



REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS



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★ ★ ★ ★ FICTION ★ ★ ★ ★

Alter, Judy. *AFTER PA WAS SHOT*. Lufkin: Ellen C. Temple Publishing Inc. and Dallas: E-Heart Press Inc., 1991. 189p. Paperback: \$5.95, ISBN 0-936650-12-5. 89-12176.

Popular Fort Worth author Judy Alter has written one of her best novels in this newest release for youth. After her pa is shot in a 1904 gunfight in Center, Texas, twelve-year-old Ellsbeth, a self-described tomboy, must assume the care of her three siblings and the house while her mother works. Time and place are important elements here and reveal turn-of-the-century social mores. With determination, spunk, and increasing maturity, Ellsbeth copes with loneliness, hard work, and grief, but the conflicts make for an intriguing plot. The characters are fully developed and believable, and solving a mystery at the end draws the family together.

Alter's books for readers ages eight to twelve include the award-winning *Luke and the Van Zandt County War*, *Mattie* (Vol. III, No.1), and the *Maggie* series (Vol.IV, No.1 and Vol.IV, No.3). Director of TCU Press, Alter is a member of Western Writers of America and the Texas Institute of Letters.

Sally Dooley

Clark, L.D. *A BRIGHT TRAGIC THING: A TALE OF CIVIL WAR TEXAS*. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 1992. 302p. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-938317-18-0; Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-938317-17-2. 91-078329.

Based on the Civil War tragedy of the Great Hanging at Gainsville, Texas (1862), *A Bright Tragic Thing* is the story of a boy's emergence into manhood. When Confederate rebels jail Union men on questionable charges of treason, Todd Blair begins the struggle to free the prisoners, his father among them. A jury packed with hotheads proves insurmountable, however, and Todd's father hangs along with more than forty others. The story is intense and touching, and its mature themes call for adult readers. Though the novel has a sound historical foundation and an engaging plot, Clark seems hesitant for the first third of the story. The language is awkward and the action does not rise as smoothly as it might. The remainder of the novel is much stronger, with a confident narrative voice and more natural dialogue, but the wait might be too long for most readers. Of special

interest is the cover photo of Clark's great-grandfather, Nathaniel Clark, whose life was taken in the Great Hanging. Clark writes fiction and critical nonfiction, and he has received a PEN Syndicated Fiction Award. This is his fourth novel about Texas.

Brenda L. Herbel

Garland, Sherry. *SONG OF THE BUFFALO BOY*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1992. 249p. Hardcover: \$15.95, ISBN 0-15-277107-7. 91-31872.

One of many Amerasian children left in Vietnam after the American forces leave, seventeen-year-old Loi suffers as an outcast because of her half-breed status. She loves a young buffalo herder, but because her family is forcing another marriage upon her, Loi flees from the countryside to Ho Chi Minh City. There the Amerasian Homecoming Program offers opportunity for Loi to go to the United States where she dreams of finding her real father. Loi learns the terrible choices war presents to people, especially the innocent women and children. More importantly, she grows in understanding of who she is, a search for identity that is common to adolescents for whom this book is written.

Houston writer Sherry Garland writes sensitively and knowingly about Vietnam, a culture she has become familiar with through her work with the resettlement of Vietnamese in Houston. *Song* won the Guilled Quill Award in Juvenile Fiction and a works-in-progress grant sponsored by Judy Blume and Society of Children's Book Writers. It was also nominated for ALA Best Books for Young Adults. Garland is a talented novelist who lives in Houston where she writes for both children and adult audiences.

Sally Dooley

Griffin, Reni R. *HOBKIN*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992. 202p. Hardcover: \$14.95, ISBN 0-689-50539-6. 91-24079.

When Liza and her teenaged sister Kay run away from an abusive stepfather in San Antonio, they make a home in an abandoned house in a small West Texas town. The two pose as relatives of the absent owners, Kay working in the bus stop/store and Liza coping with pioneer-style housekeeping without running water or electricity. From an old diary Liza discovers in the house, she learns about Hobkin, the helpful brownie who came from England with a bride. This explains to Liza the extraordinary help she

receives in several unusual instances. As the girls mature and learn to take care of themselves, they grow closer. The friendly and helpful nature of the neighbors and Hobkin soften the harshness of the modern problem of family violence. This is an intriguing story with a well-realized setting and characters who grow. A twelve-year-old reader enjoyed Hobkin probably because she too is poised between eagerness for adult responsibility and the make-believe of childhood.

Frances M. Ramsey

Hajdusiewicz, Babs Bell. *KANGA'S STEW*. Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1991. 24p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$10.95 for package of 5, ISBN 0-8114-6113-0. (Juvenile)

Riley, Gale Blasser. *ORDER IN THE COURT*. Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1991. 24p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$10.95 for package of 5, ISBN 0-8114-6117-3. (Juvenile)

Using cumulative and repetitive yet fetching rhyme, these books from an educational series leave plenty of room for children ages four to seven to use their imaginations and predict what will happen as the stories progress. Large engaging illustrations (by Sharron O'Neil for *Kanga* and by Ron LeHew for *Order*) accompany these simple stories. *Order in the Court* identifies the characters by name at the beginning and subsequently by illustration so beginning readers do not repeatedly stumble over difficult titles. *Kanga's Stew* incorporates much of the story into the drawings. Both would be excellent enrichment for any literature program. The books are part of the publisher's Step-pingstone Series and come in big books and in big book story packs.

Cynthia Calvert

Hearon, Shelby. *A PRINCE OF A FELLOW*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1978. Reprint. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992. 210p. Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-87565-099-6. 91-5178.

Before she moved to New York several years ago, Shelby Hearon lived and wrote in Texas. She won the NEA/PEN Syndication Short Story Prize five times and the Texas Institute of Letters best novel award twice as well as numerous other national awards. *A Prince of a Fellow* was her first novel after her divorce and portrays a woman in transition. Set in a town like New Braunfels where the German influence is strong, the novel describes Avery Krause, the protagonist, who thinks she is looking for a prince to rescue her, but who is unknowingly establishing her emotional and sexual independence. Hearon's wit and wisdom, sense of place, and well-drawn characters create an entertaining novel. This is number eighteen in the Texas Tradition Series of TCU Press. A newly added afterword by Sarah Greene, a journalist, places the importance of this book in Hearon's development.

