and share the same birthday. They have always celebrated their birthdays together. But, on their 10th birthday, Amanda gets upset with Leo and the friendship ends. Amanda's not looking forward to her 11th birthday – her first without Leo – and can hardly wait for the day to be over. The next day, she wakes up only to find it's her birthday again. The same thing happens the next day and the next day, only Amanda realizes what's happening – until Leo tells her the same thing is happening to him too! First, they have to figure out what it's happening. The answer involves a curse placed on their great-great grandparents. Then, they have to figure out how to stop it from happening again. By the time they have the answer, they have celebrated 11 birthdays and have renewed their friendship. A happy ending to a good story.



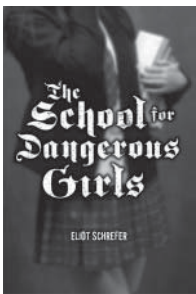
Reviewed by Sharon LeBrun

### The School for Dangerous Girls

By Eliot Schreffer

Scholastic Press, \$16.99, 341 pages

*The School for Dangerous Girls* is the dark and dreary story of Angela Cardenas, a 15-year-old who refuses to behave and after she becomes a potential suspect in her Grandfather's death, her parents send her to Hidden Oak School for Girls, an alternative school for girls, or as these kinds of schools used to be called, a reform school. It turns out there are really two schools: one for those who can be reformed into model citizens, and one for those who are hopeless. Angela continues to misbehave at Hidden Oak School and finds out what happens to those girls who are deemed to be hopeless. There is nothing entertaining about this book. None of the characters are particularly likeable, and



the only good thing about this book is finally finishing it. Parents beware, I do not recommend this book for anyone, but, especially, not for the target audience: 15 and up. Scholastic Press has a long history of printing books for school-aged children. I am very surprised they would print a book as trashy as this one.

Reviewed by Sharon LeBrun

### Skeleton Creek

By Patrick Carman

Scholastic Press, \$14.99, 185 pages

*Skeleton Creek* is the story of two best friends, Ryan and Sarah, who are working together to uncover a scary and sinister mystery in Skeleton Creek. The story is told in two formats: Ryan's story is told in the book, and Sarah's story is told on a special website. You must read the book and watch the videos to solve the mystery. Ryan and Sarah are investigating something mysterious at the old abandoned dredge in Skeleton Creek. During the investigation, Ryan is hurt and, as a consequence, he is forbidden to see Sarah. Sarah continues the investigation on her own and takes videos of what she finds. She secretly sends the videos to Ryan so he can write down the story as it unfolds. The mystery involves a secret club, and, somehow, Ryan's Dad is involved.

The book ends just as things start getting really interesting, but it picks up again on the website. It's up to you to solve the mystery!

Reviewed by Sharon LeBrun



### Scat

By Carl Hiaasen

Knopf Books for Young Readers, \$16.99, 343 pages

Hiaasen's many adult novels have a particular form of insanity to them. No matter just how you think you've figured out what's going on or about to happen, he throws a knuckle ball that threatens to become a bean ball, aimed right at your head. When he began writing YA books, he brought some of that with him, yet tempered for a younger audience.

*Scat* is the story of Nick and Marta, whose biology teacher didn't return from a class field trip to the Black Vine swamp. Not that Mrs. Starch is going to be missed; she was the most fearsome teacher at Truman School. But neither of them believe that she was called away on a "family emergency," but, instead, was the victim of foul play, probably by Smoke, the class delinquent. Very quickly, and in typical Hiaasen fashion, the plot gets not only complicated, but ever-stranger players in this mystery come



fast and furious. The story is appropriate for middle school and older, enjoyable to read, and reflects Hiaasen's love of the Florida wild lands.

### The Seven Keys of Balabad

By Paul Haven

Random House Books for Young Readers, \$16.99, 288 pages

Oliver Finch was born and raised in New York City. So, when his reporter father is assigned to work in Balabad, Oliver finds his new home dry and boring. So as any teenager might, he wanders about the city, always comparing it unfavorably to NYC. He's found a few things that make it less boring—Mr. Haji the carpet seller and unofficial historian of the country, and made friends with Zee, a local boy his own age. Things may never have changed for Oliver until a 500-year-old carpet containing a secret is stolen, and then Zee disappears.

Oliver finds himself dealing with the secret society of the Brotherhood of Arachosia, and the lost treasure of King Agamon. Suddenly, Balabad isn't so boring, and maybe it's even a little too exciting.

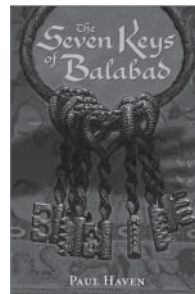
Fun to read, interesting characters, and the country of Balabad is brought to life by Haven, who spent years as the Associated Press bureau chief in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The story is loosely based on the actual Golden Horde of Bactria, discovered in Afghanistan in 1978.