Sally Dooley

Keremes, Constance Andrea. *HOOTENANNY NIGHT*. Austin: State House Press, 1992. 29p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 0-938349-79-1; Paperback: \$6.95, ISBN 0-938349-80-5. 91-32505. (Juvenile)

The delightfully-written and cheerfully-illustrated book, *Hootenanny Night*, is a fun-to-read-aloud type book for children of all ages. In simple rhyme, the farmer folks celebrate harvest time with a square dance in Jed Riley's barn. The exhilarating music of the fiddle and banjo overflows into the barnyard; the animals begin their own outdoor dance. Later, the farmer folks join the animals' dancing, and it soon becomes a barnyard jamboree. This little book is filled with imagination and spirit. The words by Keremes and illustrations by Rhea Groepper are perfectly matched on each page, which is characteristic of an excellent "read and look" picture book.

Sarah Matheny

Lindsey, David. *BODY OF TRUTH*. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 417p. Hardcover: \$22.00, ISBN 0-385-24814-8. 91-28713.

Avid readers of David Lindsey's other books will be disappointed in this newest publication. Fast-paced, suspenseful novels such as *Spiral* (Vol.2, No.1), *In the Lake of the Moon* (Vol.3, No.2), and *Mercy* (Vol.5, No.3) established Lindsey as a writer to whom a sense of place (mostly Houston) is important. Now Stuart Haydon is in Central America, but *Body of Truth* is so heavily weighted with the heat, humidity, and violence of Guatemala that *Body* sinks. Pace is sluggish in this torpid plot with characters who cannot support our interest. This is no page-turner; one is only glad to finish and get out of Guatemala. Lindsey, a talented Austin writer, will surely write another mystery as superior in caliber as his former works.

Sally Dooley

Olivares, Julián, ed. *TOMÁS RIVERA: THE COMPLETE WORKS*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1991. 447p. English/Spanish. Hardcover: \$38.95, ISBN 1-55885-039-2, 91-12328.

In this volume, Julián Olivares, who was both friend and personal editor of Tomás Rivera, brings together the late author's complete literary production including all of his previously unpublished works: two short stories, five vignettes, twenty-six poems, an introduction to a projected second novel, and his essay "Critical Approaches to Chicano Literature and its Dynamic Intimacy." The introduction to the collection is an extensive and insightful analysis by Olivares of . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*. . . *And the earth did not devour him* (Vol.II, No.4), Rivera's only novel which won the Quito Sol Literary Prize in 1970, and also of the essays, the poetry, and especially the unpublished material. At the time of his death, Rivera had published only half of his poetry believing, as he explains in his poetics, that "poetry should not be explained, categorized, studied, but read and felt and

sung." According to Olivares, poetry was a most intimate experience for Rivera. Whereas he wrote his prose for the public, his poetry was written for himself. In keeping with these sentiments Olivares, though he includes in the volume all twenty-six unpublished poems, keeps his explications brief. Interested readers can find reviews of his short stories, *The Harvest* (Vol.IV, No.4) and his poetry *The Searchers* (Vol.I, No.3) in this periodical.

Beth J. Dublinski

Putnam, Jeff. *BY THE WAYSIDE*. Dallas: Baskerville Publishers, Ltd., 1992. 343p. Hardcover: \$19.00, ISBN 0-9627509-5-6. 91-077771.

Dallas writer Jeff Putnam adequately demonstrates in this wonderful, quixotic tale of a talented opera singer in Europe that it is not only possible for Texas authors to write about distant lands and exotic themes, but it is also desirable. Gordon Bancroft is a rare talent; living in Barcelona with Elena, the mother of his child, he finds himself involved in a series of hilarious misadventures in his attempt to reconcile his professional development and career with his personal love for this accidental family.

Lovingly written and well published by this newest press in Texas, *By the Wayside* is a novel sure to please anyone who has ever had irreconcilable dreams and had to make hard choices. It is also the first of a series of novels involving Gordon Bancroft, books that will, I think, span continents and time as Putnam peers through his fiction from the environs of Big D.

Clay Reynolds

Stark, Cruce. *CHASING UNCLE CHARLIE*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992. 371p. Hardcover: \$17.95, ISBN 0-87074-333-3. 91-52777.

Larry King compares the book to *Lonesome Dove*; Don Graham says the novel seems "wise" to him. The publisher compares it to *Huckleberry Finn*.

Did we all read the same novel?

The novel incorporates recognizable elements of the tall tale, the picaresque novel, the folk myth, existentialism, secular humanism, and the perfect country song. Imagine trying to eat slightly burnt oatmeal cookies made with sardines, jerked beef, sour cream, and rosemary, and washing all of that down with Jim Beam and buttermilk.

Bo, the seventeen-year-old protagonist, assigns himself the task of finding his "Uncle" Charlie, an East Texas school-teacher who shoots the town butcher, takes off for the Indian territory, and in "five years, maybe ten" manages to associate himself with (and evidently impress the hell out of) an ersatz preacher-pimp and his good-hearted debutante-turned-whore, a Texas Ranger who had been scalped (but whose wounds had been oozing for six years or so), a mountain-man cross between Clint Eastwood and Yoda, and--well, you get the idea. While being shuffled around between all of these characters, Bo "comes out on the far side of being a man."

Stark "didn't want to get too tied down to the way things

were on maps," so he put the Big Thicket in the middle of a semi-desert. Along with geography, he ignores the conventions of prose mechanics, the laws of physics, and the axioms of medical science with the same casual disregard. All of that can be excused, of course, but his smearing of the realities of human behavior is harder to swallow.

One can hardly wait for Stark's next novel. Maybe in that one Bo will go looking for Elvis.

Andrew Preslar

Vliet, R.G. *ROCKSPRING*. New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1974. Reprint. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992. 129p. Paperback: \$7.95, ISBN 0-87074-334-1. 91-52780.

This powerful, poetic little novel of abduction, seduction, and lost love was less than well received when it was first published. In a thoughtful afterword, Tom Pilkington points out that reviewers tended to regard this unique retelling of the story of star-crossed lovers as nothing more than a "fairy tale," original only in setting. But, as Pilkington notes, it is that element that more than anything else sets this book apart as one of the most stunning novels produced by a Texas writer. Although the story is brutal and violent in its particulars, the author's prose is so beautiful that even in the harshest of circumstances, the imagery of nature merges with frontier mythology to create a kind of ironic Eden wherein the most tender of human emotions emerge.

Vliet died in 1984; he left behind a legacy of three novels, a play, and some fine poetry. Three times honored by the Texas Institute of Letters, his reputation continues to be a major literary force.

Clay Reynolds

Wade, Mary Dodson. *DAVID CROCKETT: SURE HE WAS RIGHT*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 60p. Illustrations. Hardcover: \$11.95, ISBN 0-89015-854-1. (Juvenile)

Wade explains to young readers that "whoppers" about and by David Crockett expanded until the true stories became legends. The difference between "whoppers" and truth in various exploits of Davy's is seen in the book. The Houston author uses only short direct sentences to describe Davy's life. Pat Finney's drawings on each spread enhance the portrayal of this rugged, popular frontiersman. Besides being interesting reading for young children, this book will contribute to an understanding of Texas and American history and the qualities of a hero.

Frances M. Ramsey

Wallace, Bill. *BUFFALO GAL*. New York: Holiday House, 1992. 185p. Hardcover: \$13.95, ISBN 0-8234-0943-0. 91-28243.

Set largely in Texas in 1904, Amanda is brought from California by her mother who is a member of a group trying to save the buffalo from extinction. The trip gets off to a bad

start, but Amanda perks up when a handsome half-Comanche, David Talltree, appears. How their relationship changes from hate to mutual respect and finally to love dovetails with the hunt and location of the wild bison. The plot is entertaining, but the appearance of an alligator in a spring-fed Hill Country river made this reviewer doubt the validity of the author's historical research. Feminists might also take issue with the author when Amanda's mother soothes her by saying, "We women do have the right to get hysterical every now and then. Besides . . . it's all right to act like that around men. Keeps them confused." Or maybe that is part of the historical setting for this little romance.

Sally Dooley

POETRY

D'Andrea, Ritalinda. *SOMEWHERE BEYOND HITHER AND YEARN*. San Antonio: Pecan Grove Press, 1991. 75p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$10.00, ISBN 1-877603-12-0.

If you like riddles, if you like puzzles, if you like clever poems with a decided play on words, this book is for you. Many poems are dedicated to people who may have confessed their angst, anxiety, or whatever to the author. It took this reader some time to unlock all the mysteries, but the trial was worth the effort in most pages. Strong statements here. Definitely feminist. One poem called "Baby Magic" is powerful. But how open-minded St. Mary's University is to include this one called "AVE . . ." (Ave Maria?). "Failed Mary, fool of grace, / Your lord did use thee. / Message art thou among women / And message the wound of your womb. / --Jesus! Lowly, Mary, 'other' by god, splayed with us sinners now. / And at the horror of your death, / Say, 'men.'" A rosary? Wow. Any fool can see that's clever. And strong. But . . . ? D'Andrea, a San Antonio resident and graduate student of literature at St. Mary's University, has had a varied career as a teacher; dance and art therapist, performance artist, co-author of two books of nonfiction, and author of several scientific articles.

Violette Newton

Jones, Nancy, ed. *VOICES FROM WITHIN*. Denton: University of North Texas and Dallas: Dallas County Community College District, 1992. 108p. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-929398-37-8. 91-47629.

Junior Colleges are the blue-collar districts of academia, and writers who can continue to produce under their grinding class loads are worthy of respect. Thirty-four poets from the Dallas County Community College District are gathered here to join the fiction writers collected in an earlier volume from the same publisher, *Out of Dallas, 14 Stories* (Vol. IV, No. 1). Unfortunately, most of the poems included in Jones's anthology are fairly tired examples of versifying with many working exhausted literary veins and others using such out-

dated diction as "neath" and "till" [sic]. Still, there are a couple of pleasant discoveries. John Barrett (Richland College) turns witty love lyrics, including one that uses ice cream ("the curve of scoops too rich for childhood / tongues") as a sexual conceit. Ed Garcia (Brookhaven College) contributes a poignant memory of a young daughter's weekend visitation with her non-custodial father: "I go around the house finding a sock, / Or a long blonde hair by the sink, / Scraps of scrawled paper, the odd barrette, / Scuttling a bit myself, / Sustained by her thin residue." Linda Wells (Eastfield College) is the strongest poet in the book. In "Playing Saxophone" the musical act becomes a metaphor for poetry itself: "I dive in, / past the key signature, / to devour the moan of / the lonesome woodwind, / totally unprepared."

R.S. Gwynn

NONFICTION

ARCHITECTURE

Foy, Jessica and Judith Linsley. *THE MCFADDIN-WARD HOUSE*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992. 66p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$5.95, ISBN 0-87611-117-7.

Built in Beaumont in 1906, this Colonial Revival house was home for the McFaddin and Ward families until Mamie McFaddin Ward died and left the house and its contents to become a museum endowed by the Heritage Foundation she established. The meticulous care that was lavished on the home through the years provides the museum with a building that reveals to visitors not only the family's prosperity but evolving tastes during this century. In the 12,800-square-foot mansion, over 30,000 objects demonstrate a family's history for 150 years. Foy and Linsley, who work respectively as curator of collections and research assistant at the museum, have written an entertaining and concise account of an important early Southeast Texas family, their home, and its restoration. The notes reflect their diligence while also providing resources for further study.