### The Last Invisible Boy

By Even Kuhlman and J.P. Covert

Ginee Seo Books, \$16.99, 240 pages

Remember when you go to family reunions, and that one distant aunt is always doting all over her son, who everyone thinks is the bee's knees. And, he was SO dull. His humor made you want to cry, and all you could think about was slapping him with a spatula. That's the premises of the *Last Invisible Boy*. At times, talking and thinking like he is much older, than he really is, other times talking much younger, the story of Finn Garrett is far from the funny and happy story promised on the inside of the dust jacket. With random flashbacks appearing almost all the time and remedial humor that makes you want to cry, this book should be on no ones list for this month. At the same place where funny and happy times are promised, Finn says that anything can happen in his story.



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# Science Fiction & Fantasy

## In Shade and Shadow

By Barbara & J. C. Hendee

Penguin Group, \$24.95, 400 pages

*In Shade and Shadow* opens with two junior sages from the Sagecraft guild running an errand to get scrolls for Wynn, the heroine of the story. In the process of trying to gain some extra time to meet up with some girls at an inn, they cut through an alley, only to run into an ominous figure. As the shadowy figure begins to close in on the pair, the story jumps to Wynn, who is alone in her room working on her mantic sight (or spirit vision). She is soon joined by a vampire and a young gray wolf, and she must solve the murder of a dozen young sages.

Barb & J. C. Hendee have already published six books in the *Noble Dead* series and, because even though this was the first book of the series I've read, I have to say that this is an awesome novel and that they have done an outstanding job. Some parts were a little confusing to me, but that is to be expected, because certain characters were established in earlier books. Overall, this was a great book, and I think it would be a great addition to any fantasy junkie's collection.

Reviewed by Tom Rojek



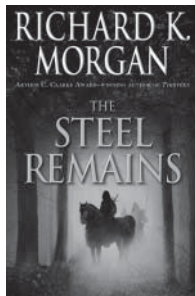
## The Steel Remains

By Richard K. Morgan

Del Rey, \$26.00, 432 pages

Creating a science fiction series that masquerades as fantasy is not new. It hasn't been overplayed, but it has been done. Morgan, a noted SF writer, has turned his eye to fantasy, but has set it in the far future. How far? No one knows. But the moon has been destroyed and its remains are a ring around the Earth. There are non-human races, the Scaled Folk (lizard men) and the Kiriath a black-skinned semi-human race that had recently left the land of me after a devastating war allied with the humans against the Scaled Folk. Whether mutant, alien, or something else is left unanswered.

Ringil Eskiath, a bitter veteran of that war, is hired to track down his kidnapped cousin who has been sold to slavers. Through his eyes, and the eyes of two of his former compatriots, Morgan's world unfolds. Egar, a Clanmaster among the northern nomads, and Lady Archeth, a half-Kiriath left behind by her family when they left, eventually meet up with Ringil in the destroyed port city of Khangset, to investigate the reasons behind the destruction. And, that reason ends up being the Dwenda, a magical seeming race that can manipulate the physics of reality. And they may be a greater threat to humanity than the Scaled Folk.



Morgan has been known writing violent, graphic science fiction. This series is no different. The action scenes are both graphically described, and could be offensive to some. So could the graphically described sex scenes, especially since two of the main characters are homosexual, and very outwardly so. That said, the *The Steel Remains* is a very well written "fantasy" story. Maybe not as genre busting as Morgan bragged about when discussing writing it, but one can forgive a writer for a bit of hyperbole.

## Eclipse Two

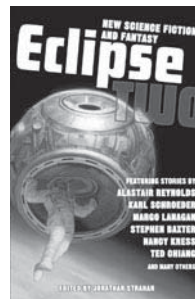
Edited By Jonathan Strahan

Night Shade Books, \$14.95, 256 pages

Strahan has collected some of the best and brightest writers to follow up on the success of *Eclipse One*. Intentionally less balanced than the previous volume, *Eclipse Two* has more stories that are science fiction, rather than fantasy. But, no matter the setting, the themes of these tales are universal, and each one is a work of art. Of particular note are the stories by Stephen Baxter (an unusual structure) Margo Lanagan (a derivative of another, much older, story) Daryl Gregory (the horrible reality behind superhero battles) Peter Beagle (a haunting tale) and Richard Parks (self-examination of the masks we wear to meet our goals).

Each and every story is highly recommended reading.

Reviewed by John Ottinger III



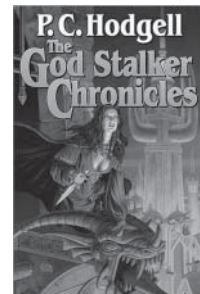
## The God Stalker Chronicles

By P.C. Hodgell

Baen Books, \$24.00, 656 pages

A collection of Pat Hodgell's 1980's books *God Stalk* and *Dark of the Moon*, *The God Stalker Chronicles* is the first of two collections (the next is *Seekers Bane*, expected in June), leading into a new fifth book continuing the series. The world Hodgell created, Kencyrath, contains three races, the Highborn (leaders), Kendar (artisans and soldiers) and Arrin-Ken (cat-like judges). They were brought together by the Three-Faced God to fight chaos in the form of a demonic being called Perimal Darkling. The lead character is Jamethiel, a Highborn who finds that not only has she lost years of aging, but that she may be one of the Kencyr, part of the trio that is supposed to lead the people of Kencyrath in the final battle against the Darkling. Behind the current story, lies an ancient one of betrayal that Jamethiel finds ties into her own life.