Sally Dooley

EDITOR'S CHOICE

ART

Carmichael, Elizabeth and Chloë Sayer. *THE SKELETON AT THE FEAST: THE DAY OF THE DEAD IN MEXICO*. Austin: University of Texas Press in cooperation with the British Museum Press, 1991. 160p. Il-

Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$27.95, ISBN 0-292-77658-6, 91-66304.

This book by Elizabeth Carmichael, curator of the Latin American Collection of the British Museum, and Chloë Sayer, author of several books on Mexico, should be required reading for anyone genuinely interested in the heart and soul of Mexican folklife, traditions, and popular culture. Immediately following Halloween and All Saints' days, Mexico's Day of the Dead, on November 2, culminates what is perhaps the most "Mexican" festival period in a country widely renowned for its colorful fiestas. The book investigates the pre-Hispanic roots hybridized with the later Catholic context of this mestizo celebration, tracing its development into modern times. It also includes interviews with a cross section of Mexicans concerning their beliefs and customs in observance of this ancient religious celebration that in many ways rivals or surpasses Christmas and Easter in Mexico and, to some extent, among U.S. citizens of Mexican heritage.

From an Anglo American perspective, the holiday appears to combine various elements of the religious fervor associated with Christmas and Easter, the feasting of Thanksgiving, the remembering of the dead on Memorial Day, the costumed revelry of Halloween, and the fireworks of Independence Day with other typically Mexican elements. The text is masterfully illustrated with 149 black-and-white photographs and drawings and thirty-two pages of full-color plates.

Bradley D. Clark



BIOGRAPHY

Gurasich, Marj. *DID YOU EVER . . . MEET A TEXAS HERO?* Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 90p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 0-89015-819-3. 91-19544. (Juvenile)

"Did you ever . . ." is part of the question which begins each brief biography and serves to help the reader identify with a Texas hero because of a shared interest or experience. For example: "Did you ever . . . make a promise that was hard to keep? Jane Long did." "Did you ever . . . like to dress up in funny clothes? Sam Houston did." There are black-and-white portraits of each subject and some other related illustrations. Each chapter ends with a word list which defines the more difficult terms. Texas heroes portrayed include: Stephen F. Austin, Mary Austin Holley, William Barret Travis, James Bowie, David Crockett, Susanna Dickinson, José Antonio Navarro, Sam Houston, and Jane Long. Elementary school students should find this a useful reference for reports as well as for interesting leisure reading. The bibliography will be a further resource for teachers.

Frances M. Ramsey

Hilts, Len. *QUANAH PARKER*. New York: Harcourt

Brace Jovanovich, 1992. 171p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Hardcover: \$12.95, ISBN 0-15-200565-X; Paperback: \$4.95, ISBN 0-15-264447-4. 87-8488.

This book is more fiction than biography, and it's misleading to present it as a "true historical account." The simple truth is that so little is known about Quanah Parker and his life prior to bringing his people into the reservation in 1875 that any author is obliged either to generalize or make up that which just isn't available as fact. Even after that date, Quanah's life was intensely private, and his own statements tend to contradict each other. Hilts goes a step or two beyond speculation, however. He relies heavily on Zoe Tilghman's highly romanticized and sometimes erroneous book as well as on Paul Foreman's and other somewhat less than factual accounts of Quanah's life; and he completely ignores other, better researched volumes about the Quahadis band and their famous half-breed leader. Hilts' book contains imagined conversations and detailed events which make for good reading for nine-and-ten-year-olds perhaps, but they should be aware that it is fiction and not history. *Quanah* illuminates if it doesn't document the life of the Last Chief of the Comanches.

Clay Reynolds

Hunt, Lenoir, comp. *MY MASTER: THE INSIDE STORY OF SAM HOUSTON AND HIS TIMES BY HIS FORMER SLAVE JEFF HAMILTON*. Dallas: Manfred, Van Nort & Co., c.1940. Reprint. Austin: State House Press, 1992. 147p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-938349-84-8; Paperback: \$14.95, ISBN 0-938349-86-4; Limited edition: \$60.00, ISBN 0-938349-85-6. 92-4923.

In 1936 the Texas Centennial Association commissioned author Lenoir Hunt to interview Jeff Hamilton, the ninety-six-year-old former body servant of Sam Houston. At the time, Hamilton still had a clear mind and a keen sense of historical events of the late antebellum and Civil War periods. Through a series of interviews, Hunt gathered material for a vivid picture story of Texas affairs as seen through the eyes of a former slave who deeply admired his master. Hamilton was only thirteen years of age when purchased by United States Senator Sam Houston at a slave auction in Huntsville in 1853. He became Houston's personal servant soon thereafter and accompanied Houston when he served as governor during the late 1850s. Although Hamilton recalls that slavery itself was an evil institution, he had only the fondest memories of his master. According to Hamilton, Houston had no love for the institution of slavery. "I heard the General say that slavery was a damnable thing at best," Hamilton told his interviewer.

State House Press of Austin has again performed a valuable service in reprinting this memoir on the eve of the 200th anniversary of Sam Houston's birth. Modern readers and those experienced in gathering oral history will understand that Hamilton's comments must be viewed from the perspective of the time, place, and conditions under which the interviews occurred. Both Hamilton and Hunt reflect the social views of the 1930s; nevertheless, the volume

presents an interesting picture of Texas life on the eve of the Civil War.

Ralph A. Wooster

Pringle, Terry. **THIS IS THE CHILD**. New York: Knopf, 1983. Reprint. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1992. 194p. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-87074-355-X; Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-87074-332-5. 91-52776.