A good series that is worth picking up, and Baen has made it easier by releasing it in both a hardcover and trade release.



## A Song in Stone

By Walter H. Hunt

Wizards of the Coast Discoveries, \$21.95, 392 pages

In this time-travel novel, TV personality Ian Graham is transported back in time nearly 700 years to the very eve of the abolition of the Knights Templar. Though a fish out of water, he must travel Europe on a pilgrimage to become a Templar, while trying to return to his own time and discover the secret of the stone song of Rosslyn Chapel. Though the idea behind this novel is interesting, what results is a book with way to much description of architecture (more of a Rick Steve's travel guide than novel) and lots of attempts at mysticism that are more confusing than intriguing. Ian Graham is a very flat character with little of interest, and his prosaic acceptance of the status quo is truly unbelievable. Masons and Templar aficionados may find something of interest in this book, but for everyone else, best to let it lie to collect the same dust as the Templar order.

Reviewed by John Ottinger III



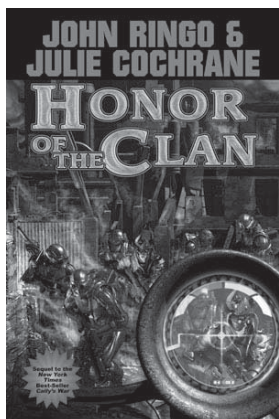
## Honor of the Clan

By John Ringo; Julie Cochrane

Baen Books, \$26.00, 368 pages

In a high-octane continuation of the *Legacy of the Aldenata* series, this volume finds O'Neal (Cally and Papa) against O'Neal (Mike) both doing what they feel honor demands, both determined to win. Mike O'Neal is tasked to stabilize the Federation, and the alien Darhel Clan Corporations hold over Earth. For Cally and Papa (Mike's daughter and father), they need to fight the control the Darhel have, at all costs. When Papa O'Neal leaves on a diplomatic trip to the Indowy, Cally finds herself acting Head of the Clan. Her allies, the Indowy Bane Sidhe, head to Earth, trying to survive a purge of their ranks, as the Darhel try to exterminate them. Eventually Cally and Mike find themselves on opposite sides of the political situation, and neither is temperamentally to give in.

As is usual with series like this, middle books have lots of story lines that need mention and maintenance. And, while there are those, Ringo and Cochrane keep the action flowing, with plenty of political scheming and combat. This is both galactic action, as races jockey for supremacy, and personal interactions, between complex characters, many of who wish to kill each other. *Honor of the Clan* keeps the story going from previous books, and leaves plenty of room for further books. And, no major clues on just where the story may end up. Recommended not only for readers of the earlier books, but for military science fiction fans who haven't yet picked up the series (though you probably ought to start at the beginning - *A Hymn Before Battle*.)



## Last Watch

By Sergei Lukyanenko

Miramax Books, \$14.95, 384 pages

*Last Watch* is the fourth novel of the *Night Watch* series, written by popular Russian writer Sergei Lukyanenko. Continuing the epic story of the fight between good and evil, Anton Gorodetsky is assigned to help the Scottish Night Watch on a murder investigation of a young man presumably murdered by a vampire. The murderer also seems to have first-hand knowledge of the Night Watch organization. The murder points to a conspiracy to obtain an artifact through the use of human cattle, and artifact hidden by Merlin himself. But, as he investigates the murder further, Anton realizes that forces of good and evil are hatching a plot that could lead to Armageddon.

Fast-paced and exciting, *Last Watch* is a good read, and fans of the series will be delighted. The end leaves room for a sequel, and one can only hope that the next installment is as good as this one.



Cont'd on next page



## The Comet's Curse

By Dom Testa

Tor, \$16.95, 240 pages

In a self-publishing Cinderella story, author Dom Testa received a publishing contract with Tor after the first three books in his series reached critical acclaim. Originally self-published and sold in Testa's hometown market of Denver (where he is a radio show host), *The Comet's Curse* and its two sequels had favorable reviews locally (a reason for local book reviews) and awards (including *Writer's Digest* Grand Prize Award). With three more books to go in the series, Tor picked it up for national publication, and we all benefit. While appearing a YA book, *Curse* is written to entertain all age groups.

A virus from a passing comet's tail is killed everyone over the age of 18, and nothing seems to be able to stop it. To save the future of the human race, a space ark is created to take 251 under 18-year-olds to another planet, hoping to form a viable colony. Along the way, the crew and passengers of the Galahad not only need to deal with the stresses of leaving Earth forever, running the ship, and the many common teenage problems, relationships and angst. And, then, they begin to suspect that someone may be trying to sabotage the mission.

A very well-written story, even though it follows well trod ground. Testa created characters you care about, and has them react much like teenagers probably would in unusual situations.

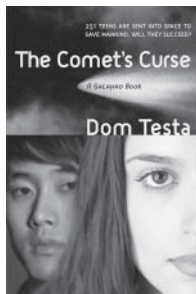
## One More Bite

By Jennifer Rardin

Orbit, \$12.99, 336 pages

Jaz Parks is an assassin for the CIA. However, she and her team target supernatural beings, taking out threats to the peace, and now, in *One More Bite* keeping a balance between three different groups, each now looking for supremacy in the wake of the death of Edward "The Raptor" Samos (killed in *Bitten to Death*). The action moves from Manhattan to Scotland, where the Flock vampire gang, the Valencian Weres and the Coven of Inverness are all looking to come out on top. The CIA is interested in détente, so when they receive information that the Weres have hired an assassin to kill the Coven's leader, Floraidh Halsey and they want Jaz to stop the hit. However, they don't know what the assassin looks like, or how powerful it may be.

This has been a pretty good modern supernatural series, and one that the former fans of Laurell Hamilton who became disappointed at the increasing forced sexual themes, will find to their liking.



## Mean Streets

By Kat Richardson, Thomas E. Sniegowski, Jim Butcher, Simon R. Green

RoC, \$15.00, 368 pages

Mean Streets is an anthology with a story from Richardson Sniegowski, Butcher, and Green. The flagship story, *The Warrior* involves the publicly acclaimed professional wizard, Harry Dresden, who becomes endangered when he tries to protect a friend. *Noah's Orphans*, written by Sniegowski, is a story about an angel that gave up the title to become a human and live on earth. When Noah of the Ark is murdered, it is up to the angel Remy to figure out what is going on. *The Difference a Day Makes*, written by Green, is a return to his nightshade world and a detective who helps a dame in trouble find her lost memories. Richardson's "The Third Death of the Little Clay Dog" is about Harper Blaine, who can walk in the spirit world.

All four stories are excellent and this anthology is perfect for people trying to discover more authors.

Reviewed by James Rojek

## Getting to Know You

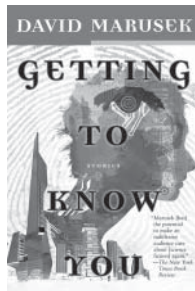
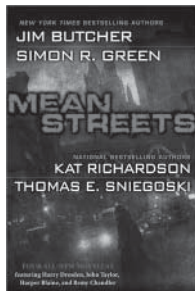
By David Marusek

Del Rey, \$15.00, 267 pages

*Getting to Know You* is a collection of science fiction stories that can have great appeal to someone who is not necessarily a fan of this particular genre. Much of the usual scientific content is sacrificed and well compensated for by the inclusion of memorable characters, haunting themes, and unexpected plot twists. Yet, as with many of David Marusek's futuristic universes, they are rooted in the cyberpunk tradition of technological dystopias.

These tales range in size from three pages to novella length, and each one packs quite a punch. It comes as no surprise that many of Marusek's settings are similar to his home state of Alaska; the climate is particularly relevant to "The Earth Is on the Mend." The book's title story adds a new dimension to the term "unconditional love," when two sisters reunite with surprising results. And, while a dark atmosphere is pervasive, it's not without some hope as is evidenced by the ironic wit of "Yurek Rutz, Yurek Rutz, Yurek Rutz." Nor does the author shy away from raising certain ethical questions that concern the actions of his characters as he did in "VTV."

The continuous thread throughout this collection is that of human shortcomings juxtaposed with technological perfection... and vice-versa. It receives a refreshing makeover from piece to piece especially with regard to artificial intelligence. Whether it's a severely altered society, exploitation by the media, corporate greed, political sup-



## David Falkyn: Star Trader

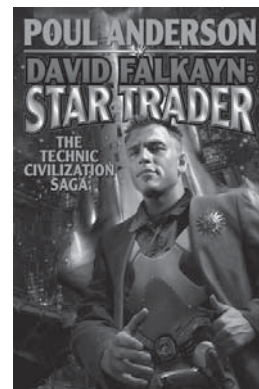
By Poul Anderson (compile by Hank Davis)

Baen, \$14.00, 512 pages

*David Falkyn: Star Trader* continues the epic adventures of Nicholas Van Rijn and David Falkyn. In these stories, the free market capitalism of Technic civilization is on the wane. Anderson is writing tales that, while full of adventure, are also more introspective and philosophical. The characters are deeper and more real, less like 50's era *Lost in Space* and more like the new *Battlestar Galactica*. The world-building continues to be exquisite and scientific, and the stories are truly exciting. But, there is a hint of melancholy in them at the passing of the Technic era, soon to be replaced by the Terran Empire.

This is space adventure for grown-ups. A great book for fans of 60's- and 70's-era pulp fiction and those who like truly science-based fiction. The stories are full of witty characters and exciting adventure that makes the reader nostalgic for the so called "Golden Age" of SF.

Reviewed by John Ottinger III



pression, or high tech gone wild, the future will come whether we like it or not. *Getting to Know You* conveys the point that, ultimately, it's up to humanity to take control and make it a better one.

Reviewed by Richard Mandrachio

## Unusual Suspects

Edited by Dana Stabenow

Penguin Group, \$14.00, 320 pages

*Unusual Suspects* is another anthology of short stories edited by Dana Stabenow. There are an even dozen of mystery and fantasy tales that are pure escapist literature. Fantasy fans will recognize the names of authors like Simon R. Green and Carole Nelson Douglas. The stories cover the gamut of fancy with tales about ghosts, Vampires, witches, and dragons. These supernatural beings interact with normal folks like you and me to such diverse celebrities as Sam Spade and Santa Clause.