Only two months past his fourth birthday, young Eric Pringle was diagnosed with leukemia. The shock, anger, hope, and frustration of the parents as they watch Eric suffer through medical treatment and disease compete with their attempt to maintain some degree of normalcy in their relationships with Eric and his older brother Michael. Without sentimentality but with sincerest honesty, Pringle eloquently and tenderly chronicles the emotional ups and downs in the life of a family whose emotional resources focus on Eric. The helplessness of parents to protect their child from pain and death during the twenty-month struggle is sensitively recounted. As Robert Coles notes in the new foreword to this volume, the family's courage and steadfastness are inspiring and will doubtlessly be helpful to families and medical professionals who mesh in similar circumstances. *This is the Child* was Pringle's first book; since then this talented author has published three well-received novels: *The Preacher's Boy* (Vol.III, No.1) *A Fine Time to Leave Me* (Vol.IV, No.2), and *Tycoon* (Vol.V, No.1). He continues to live and write in Abilene.

Sally Dooley

Westheimer, David. **SITTING IT OUT: A WORLD WAR II MEMOIR**. Houston: Rice University Press, 1992. 358p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-89263-315-8. 92-50058.

Novelist and screenwriter David Westheimer was twenty-five years of age when he joined the Army Air Corps in 1941. A graduate of Rice University (then Institute) and a staff writer for the *Houston Post*, the future author of *Von Ryan's Express* and over a dozen other novels, Westheimer flew a B-24 which was shot down by Italians in December, 1942. This volume is an account of the 869 days that he was held as a prisoner of war. The first nine months were spent in an Italian POW camp, but for the remainder of the war he was in Germany, most of the time in Stalag Luft 3 (made famous by *The Great Escape* and *Von Ryan's Express*) in east Germany and Stalag Luft VIIA in Bavaria. This present volume, based largely on a manuscript written by Westheimer soon after his discharge from the service, provides a rich account of prison life. On the whole, the POWs were treated reasonably well in terms of the necessities of life and probably fared better than many German civilians. They received mail, parcels from home, and Red Cross packages. This is an exceptionally well-written and informative historical memoir which should be of interest to a wide range of

readers concerned with the human experience during war-time.

Ralph A. Wooster

BIOLOGY

Metzler, Susan and Van Metzler. **A FIELD GUIDE TO TEXAS MUSHROOMS**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992. 350p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-292-75125-7; Paperback: \$17.95, ISBN 0-292-75126-5. 91-2239.

"Dazzling" is the only word to describe this sorely needed guide to Texas mushrooms. Combining the talents and fieldwork of Susan and Van Metzler, who have collected, photographed, and classified native mushrooms for almost twenty years, with the mycological expertise of Orson K. Miller, Jr., this beautiful book represents a milestone among Texas field guides. Accurate descriptions of over 200 species accompany the quality color photographs. Included are glimpses of many rare and some previously undescribed species. The reader is aided in the challenge of mushroom identification by means of a clear step-by-step approach utilizing figures illustrating mushroom structure and a color photograph chart for quick classification of fungi. Delectable recipes and detailed cooking instructions are certain to captivate the gourmet's imagination. The book is sure to inspire and delight both novice and experienced mushroom hunters, appealing as well to nature lovers in general.

Phillip Malnassy

The National Wildflower Research Center's **WILDFLOWER HANDBOOK**. 2d ed. Edited by Elizabeth S. Anderson and Annie P. Gillespie. Stillwater: Voyageur Press, 1992. 304p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-89658-201-9. 92-15148.

The National Wildflower Research Center, a non-profit "research and education organization committed to preservation and reestablishment of native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees" of North America, was established by Lady Byrd Johnson in 1983 in Austin, Texas. While largely a directory of private and public conservation organizations, native plant seed companies and nurseries, and landscape designers specializing in native plants, the book contains a small section of practical information on the cultivation of native plants. Within the three separate directories, the sections are arranged by state and then alphabetically by name of organization. All entries include company names and mailing addresses with information on catalogs and the company's primary plant focus.

While up-to-date and useful, the presentation of the information is less than ideal. Conspicuously absent from this edition are the several pages of bibliographies and the extended chart of species-related information. There is neither a table of contents nor an index. Although entries are fairly simple, inclusion of a brief key or sample entry would help the reader avoid confusion. Despite these flaws, this is

an excellent resource of important information not readily obtainable in any other source.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks

COMMUNICATIONS

Narciso, John and David Burkett. *RELATING REDEFINED: DISCOVERING THE NEW "LANGUAGE" FOR LIVING*. rev.ed. Houston: Redman-Wright, Inc. 1992. 127p. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 1-879-797-01-1.

Printed sixteen times under the title *Declare Yourself: Discovering the Me in Relationships*, this "revised" edition seems to differ little from its 1975 original except in title and typeface. This revision does contain subheadings for the text which are listed in the table of contents. The authors fail to bring out many points not already addressed by other scholars of human communication. Strong points of the book include simple language and an appealing style. Written in the first person singular--although authored by two persons--the work is largely anecdotal, containing many examples from the authors' counseling and teaching experience.

Although both authors are professors at Trinity University in San Antonio, the work seems lacking in critical scholarly research. Apparently used extensively by counselors with their clients, the book is recommended for public libraries that do not already have the earlier title on their shelves.

Sharyl A. McMillian-Nelson

CORRESPONDENCE

Chapman, Helen B. *THE NEWS FROM BROWNSVILLE: HELEN CHAPMAN'S LETTERS FROM THE TEXAS MILITARY FRONTIER, 1848-1852*. Edited by Caleb Coker. Austin: Texas State Historical Association for the Barker Texas History Center, 1992. 410p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$39.95, ISBN 0-87611-115-0. 92-7443.

The Massachusetts-reared wife of the U.S. Army quartermaster at Matamoros and later at Brownsville, Helen B. Chapman wrote letters to her mother in lieu of a journal during the Mexican War and in the years immediately following. She was an intelligent woman and wrote well, although she was determinedly conventional and her intellect was inelastic and self-centered. As a result, her letters are of general interest only when the experiences she reports were new and pressed from the outside directly upon her concerns as an officer's wife in Army society. A complacent observer, she lacked the insight to make her reports a personal mirror of her larger context. However, when circumstance roused her to see things afresh, as when she first traveled to Matamoros or Mexico City, she at least saw and described clearly things which she may not have understood, and these nuggets in her letters are worth mining. Editor

Caleb Coker, her great-great-grandson, also includes a few letters from her husband, William, which are even more domestic than his wife's. They are, however, filled with wit and playful irony, letters rich in the personal charm and humor which Helen's musings absolutely lack.