This is a great work for reading in bed at night. The stories are just about the right length to keep your interest long enough to get sleepy. By that time, the end of the story is at hand. These twelve stories are enough to keep you busy for almost two weeks. Enjoy!

Reviewed by Michael H.

## After the Downfall

By Harry Turtledove

Night Shade Books, \$24.05, 324 pages

Hasso Pemsel was a Captain in Nazi Germany when the Soviets marched into Berlin. Backed into a museum and under Soviet fire, Hasso stumbled upon an omphalos stone reported to be a portal to another world. Out of options, Hasso sat on the stone and found himself in a swamp with a beautiful blonde woman chased by swarthy dark men. Hasso stepped in, rescued the

maiden, and discovered that he truly was in a new world. The blonde woman, Velona, was apparently the avatar of a goddess of the Lenello, a race of tall, blonde "Supermen" just like Hasso. For Velona, Hasso brought his military strategy to the Lenello, perpetually at war with the "racially inferior" Grenye, the swarthy, dark men chasing Velona.

Dual world fantasy has been done before. Harry Turtledove did this in 1987's *The Misplaced Legion*. The major difference between *The Misplaced Legion* and *After the Downfall*, besides Turtledove's choice of cultures to examine, is that over the course of *After the Downfall* Hasso Pemsel examines his racial beliefs towards the Jewish people, as seen through the lens of Lenello and Grenye.

*After the Downfall* is a strong alternate history novel. Fans of serious dual world fantasy and fans of Harry Turtledove's earlier work will find much to enjoy here.

Reviewed by Joe Sherry



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this could be  
your ad.





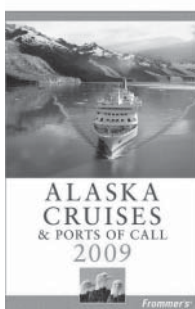
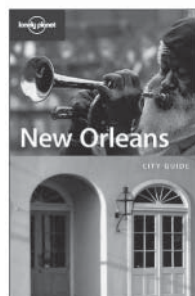
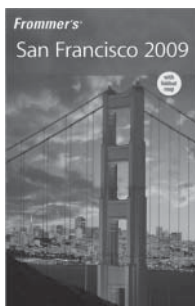
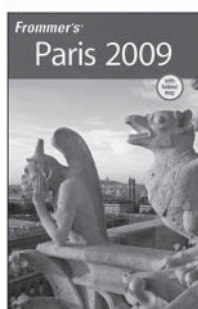
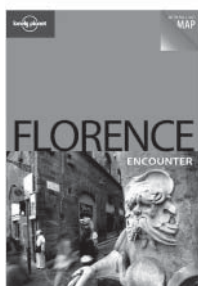
# Travel

Thinking about a romantic getaway for just you and your loved one? While it may be too late for a quick trip to Italy or France by Valentine's Day, you could present a couple of travel guides to your SO, and use dinner to plan out an upcoming trip. Lonely Planet has several good guides for Italy, including the country guide (*Italy*, Lonely Planet, \$25.99) that covers all the regions, with maps, lists of restaurants, hotels and sights. In a smaller, pocket sized guide, Lonely Planet also has the *Encounters* series (*Milan Encounter*, Lonely Planet, \$12.99; *Florence Encounter*, Lonely Planet, \$12.99), each focused on a specific city, containing much of the same general information from the larger guidebooks, but also adding in more specifics, and a handy pull-out map of the city. Frommer's 19th edition of their Rome guidebook (*Rome*, Frommer's, \$16.99) also includes a pull-out map of the city, but at twice the size of the *Encounters* guides, the map is also proportionately larger. You can fit the *Encounters* guides into the pocket of your pants, Frommer's needs a large jacket pocket or purse.

Both Lonely Planet and Frommer's have guidebooks to Paris (and what travel book company doesn't), and while both cover much of the same territory, the Frommer's guide (*Paris 2009*, Frommer's, \$12.99) is a smaller, portable book, but without the removable map that Lonely Planet provides (*Paris City Guide*, Lonely Planet, \$18.99). Of the two, the Frommer's is easier to read and find things, but that come at a cost of containing about one-third the content that the Lonely Planet guide does. Which is better? Depends on if you've been there before, and how comfortable you are trying to find things for yourself. Also available from

Frommer's is their guide to the Provence region (*Provence & the Riviera*, Lonely Planet, \$19.99) in case you'd like to explore the more Mediterranean areas of France, and get some sun on the beach.

For more local getaways, Frommer's has a new guide to San Francisco (*San Francisco 2009*, Frommer's, \$17.99) allowing you to just go and see the touristy sites that you haven't yet, or find the neighborhood restaurants recommended by the writers that you haven't ever enjoyed. The City Strolls chapter gives some good walking areas, especially when there is good weather for it. Also included is a pull out map for navigating the twists and turns of San Francisco streets. Lonely Planet has a great guide to New Orleans (*New Orleans City Guide*, Lonely Planet, \$18.99) that takes into account the many changes that have happened since Katrina, and a good guide to the rebuilt night (and day) life that makes New Orleans still a great city to visit. Frommer's has a new guide to Alaska cruises (*Alaska Cruises and Ports of Call 2009*, Frommer's, \$18.99) just in case a visit to the land of Sarah Palin is more your style.



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# Art, Architecture & Photography

## China, Portrait of a Country

Edited By Liu Heung Shing; Text From James Kyng; Karen Smith

Taschen, \$59.95, 424 pages

A highly spectacular photo collection of pictures from Chinese photographs taken from the 1949 Cultural Revolution and through the current day. Liu Heung Shing collected these pictures from more than 80 photographers who took pictures of their country, lives, and countrymen, often never-before seen or published for fear of being marked as counter-revolutionary. Organized by years, you get to see the progression of China, from the early Cultural Revolution years, to today's industrial Revolution. This is a still photographic documentary of 50 years of change. There are the highly staged and political pictures, and those of rural life. The pictures are all well-captioned, and biographies of all the Chinese photographers are provided. There have been plenty of books and documentaries on the subject of China in the last few years. *China, Portrait of a Country* is certainly unique, interesting and comprehensive. And, in the usual Taschen fashion, well-designed, packaged, and presented. An unusual coffee-table book, but an excellent addition to a photography book collection.

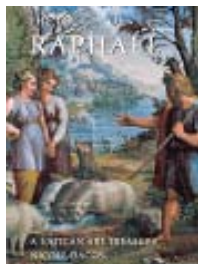


## The Loggia of Raphael

By Niole Dacos

Abbeville Press, \$125.00, 352 pages

One of the hidden treasures in the Vatican is the loggia, or colonnaded porch, of the Apostolic Palace, designed and decorated by Raphael and his workshop. Possibly almost as stunning and detailed as the Sistine Chapel, this comprehensive book provides new pictures and details of the project. Part One of the book showcases the "grotesques" and bas-reliefs molded into the stucco around the loggia that were modeled after Roman wall paintings from Nero's Domus Aurea, that had been recently discovered. Part Two covers the Biblical scenes used in decorating the thirteen vaults—the first twelve being major Old Testament figures, each having four paintings depicting their story, the thirteenth being the story of Christ, from the Adoration of the Shepherds to the Last Supper. The third part is a breakdown of the many helpers from Raphael's studio and the other artists who came to Rome to work with him. Finally, the last section shows the influence that this masterpiece had on the world, often copied, including in the United States Capitol.



Many of the pictures are unique to this book, commissioned for its publication. This is the first major English book on the Loggia, and an excellent companion to Abbeville Press' 2007 *The Sistine Chapel: A New Vision*.

## The Dawn of the Color Photograph

By David Okuefuna

Princeton University Press, \$49.50, 336 pages

When color photography was created in 1907 by the Lumière brothers in France, philanthropist Albert Khan assigned photographers to travel the world documenting the many peoples they found, using the new technology. More than 72,000 pictures resulted, and *The Dawn of the Color Photograph* is a sampling of them. These don't just focus on the exotic cultures from the reaches of civilization, but Europeans, Americans, and the battlefields of WWI. But, those exotic cultures are also well represented, when native dress was day to day wear, and not something worn for tourists. This is also well before globalization, so there are no modern distractions in the background, no Micky Mouse T-shirts, McDonalds, or Starbucks. This book is a supplement to a BBC TV program of the same name, but is extremely stand-alone. A prefect book for photography or history buffs and being a nice sweet spot for those that are both.

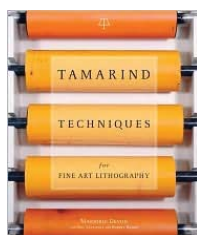


## Tamarind Techniques for Fine Art Lithography

By Marjorie Devon; Bill Lagattuta; Rodney Hamon

Abrams, \$85.00, 320 pages

The Tamarind Institute of Lithography at the University of New Mexico had already created the bible of the fine art lithography field in their *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art & Techniques*, published in 1971. This long-overdue new volume will probably be treasured as much as the previous one, and maybe for just as long. Produced by Devon (Tamarind Director), Lagattuta (Tamarind Master Printer), and Hamon (Tamarind Education Director), *Tamarind Techniques for Fine Art Lithography* not only has step-by-step directions for all the lithographic techniques used by Tamarind, but also includes instructions for setting up your own print studio, create high-quality prints, maintain edition sequences and caring for the finished products. There is health and safety information for the chemicals and inks used in production, which is a very nice addition. Above all, there are hundreds of pictures showing the steps for each technique, and



illustrated by finished projects from the Institute over the last 40 years.

While a specialized book, for anyone interested in doing fine art lithography, this is a necessary purchase for your reference shelf.

## Paradise Lost: Persia From Above

By Georg Gerster, Maryam Sachs

Phaidon, \$59.95, 184 pages

George Gerster has been an aerial photographer since 1963, because, as he says, "Distance creates an overview, and an overview creates insight." He has photographed 111 countries, on every continent including the Antarctic. In 1976 and 1978, he had an opportunity to fly over and photograph Iran. The results of those flights, over 100, are showcased in *Paradise Lost: Persia From Above*. From ancient ziggurats and citadels to a crowded ski resort, this is an unusual look at the thousands of years of civilization modern Iraq has had. Even the cities are still crowded, in buildings that have lasted hundreds, if not a thousand years of occupation. Iran has been much in the news, and this photographic look is prior to all of the changes we have seen since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. All of the photographs reflect changes that man has made in nature, from millennial old ruins, to current rice fields cut into the rich delta soil. An intriguing look at one of the oldest, consistently occupied parts of the world.