Randall Holdridge

ESSAYS

Janes, Daryl. *NO APOLOGIES! TEXAS RADICALS CELEBRATE THE '60s*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1992. 294p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 0-89015-870-3.

In considering these eighteen articles by so-called Texas radicals written largely about themselves and their involvement in various causes of the 1960s, the common thread seems to be that most of them hung out a lot in Austin. Few of them are names that will be recognized outside that groovy venue, and perhaps only then by persons with acute and detailed nostalgia for that bygone era.

The white writers, who from their current job descriptions seem to have integrated into straight society, generally take up a fair amount of space with self-adulation/justification. In reading the three black writers, however, one gets the feeling that there is little in their aggressive rhetoric to suggest a pose. This is not to imply that some of the authors of these articles did not make personal sacrifices in a legitimate effort to bring about change. The point is that looking back on those times, it's a little hard to share the *Big Chill* perspective of some of the writers as they indulge in their self-absorbed trips down Memory Lane.

Tanner T. Hunt, Jr.

FOLKLORE

Dobie, J. Frank, ed. *LEGENDS OF TEXAS: LOST MINES AND BURIED TREASURE, VOLUME I*. Austin: Texas Folklore Society, 1924. Reprint. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1902. 208p. Illustrations. Index. Paperback: \$3.95, ISBN 0-88289-909-0. 91-32367.

Dobie and seventeen others contributed over forty brief legends which should excite both young and old readers about lost treasure while giving older readers an appreciation of the folklore of the state. Recommended for middle school and high school libraries and all other libraries which do not own this Texas classic.

Sally Dooley

GUIDEBOOKS

Bennett, Marilyn. *A VISITOR'S GUIDE TO THE TEXAS COASTAL BEND*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1991. 185p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Paperback: \$12.95, ISBN 0-89015-834-7.

Travelers will find this a helpful guide to this large area of Texas coast from Victoria and Indianola, through Refugio and Rockport, to Alice, Corpus Christi, and Kingsville. Histories, sites to visit, and activities are listed both by town and by month. Restaurants for sampling local cuisine are included as are lists of birds, wildflowers, and shells that might be observed. Black-and-white pictures (some of very poor quality) and attractive drawings by Dinah Bowman complement the text. A large bibliography directs the interested traveler to more specialized reading. Amazingly, a good map of the area is lacking.

Sally Dooley

Parent, Laurence. *THE HIKER'S GUIDE TO TEXAS*. Helena: Falcon Press Publishing Co., 1992. 184p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 1-56044-102-X. 91-077728.

Enjoyment of exercise and the environment account for the growing popularity of hiking, and a remarkable diversity of hiking opportunities exists in Texas. Rugged mountains, sandy beaches, piney woods, and prairie beckon to both the beginning and experienced hiker. Noted outdoor photographer and travel-writer Laurence Parent here presents a useful and practical guide to seventy-five hikes. Each contains a trail map, up-to-date trail information, closest town, round trip mileage, elevation, and time required. Quality black-and-white photographs also illustrate the simply written text. The book is especially helpful to novices with sections on hikes to do with children and wilderness safety and ethics. This would be a worthwhile addition to any Texas library.

Sally Dooley

Swaim, Joan. *WALKING TCU: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992. 155p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-87565-104-6. 91-38344.

Walking TCU is a pleasantly nostalgic look at the evolution of the present Fort Worth campus of Texas Christian University. Swaim takes the reader on a guided tour, explaining the history, names, architecture, and special features of the buff "TCU brick" structures encountered along the way. Included are a prefatory map (unfortunately losing some detail in the binding gutter) and copious photographs of the buildings and their namesakes. The buff-colored pages give a softly aged look to both modern and archival photographs. These compliment the well-written text which describes campus traditions, personalities, and special collections, as well as memorials, programs, and awards associated with TCU. This book would make fine reading for a Horned Frog alumnus, an entering freshman, or a visiting parent of a TCU student.

Andrea Twiss-Brooks

HISTORY

Bracht, Viktor. *TEXAS IN 1848*. Germany, 1849. Translated by Charles Frank Schmidt, 1931. Reprint. Manchaca: German-Texas Heritage Society, 1991. 229p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$21.00, ISBN 0-944779-04-2. 91-77130.

Travel accounts describing Texas in the 1840s and 1850s are plentiful, although not always in agreement. None is more pleasant reading than Viktor Bracht's *Texas In 1848*. Bracht divided his book into three parts: the first part is a description of land, animal life, and climate with some comment on the people, both Indian and others; the second part covers Bracht's advice for prospective emigrants; and the third contains excerpts from letters written by Bracht to relatives in Germany. Each section incorporates information that is both interesting and useful to students of the period, but the third section is possibly more candid and useful than the first two, both of which sometimes exaggerate the virtues of Texas and the Texans.

To now, Bracht's work has not been cited as much as the accounts of Mary Austin Holley, Frederick Law Olmsted, or Ferdinand Roemer. However, the reprinting and distribution of this reprint will certainly make it more easily available, and it is likely to receive more attention in the writing of the history of the republic and early statehood.

Adrian N. Anderson

Douglas, C.L. *THE GENTLEMEN IN THE WHITE HATS*. Dallas: South-West Press, c.1934. Reprint. Austin: State House Press, 1992. 210p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-938349-81-3; Paperback: \$16.95, ISBN 0-938349-82-1; Limited edition: \$60.00, ISBN 0-938349-83-X. 92-6950.