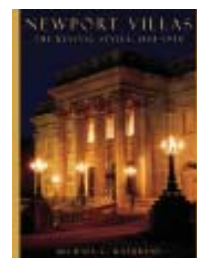


## Newport Villas: The Revival Styles

By Michael C. Kathrens

Norton, \$85.00, 384 pages

In another book of architectural excess, Norton releases *Newport Villas* just months after their *Gilded Mansions*. Covering the much of the same period of history—1885 to 1935, but moves from a New York focus and into Newport, Rhode Island. Here is where the fabulously wealthy took their summers, far from the heat and crowds of urban life, and to their simple coastal cottages, ranging in size from 30 to 70 rooms, and built to impress the also wealthy neighbors. The book is organized by homes, each exemplifying a specific style moving from Colonial Revival to Italian Renaissance Revival, French Classical Revival and Georgian Revival. Many of these homes are considered historical landmarks, and the many hundreds of photographs, floor plans, and historical notes are almost like taking a walking tour of each house. There are color plates at the beginning of the volume, but the majority of the book is black-and-white archival pictures. That said, this



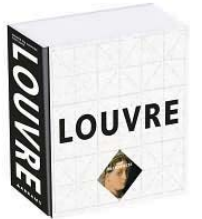
is still a well-produced and organized book. Recommended for armchair architectural voyeurs.

## Louvre: 400 Masterpieces

By Daniel Soulié

Abrams, \$40.00, 544 pages

In this amazing book, Daniel Soulié, Louvre historian, collects 400 of the more than 35,000 art objects from the museum's eight departments—Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities; Egyptian Antiquities; Near Eastern Antiquities; Islamic Art; Sculptures; Decorative Arts; Paintings; and Prints and Drawings. Of course, many of the marquee objects are represented, the *Mona Lisa* and the *Venus de Milo* as the two big ones, but Soulié finds new objects, many of them probably overlooked by visitors too busy waiting in line for Mona Lisa. Each chapter is introduced by a small essay about the history of the department, but the emphasis is on the art itself. Most pages are art, one or two pictures per page, with reference information about the pieces. The initial chapter is the history of the Louvre itself, with pictures and paintings from its past, showing its development over the centuries.



The book, itself, is a small square hardcover without a dust jacket and is heavier than it looks. The gilded edges of the pages makes them stick together the first time you go through the book, but add a nice touch to the packaging. A very nice collection of art, from one of the premier art museums of the world.

## J. C. Leyendecker

By Laurence S. Cutler; Judy Goffman Cutler  
Abrams, \$50.00, 256 pages

J. C. Leyendecker was one of the great commercial illustrators in early 20th Century, having created the iconic Arrow Shirt man (based on his partner and model, Charles Beach), and produced more than 300 covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*. This is the first collection of his work in more than 30 years, and has been long overdue. The *Post* covers are reproduced nine to a page, with a full-page reproduction of one of the original painting opposite. Many of the Arrow Shirt ads are also reproduced, as are sketches and studies in oil. The controversy in this volume lies in claims that a few of the reproduced pieces are actually forgeries and that some of the facts presented about Leyendecker and his life are unsubstantiated.



See J.C., page 32



# Current Events & Politics

## The Great Derangement

By Matt Taibbi

Spiegel & Grau, \$14.95, 336 pages

Matt Taibbi is the best thing to happen to Rolling Stone since Hunter S. Thompson. He's the reason I renewed my subscription more than once. And, while *The Great Derangement* works at a number of levels, is it more like a collection of magazine essays than a coherent full length book. That said, Taibbi is one of the great essayists, especially when he has his dander up and his tolerance for bullshit down. One of his great ongoing targets has been not just the Bush administration, but the entire system that has evolved in Congress, with the cycle of politicians paying for campaign donations through funding private programs and then retiring to those same lobbying groups, to return the favor for their replacement.

Here, *The Great Derangement* is Taibbi's attempt to make some sense of the far left and the far right, and their ability to create and believe the most unbelievable conspiracy theories; whether its the US government behind 9/11 or that the global warming is a conspiracy designed to take away religious liberties. Many of the groups he joins, looking for "understanding" from within, are easily mocked, and Matt does often take the easy pot shots. But he still has an eye for detail and irony, and both show up quite often. Probably not a book to read straight through, but easy enough to pick up and put down. And moderates on both sides of the Red/Blue divide, will find some uncomfortable-ness as the extremes from either side take unbelievable positions, creating no common ground, except for the usefulness in using the Internet to trumpet those beliefs.



## Forecast

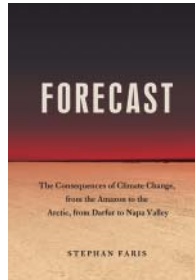
By Stephan Faris

Henry Holt, \$25.00, 256 pages

Stephan Faris has traveled the world looking for connections between changing weather patterns and increasing migration, violence, and ecological damage. Even if you don't believe in global warming, Faris makes

convincing arguments that, when weather changes, people respond, and those responses, in turn, create yet more responses. The tribes currently fighting in Darfur co-existed peacefully, until drought caused food scarcity, which began the cycle of violence. People fleeing the violence headed for Europe, causing an increase in anti-immigrant politics. *Forecast* looks at major problems resulting from erratic weather—looking at food supply, immigration, insurance, national sovereignty, disease, armed conflict, and natural disaster—each causing a cascade of resulting problems for others not directly in the pattern of the ecological crisis.

Recommended for both believers in global warming and the skeptics—who may both find some common ground.

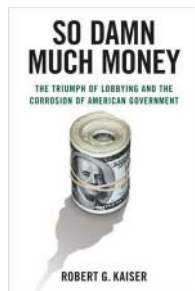


## So Damn Much Money

By Robert G. Kaiser

Knopf, \$27.95, 416 pages

"Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made" (Otto von Bismarck) is a highly applicable quote for Kaiser's *So Damn Much Money*. Kaiser is a long-time *Washington Post* political reporter, and, here, he uses the story of Gerald Cassidy and his lobbying firm, Cassidy and Associates, as a way to track the growth and development of the modern lobbying industry. Cassidy started from a poor family, became a lawyer for migrant workers and eventually decided to go for the big money as a lobbyist. Cassidy and Associates was one of the pioneers of earmarks and in congressional junkets and perks (NCAA tickets anyone?). During the George W. Bush administration, Cassidy and Associates, a traditionally Democratic firm, hired Republican lobbyists, including even Jack Abramoff for a period of time. The whole history of lobbying, from its earliest roots, to today, is told in an eminently



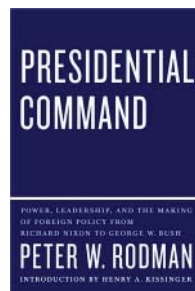
readable, yet highly disquieting story, that makes one consider that the lobbyists may just be the drivers, bringing the live animals to the Congressional slaughterhouse for sausage.

## Presidential Command

By Peter W. Rodman

Knopf, \$27.95, 368 pages

In a very well-researched and scholarly book, Rodman walks through styles of presidential leadership and decision-making, from the Nixon years to the end of the George W. Bush's administration. *Presidential Command* is an analysis of how decisions were made and the ongoing conflict in vision and execution between the State Department and the National Security Advisors. By looking at how each president picked his closest advisors, and how those advisors advised, obstructed, or used the national security bureaucracy to make their own policy Rodman not only sheds light on the past, but on the inherent problems with an entrenched bureaucracy that doesn't change every four to eight years. His analysis of the players involved, from Henry Kissinger (who also wrote the introduction) to Dick Cheney, and the rest of the most recent administration, is insightful and interesting to read. Rodman was a long-time Washington insider, working for every Republican president since Nixon (during the Clinton years, he was a senior editor at the *National Review*) and his grasp of the inherent conflict between State and National Security will probably make this book required reading in many parts of the Obama administration.



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## ART

J.C., con't from page 31

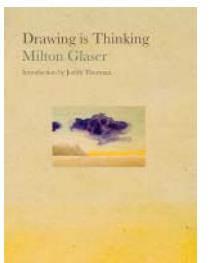
ated. For a major retrospective of a modern artist, there were very few footnoted references to the text, leading to claims and counterclaims about Leyendecker and his life, without any substantiation. The reproductions are exceptional, even the older *Post* covers, and the many hundreds of pieces make this the most complete book yet on Leyendecker.

## Drawing is Thinking

By Milton Glaser

Overlook Press, \$45.00, 208 pages

If you don't recognize the name of Milton Glaser, you definitely would recognize some of his commercial work—probably the most widely known one is the I ♥ NY logo. *Drawing is Thinking* is a collection of his art, none captioned or explained, just there to be experienced. The introductory interview between Glaser and Peter Mayer explores some of Glaser's thought process and his belief that "art is a form of meditation for both maker and witness." For the viewers of *Drawing is Thinking*, there are many hours of reflection ahead. The art ranges from black-and-white pencil and ink work to full-color completed designs. There are several pieces that are shown in stages, from sketch to finished work. Usually, when you have a collection of an artist's work, there is extensive commentary about each piece; here, you are left to ponder the what Glaser was thinking as he drew them. And, that is the point. Interesting, thoughtful, and, as he says, meditative.



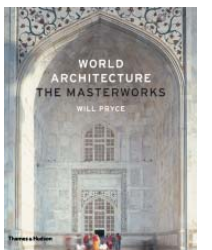
## World Architecture: The Masterworks

By Will Pryce

Thames & Hudson, \$80.00, 320 pages

Will Pryce (*Brick: A World History*) has collected more than 80 buildings that represent the pinnacle of architectural design. Some of them show up on any given list of classic design—the Pantheon, the Hagia Sophia, and the great cathedrals of Europe—also go into the new or smaller projects—the Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp. More than half the buildings have detailed photo essays documenting the many aspects of the design. Pryce's comments on the buildings reflect his interest and love of architecture, and provide context to the history of each.

The book and reproductions are excellent, the hundreds of photographs stunning. An thoroughly wonderful book of architecture and what the visions of men can produce.





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