Why the original publication of this book became a rare edition is hard to imagine, for these accounts of the feats of Texas Rangers are some of the most entertaining around. Douglas begins with the relentless, vengeful Comanche raids which made organization of the Rangers necessary, then moves through more than 150 years of Ranger history, telling how these fearless lawmen stopped cattle rustlers, bandits, Mexican invasions, and killers like Bonnie and Clyde. Though Douglas was a respected journalist in his day, the absence of footnotes or a bibliography makes recommending the book as a scholarly reference difficult. This reprint includes an introduction by Roger Conger, newly added photos, and an expanded index. *Gentlemen* is for true buffs of the lore and legends of the Texas Rangers.

Brenda L. Herbel

Fredrickson, Eric L. *A COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE: THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION*. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co., 1992. 202p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-88415-082-8. 92-070629.

Authorized histories, by their nature, are usually

sanitized and lame. Sponsored histories, in which complete control is exercised over form, content, and point of view, are often worse, and among those who buy such books only the index is perused, seeking reference to their own names. The title of this one, commissioned by the Houston Bar Association, suggests the text will be particularly unpromising: for every lawyer who seeks to become involved in Bar politics because of a burning commitment to public service, ten others do so for personal prestige, or professional self-aggrandizement, or because his or her number came up within the firm.

Nonetheless, with subjects such as Captain James Baker, Percy Foreman, and Leon Jaworski, the reading cannot always be dull. But inevitably the interesting parts are more than offset by forgettable excerpts from official HBA resolutions and speeches, or by photographs of lawyers holding plaques. Eric Fredrickson, a student at the University of Houston Law Center, has done his best (given institutional restrictions) to enliven his task with interesting anecdotes, but I can't imagine who would buy this book, except those whose names are contained therein.

Tanner T. Hunt, Jr.

Houstoun, Matilda. **TEXAS AND THE GULF OF MEXICO; OR YACHTING IN THE NEW WORLD.** Editor by Marilyn McAdams Sibley. Reprint. 1844. Austin: W. Thomas Taylor, 1991. 274p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$47.00, ISBN 0-935-072-21-7.

This reprint of a classic travel book is the first in a series of new editions of important nineteenth century Texas history source books by W. Thomas Taylor. The editor, Texas historian Marilyn McAdams Sibley, has produced a carefully prepared text for use by students, scholars, and general readers. The introduction is fascinating, and the footnotes are informative. Mrs. Houstoun was a well-known British travel writer who sailed to Texas with her second husband, a British army officer. Dr. Sibley suggests that the Houstouns came to Texas to advance British interests in the area. This volume, based on their first trip in 1842, was published in England in 1844 and reprinted in the United States in 1845. Houstoun describes their ports on the journey, but the most interesting parts are the accounts of life and the environment in Galveston and Houston.

Mrs. Houston writes at length about the weather, the American and Texan obsession with money, and the institution of slavery that she opposed. She provides fascinating glimpses of many aspects of frontier society in this beautifully prepared reprint. I strongly recommend this volume.

JoAnn Stiles

Justice, Glenn. **REVOLUTION ON THE RIO GRANDE: MEXICAN RAIDS AND ARMY PURSUITS, 1916-1919.** El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1992. 100p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Paperback: \$7.50, ISBN 0-87404-186-4. 91-065782.

Violence on the Rio Grande border between Mexico

and Texas is a topic well explored by historians. This book presents a scholarly account of the border violence in the often-neglected Big Bend area in the early years of the Carranza regime. Justice's study involves the role of four groups: Mexican civilians on both sides of the river, Anglo residents in the area, various Texas Ranger forces, and the United States Army. In a well-told, succinct story the picture emerges of a troubled land where each of these groups shared some responsibility for death and destruction. Perhaps the primary lesson to be learned is that there were no easy solutions to problems in a time and place where revolution and cultural conflicts led to the abandonment of traditional moral values.

The author relied primarily on manuscript papers, official army records, and some state records. None of the primary participants nor the Mexican sources were interviewed or studied. As the author notes, these might have led to additional information. Justice carried out a commendable research project with useful maps and outstanding illustrations.

Adrian N. Anderson

McIntire, Jim. **EARLY DAYS IN TEXAS: A TRIP TO HELL AND HEAVEN.** Edited by Robert K. DeArment. Kansas City: McIntire Publishing Co., 1902. Reprint. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. 192p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$22.95, ISBN 0-8061-2407-5. 91-30547.

Jim McIntire felt it his duty to write about his life as a buffalo hunter, cowpuncher, and saloon owner when a near-death experience, caused by black smallpox in 1901, allowed him to view hell and heaven. Though many of the names, dates, and locations used by McIntire necessitate correction and explanation from editor DeArment, the story is honest and revealing. The original story serves as an easy-to-understand source for adolescent readers, while the copious notes added by DeArment provide a wealth of information. This attractive reprint is a must for high school or public libraries, but the squeamish should be warned that buffalo and Indian killings are graphically explained.

Brenda L. Herbel

Moore, James Talmadge. **THROUGH FIRE AND FLOOD: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FRONTIER TEXAS, 1836-1900.** College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992. 284p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$39.50, ISBN 0-89096-504-8. 91-34327.

Church history, when written about a particular region, often falls into one of two categories: either the study becomes an institutional catalog of who was there and the number of souls saved, or it becomes a general history of the region, with some religion added from time to time. Moore's book falls somewhere in the middle. Moore utilizes Catholic archival sources and secondary writings judiciously. Using these with considerable organizational skills most of the time, he integrates the story of the development of the

Catholic Church in Texas into the larger story of the development of Texas and does so very well. Occasionally, however, he drifts into areas not truly pertinent to this type of study, and sometimes he is not as critical of his sources as he might be. For example, Juan Cortina may have been forced into a life of banditry by injustices of the Anglo world, but it is doubtful that his career had much to do with the growth of the Texas Catholic Church. Other claims of the percentage of Catholics in the Texas population over a period of years do not appear reliable. Moore describes in detail the problems confronted by the Church: prejudice of non-Catholics, persecution, conflicts within units of the faith, as well as disease, weather, Indians, and hazards of travel.

Despite these problems, the story told is essentially a story of success. Moore understandably focuses more on the leadership, such as the bishops, but there are some descriptions of the efforts of individual parish priests and sisters and their dedication and sacrifice. One may suspect that the success of the Church was due in large measure to their efforts.

Adrian N. Anderson

Rhinehart, Marilyn D. *A WAY OF WORK AND A WAY OF LIFE: COAL MINING IN THURBER, TEXAS, 1888-1926*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992. 167p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$39.50, ISBN 0-89096-499-8. 91-35907.

Coal mining is a topic not often associated with Texas. Yet the industry flourished in parts of the state, particularly in Erath, Eastland, and Palo Pinto counties, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marilyn Rhinehart, history professor and chair of the Social Sciences Division at North Harris College in Houston, examines the interaction between mining companies and miners in Thurber, Texas, a company-owned town of the Texas & Pacific Coal Company. Rhinehart does an excellent job tracking the beginnings of the company town, showing how the miners' lives, culture, and labor relations evolved over the period, and presenting the factors and events that led to the decline of both coal mining and company town. The book has been well researched as is evidenced by an extensive bibliography listing numerous primary sources. Statistical tables likewise illustrate the meticulous documentation Rhinehart put into her work. This book, number nine in the Texas A&M Southwestern Studies, is recommended for academic libraries and for collections focusing on labor history and relations and on the mining industry.

Jon P. Tritsch

Rumbley, Rose-Mary. *THE UNAUTHORIZED HISTORY OF DALLAS TEXAS*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1991. 183p. Illustrations. Paperback: \$9.95, ISBN 0-89015-833-9.

Rumbley, a second-generation Dallas native, is apparently a citizen of some renown there as she frequently mentions her invitations to speak for groups and clubs. Rumbley's mother and grandmother provided the social

experiences which form the foundation of this book. The latter half of the book centers upon several famous Dallas businesses, personalities, and places all described in an overly intimate conversational style saturated with exclamation points. Grammatical and spelling errors abound! Those persons knowing Ms. Rumbley or her ancestors will possibly be amused by her stories, but this "unauthorized history" will be of consequence to only a few Dallas natives and club members from whom the purchase of this book will be solicited after a luncheon lecture.

Cynthia Calvert

Sandos, James A. *REBELLION IN THE BORDERLANDS: ANARCHISM AND THE PLAN OF SAN DIEGO, 1904-1923*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. 256p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$24.95, ISBN 0-8061-2433-4. 91-50870.

Against the background of the Mexican Revolution and economic exploitation and ethnic discrimination suffered by Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the lower Rio Grande Valley, Sandos traces the development of American anarchist thought which preceded the 1915 Plan of San Diego, Texas. This plan has been generally overlooked and misunderstood by historians. Sandos' work opens new avenues of thought in understanding borderlands history and Mexican American relations. It is a very detailed and scholarly book based on extensive archival research in both the U.S. and Mexico. *Rebellion* has greater appeal for the specialist than the general reader since it presupposes considerable knowledge of the borderlands during this period. The Plan of San Diego aimed to free the area comprising Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California from U.S. control through the extermination of all white American males over sixteen years of age. Although the Plan was effectively repressed, Sandos suggests a possible connection between the anarchist elements in Southwestern Mexican Americans and later militancy in the Chicano community.

Marion Holt

LAW

Wallace, L. Jean. *WHAT EVERY 18-YEAR-OLD NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT TEXAS LAW*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992. 153p. Illustrations. Index. Hardcover: \$19.95, ISBN 0-292-79069-4; Paperback: \$8.95, ISBN 0-292-79070-8.

Wallace has produced a clearly-written introduction to Texas law for young adults. She selects topics of interest to most eighteen-year-olds, such as the legal issues involved in traffic accidents, renting apartments, personal relationships, consumer credit, and employment within the state of Texas. Her purpose is to acquaint individuals becoming adults under Texas law with their legal rights and responsibilities and with the penalties of violating particular laws. The large print, simple language and minimal use of jargon make this

book easy to read and comprehend. A table of contents which outlines the topics and a nine-page index with multiple listings and cross-references make this a valuable reference even to those well beyond eighteen. Entertaining, with anecdotes from her days as attorney for students at Texas Tech University (1979-1990), these true stories illustrate laws. This book would make a useful textbook and is recommended for all high school, academic, and public libraries.

Sharyl A. McMillian-Nelson

SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS

McCandless, Barbara, ed. *EQUAL BEFORE THE LENS: JNO. TRLICA'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF GRANGER, TEXAS*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992. 196p. Illustrations. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover: \$34.50, ISBN 0-89096-486-6. 91-26693.

Jno. (John) Trlica, a first-generation Czech businessman in Granger, also owned the only photography studio. From the Eastman Kodak Company, he and other isolated photographers received technical training as well as marketing strategies to advertise and instill in the minds of clients a responsibility to preserve family and cultural heritage through photography. He was a meticulous record-keeper, and his grandson donated his collection (over 15,000 negatives, several hundred prints and all of his notes and ledgers) to the Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin in 1980. This attractive book is the product of years of research by Barbara McCandless, now assistant curator of photographs at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth.

Trlica photographed Granger for over thirty years, doing his most significant work during the 1920s and 1930s. He photographed all of Granger's citizens in his studio, particularly at important passages in life. The ethnic diversity in Granger, which included European immigrants, Hispanics, and blacks, created racial tensions, but Trlica welcomed all to his studio, even lowering prices to permit the poor to have family portraits. Through his photographs he tried to show the solid values of family heritage and community brotherhood. The ninety-seven illustrations invite comparison with the great WPA photographers, Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, but Trlica's work is more conservative and rooted in the formal studio tradition of the nineteenth century.

Lynne Lokensgard

REVIEW OF TEXAS BOOKS

Sally Dooley, Editor
Sally Lombardo, Andrea Twiss-Brooks, and
Andrew B. Preslar, Associate Editors
Genny Dupre, Desk Top Publishing

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